



Deer, teal, and shorebirds on northwest Indiana WRP



Shorebirds flying over northwest Indiana WRP



This publication is the third issue of a direct mail piece intended to provide information to holders of NRCS Wetlands Reserve Easement Program (WRE) and Emergency Watershed Protection Program Floodplain Easements (EWP-FPE) and to identify the activities that are taking place with respect to easements across Indiana.

INDIANA ● WRE/EWP-FPE ISSUE 3 ● JANUARY, 2015

WRE/EWP-FPE Easement Owner Newsletter

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We want to hear about your easement success stories

NEW FARM BILL - NEW NAME

2014 brought a new Farm Bill, and along with it, some changes to the easement programs. Rest assured your existing easement is still protected. Changes to the easement programs affect new enrollments only.

All Warranty Deeds recorded under the former Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), remain in force and effect. What will change over the course of the next couple of months is the name. The Wetlands Reserve Program is now the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program- Wetlands Reserve Easement, or ACEP-WRE.

Correspondence you receive regarding your current easement property will be switching over to this new name. All monitoring and management of WRP easements will be conducted under the authority of the new ACEP-WRE. There is no change to the Floodplain Easement Program (EWP-FPE) name.

2015 MONITORING BEGINS

Each year, NRCS is responsible for verifying the condition of its easements. This includes the verification of ownership, as well as site conditions. Site condition checks may take place on site or via offsite methods using remote imagery. If you are interested in participating in the monitoring process, please contact your local NRCS District Conservationist to make arrangements. The contact numbers for the local field offices can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/contact/local/>.

Even if your site is not selected for an onsite monitoring visit, your local NRCS District Conservationist is available to answer any questions you may have about your easement, and to meet with you on site to discuss the management and restoration of your property. This is a great opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have, and for you and NRCS to evaluate the progress of the easement restoration.



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Compatible Uses- Trails, Food Plots, Invasive Species... Oh My!

The Warranty Easement Deed on WRP/WRE and EWP-FPE easements reserves six rights to the landowner of the property (Refer to Part II. of the Warranty Easement Deed recorded for your property for more information):

1. Right to ownership, and subsequently the right to transfer or sell the property;
2. Right to quiet enjoyment of the property without interference from others;
3. Right to control access- properties are not open to the public unless the landowner chooses to make access available;
4. Undeveloped recreational uses, such as hunting, hiking, bird watching, etc.;
5. Right to subsurface resources, however these resources can not be extracted through the surface of the easement. Horizontal or other offsite extraction method must be used and NRCS should be notified of such activity under its easement; and
6. Water rights, which are typically not applicable in Indiana.

Any activity on the property not covered under the six reserved rights is prohibited, but may be permissible if authorized as a Compatible Use. Examples of activities requiring authorization include mowed trails, food plots, invasive species control, vegetation management, water level management, native vegetation plantings, excavating shallow scrapes, etc. If the activity alters the vegetation, or impacts the water levels there is a good chance it will require a Compatible Use Authorization. Compatible Use Authorizations are not guaranteed; each is evaluated on an individual basis in the context of the site conditions. Please contact your local NRCS field office prior to beginning any activity. When in doubt- ASK FIRST. <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/contact/local/>



Northern Indiana WRP



Eagle Marsh



Trailcam of Greater White-fronted geese on Wabash River WRP

EAGLE MARSH AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES CONTROL PROJECT

Located in northeast Indiana, just south of Fort Wayne off of Interstate 69, is the Eagle Marsh Wetlands Reserve Program project. The property, co-owned by Little River Wetland Project and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, is over 700 acres of tree plantings, emergent marsh, and prairie. The site is home to numerous species of plants and animals, including the endangered Blanding's Turtle.

But what makes this site so different than other WRP sites is that it lies on the continental divide between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Watersheds. When storm waters flood the area, waters in both watersheds intermingle and organisms can pass from one to the other. As a result of this mixing of

watersheds, Eagle Marsh was labeled as one of the top 18 locations where Asian Carp could move from the Mississippi Watershed into the Great Lakes. The invasion of Asian Carp into the Great Lakes system could have devastating impacts on the environment and the economy of the region.

With groundbreaking starting this past October, Little River Wetland Project and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with NRCS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the White House Council on Environmental Quality, are rebuilding and reinforcing a berm located in the center of Eagle Marsh to create permanent

separation between the two drainage basins. The goal for this berm is to prevent the passage of Aquatic Nuisance Species between the watersheds. The berm will not only reduce the risk of Asian Carp passage, but also the passage of snakehead, and the transfer of diseases such as VHS- viral hemorrhagic septicemia. The new berm will also replace an older, deteriorating berm on the property, possibly offering an opportunity for a public trail on top of the new berm and a panoramic vista of the project. When the over 9,000 foot berm is completed, and disturbed areas revegetated, Eagle Marsh will continue to flourish as a wetland restoration success, and one of the critical crossing points for the Asian Carp into the Great Lakes will be closed, permanently.

WANTED: YOUR SUCCESS STORIES

Photos in this newsletter are from easements within Indiana. Thank you to everyone who has been submitting pictures of your easement and sharing your stories with us. They are all great reminders of the success of these programs. Over 64,900 acres of wetlands and 6,400 acres of floodplains have been protected through these two easement programs as of October 1.

If you have photos or an easement success story you would like to share, please submit them to the NRCS State Easement Program Specialist at brianne.lowe@in.usda.gov. Over the next year we will be posting success stories and interviews on our website at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/newsroom/stories/>. Stories and photos used in future publications will remain anonymous upon request.