

# Benefits

# FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Benefits of Purchasing Credits from a Wetland Mitigation Bank:

- **Saves Time** – Purchasing credits from a mitigation bank can take a couple of weeks instead of potentially much longer to develop a different mitigation plan. This allows farmers to remain eligible for funding, faster.
- **Severs Liability** – The landowner is not responsible for the success or maintenance of the bank or credits purchased through the program.
- **Eliminates General and Financial Risk** – The bank developer is responsible for all risk associated with the bank. The landowner does not take on any risk through the purchase of credits from the bank.
- **Saves Money** – The costs associated with landowners developing and maintaining mitigated wetlands on their land far exceeds the cost of purchasing credits from a mitigation bank.
- **Doesn't Encumber Land in Perpetuity** – If a landowner mitigates a wetland to another site on his or her property, a permanent conservation easement is required; purchasing credits in a mitigation bank frees the landowner from that commitment.

## What is a wetland credit?

A wetland credit is equivalent to approximately an acre of converted wetland.

## How do I move my wetland to the wetland mitigation bank?

Contact MEC to begin the purchase process. MEC will provide pricing information and supply you with a wetland credit purchase agreement.

Finalizing the purchase will include the following steps:

1. The landowner will provide to MEC: name; address; wetland impact type; and quantity.
2. MEC will draft a purchase agreement.
3. The landowner will sign and return the agreement to MEC.
4. MEC will sign and return the agreement to the landowner, and provide an invoice.
5. The landowner will pay MEC for the wetland credits.
6. Once payment is received, MEC will finalize the purchase agreement, and send documentation to the landowner.

## How many wetland credits do I need to purchase to be compliant?

Landowners should contact their local NRCS office to determine the appropriate amount of wetland credits they need to purchase. The amount of wetland credits a farmer needs to purchase depends on the wetland functions, values, and acres at the site the farmer plans to convert. NRCS has established a functional assessment procedure for evaluating the wetland that is intended to be impacted and the resulting number of wetland credits needed to offset those impacts.

## Does my farm need to be in a specific geographical location to purchase wetland credits from the program?

The mitigation credit needs to be sold within the Bank Service Area boundary (see map).

## Once the wetland credits have been purchased, then what?

The landowner will provide a copy of the fully executed credit purchase agreement, including the Bill of Sale and Payment Receipt to NRCS.

# Wetland Mitigation Banking

An Option for Removing Wetlands in Missouri Fields



# Program Overview

# Missouri Agricultural Wetland Mitigation Bank

USDA conservation compliance requires any farmer who wishes to convert a wetland for commodity production to offset that loss through mitigation. The mitigation process allows those farmers to maintain eligibility for USDA benefits, including participation in USDA farm programs.

The Wetland Mitigation Banking Program, administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), funds development and administration of wetland mitigation banks. Landowners who purchase "credits" in a wetland bank that at least equal wetland acreage that is farmed or removed, remain eligible for all USDA programs.

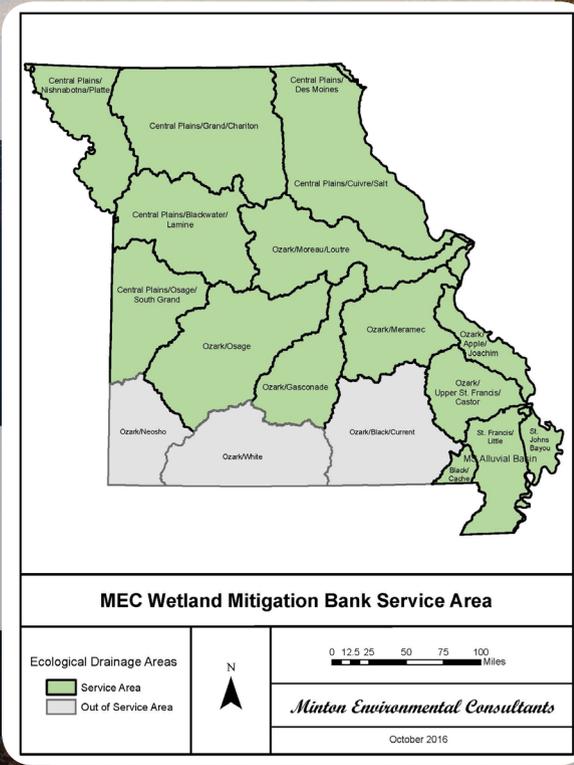
Minton Environmental Consultants (MEC) is the entity approved by NRCS to develop and operate a wetland mitigation bank serving Missouri. Through the Missouri Agricultural Wetland Mitigation Bank, farmers have the opportunity to mitigate their existing wetlands, previously converted wetlands, and mitigated wetlands from their present locations to the bank. The mitigation process eliminates the farmers' responsibility for these wetlands and allows them to farm these areas.

## Multi-Benefit Project Habitat Restoration

Between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, conversions to agricultural use accounted for 54 percent of wetland loss in the United States. The bank will replace the hydrologic, biogeochemical, plant community, and habitat functions impacted by the wetland conversions within its service area. Benefits include flood attenuation, groundwater recharge and discharge, sediment retention, nutrient and contaminant removal, plant community structure and function, and wildlife habitat of critical importance to waterfowl, shorebirds, and many threatened and endangered species.

## Wetland Mitigation Program Wetland Credits and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Credits

Wetland credits developed for the NRCS Wetland Mitigation Program are generated to assist landowners with USDA conservation compliance. NRCS does not certify or make assumptions regarding what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Clean Water Act, or any state government agency might require for mitigation.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

### NRCS

Find your local NRCS field office at  
<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

### Minton Environmental Consultants, LLC

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Photo: Existing Minton wetland mitigation bank.