

Wetlands Reserve Program



What is the Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program to restore, protect and enhance wetlands on private property. It is an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to restore wetlands that have been converted to agriculture production or have been altered by multiple flood events.

WRP and Flood Recovery

Landowners with damaged agricultural land due to flooding along the Missouri River may be able to enroll these acres in to WRP.

The Plan

The program offers landowners several options:

- Permanent easements
- 30-year easements
- Restoration cost-share agreements of a minimum 10- year duration
- Reserved Grazing-Rights: Permanent or 30-year Easement
- 30 year Tribal Contracts

How WRP Works

Landowners who choose to participate in WRP may sell a conservation easement or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with USDA to restore and protect wetlands. The landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, yet retains private ownership, and may also retain the use of the property for certain approved activities. The landowner and NRCS develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland.

Landowner Eligibility

- Ownership of the land for the last seven years;
- Must be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions, and;
- Must meet adjusted gross income (AGI) limitation.

Landowner Benefits

WRP participants benefit by:

- Receiving financial and technical assistance in return for restoring and protecting wetlands;
- Seeing a reduction in problems associated with farming flood-prone areas, and;
- Having incentives to develop wildlife recreational opportunities on their land.

WRP Financial Assistance

Permanent Easements: A conservation easement in perpetuity that pays up to 100 percent of the easement value and restoration costs.

30-year Easements: Easement expires after 30 years that pays up to 75 percent of the easement value and restoration costs.

10-year cost-share agreements: An agreement with no easement purchase involved. USDA pays for up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.

Easement payments are usually based on the Nebraska Geographical Area Rate Caps (GARCs), (see Figure 1 below.)

What is Eligible?

- Land must be restorable and suitable for wetland and wildlife benefits;
- Farmed wetlands;
- Adjacent lands that contribute to wetland functions and value;
- Upland buffer areas for ecological benefits;
- Riparian areas that can be restored that link wetland areas, and;
- Lands significantly altered by flooding.

What Land is not Eligible?

- Wetlands converted after December 1985;
- Wetlands that are not degraded and functioning properly, and;
- Land that is in public ownership.

Some of the Benefits of Wetland Restoration:

- Restore, protect and enhance wetland ecosystems;
- Protect the land from soil erosion;
- Reduce damages from future flooding;
- Opportunity to develop wildlife habitat including threatened and endangered species habitat;
- Improve water quality and recharge groundwater, and;
- Protect biological diversity.

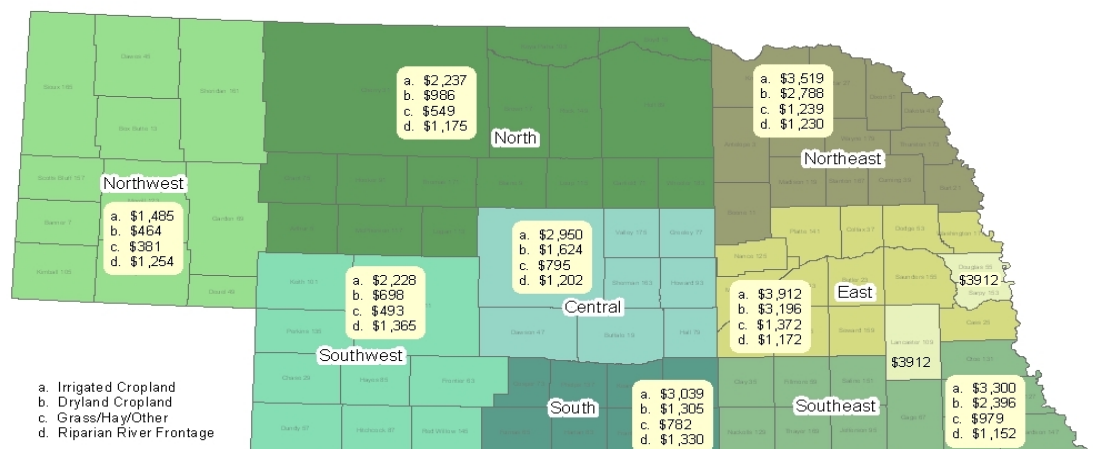
Wetlands benefit all Nebraskans by providing fish and wildlife habitat; improving water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals; reducing flooding; recharging ground water; protecting biological diversity; and providing opportunities for educational, scientific, and recreational activities.

How to Apply

Landowners may apply by contacting the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office in the county in which the land is located.

For more information, visit www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov/programs

Nebraska Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARC) by land use for FY 2011



These rates will vary state-to-state. Please check with your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to find the most current GARC rates for your state.

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