

USDA Seeks Project Proposals to Protect and Restore Critical Wetlands

USDA is making up to \$40 million available in technical and financial assistance to help eligible conservation partners voluntarily protect, restore, and enhance critical wetlands on agricultural lands. Restored wetlands improve water quality downstream and improve wildlife habitat, while also providing flood prevention and recreational benefits to communities.

“These locally-led partnerships are instrumental in achieving greater wetland acreage and maximizing their benefits to farmers, ranchers and the local communities where wetlands exist,” said Matthew Lohr, Chief of USDA’s [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS). “For example, we see this program as important to helping communities respond to natural disasters, such as the floods in the Midwest. These partnerships can help with addressing croplands that flood frequently.”

Proposals should be emailed to NRCS at SM.NRCS.WRE@wdc.usda.gov by June 14, 2019.

About the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership

Funding will be provided through the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP), part of the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (ACEP), a Farm Bill conservation program. Through WREP, States, local units of governments, nongovernmental organizations, and American Indian Tribes collaborate with NRCS through cooperative and partnership agreements. These partners work with tribal and private landowners who voluntarily enroll eligible land into easements to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their properties.

Wetland reserve easements enable landowners to successfully reduce impacts from flooding, recharge groundwater, enhance and protect wildlife habitat, and provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. Partners benefit from WREP by targeting outreach and enrollment priorities supported by NRCS, including places impacted by natural disasters, such as the severe flooding that has impacted Nebraska, South Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, and parts of Kansas recently.

The voluntary nature of NRCS’s easement programs enables effective integration of wetland restoration on working landscapes, providing benefits to farmers and ranchers who enroll in the program, as well as benefits to the communities where the wetlands exist. Easements enable landowners to adopt a variety of conservation practices that improve the function and condition of wetlands.

Partners interested in WREP are encouraged to work with the Kansas NRCS state office as part of developing the proposal. Proposals must follow ACEP guidelines for wetland reserve easements.

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners interested in ACEP should contact their [local USDA service center](#) or visit the [ACEP webpage](#). To find a service center near you,

check on the Internet at offices.usda.gov. Follow us on Twitter @NRCS_Kansas.