



United States Department of Agriculture

2014 Farm Bill: Wetland Preservation, Restoration and Creation Programs



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Conservation Programs

Easements:

- ACEP – Agricultural Conservation Easement Programs: (ALE) Agricultural Land Easement and (WRE) Wetland Reserve Easement
- HFRP – Healthy Forest Reserve Program

Financial Assistance:

- EQIP – Environmental Quality Program
- CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program

CRP/CREP – Conservation Reserve Program / Enhancement

RCPP – Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE)

A voluntary, incentive-based program that helps landowners protect and restore wetlands on their property through technical and financial assistance.

Eligible Lands include:

Woodland and Cropland where hydrology has been removed by drainage or diversion to the extent that wetland functions and values have been substantially removed and will be substantially restored through the implementation of WRP practices.

Enrollment Options:

- *Permanent easements*
- *30-year easements*



Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE)

For easements, compensation will be based on the lowest of the following:

- Fair market value based on value of land, appraisals, or market survey
- Geographic cap (GARC)
- Landowner offer

For 2014 the proposed GARC is \$4000 per acre for a permanent easement on cropland and \$3200 per acre for woodland in Kent and Sussex Counties. For 30 year easements compensation is 75% of GARC.

Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE)

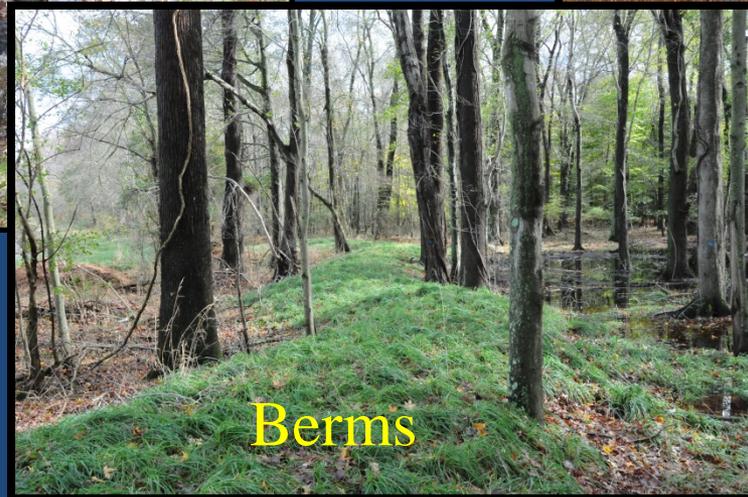
NRCS pays for the cost of all easement acquisition services including:

- Title Searches
- Boundary Survey
- Closing and Recording

For permanent easements, NRCS pays for 100% of the restoration costs. For 30 year easements and 10 year restoration agreements NRCS pays for 75% of the restoration costs.

Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE)

Typical wetland restoration practices include:



Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE)

Delaware has 2,363 acres enrolled in WRP at this time.

95% of the enrolled acreage is forested, the remainder is cropland that has been either converted back to woodland completely or is maintained in early successional state with shallow water areas for wildlife.

60% of our WRP easements are 30 years easement, the remainder are permanent. Participants have the option to change 30 year easements to permanent easements at any time.

Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP)

WREP is a voluntary conservation program that works through partnership agreements with states, nongovernmental organizations and tribes.

WREP is a component of WRE through which NRCS enters into agreements with eligible partners to leverage resources to carry out high-priority wetland protection and improve wildlife habitat.

Benefits to partners in WREP agreements include:

- Wetland Restoration in high-priority areas
- The ability to cost-share restoration or enhancement components beyond those required by NRCS
- Participating in management or monitoring of selected project locations
- Opportunities to use innovate restoration methods and practices

Delaware does not currently have any WREP agreements and no new agreements will be available until 2015.

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) helps landowners restore, enhance and protect forestland resources on private lands through easements and financial assistance.

Landowners promote the recovery of endangered or threatened species, improve plant and animal biodiversity and enhance carbon sequestration.

HFRP provides landowners with 10-year restoration agreements and 30-year or permanent easements for specific conservation actions.

Easement compensation is determined with the same methodology as WRE.

States have to submit proposals to offer HFRP to landowners in their State. No new proposals until 2015.



Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

CREP is a State-Federal partnership that provides financial incentives to landowners willing to voluntarily implement conservation measures on marginal agricultural land rather than continue agricultural production.

NRCS provides the technical assistance for CREP.

Practice CP23 is to restore the functions and values of wetland ecosystems that have been devoted to agricultural use. 327.1 acres of CP23 (wetland restoration) enrolled in Delaware.

The level of the wetland restoration is determined by the producer in consultation with NRCS.

Landowners are compensated with an annual payment based on the soil rental rates established in each county.

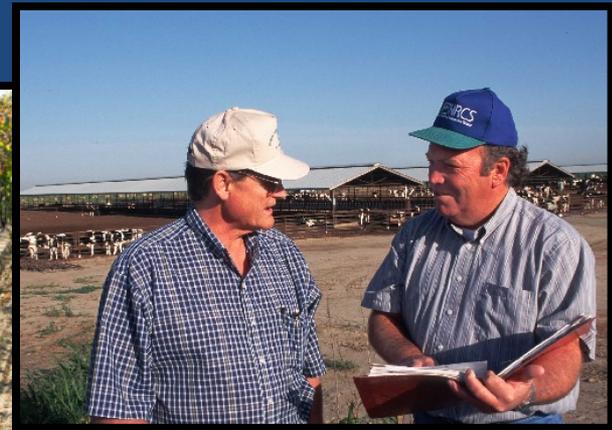
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- RCPP promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements.
- RCPP combines the authorities of four former conservation programs – the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program, the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative and the Great Lakes Basin Program.
- Assistance is delivered in accordance with the rules of EQIP, CSP, ACEP and HFRP; and in certain areas the Watershed Operations and Flood Prevention Program.
- Through RCPP, NRCS and its partners help producers install and maintain conservation activities in selected project areas. Partners leverage RCPP funding in project areas and report on the benefits achieved. The Secretary of Agriculture may also designate up to eight critical conservation areas to focus RCPP assistance.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat.

Wetland restoration on woodland and cropland is eligible for an incentive payment and has to be maintained for 15 years as part of a contract.



Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance - the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

Participants receive an annual payment to implement wetland restoration type enhancements on woodland and cropland and has to be maintained for 5 years as part of a contract.



Thank You

For additional information please contact your local USDA Service Center.

- Sussex County, call 302-856-3990, ext 3
- Kent County, call 302-741-2600, ext. 3
- New Castle County, call 302-832-3100, ext. 3

or visit us on the web at <http://www.de.nrcs.usda.gov>

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