

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)



Wetland Reserve Easement Program Quick Facts

The landowner retains the following rights:

- Title
- Quiet enjoyment of land
- Control of access
- Recreational uses
- Subsurface resources
- Water rights and water uses

Through the easement process, the landowner sells rights including:

- The right to crop or farm the land
- The right to manipulate drainage or vegetation without NRCS permission
- The right to develop or build on the land

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I hunt the land?

Yes! WREs create great wildlife and hunting habitat.

Is my land eligible?

It must be at least 10 acres and contain wetland soil. We can visit to evaluate suitability

Do I still control access to the land?

Yes! You still are the owner and the land is private. We visit annually for monitoring.

How long does it take to enroll?

WRE is a competitive and slow process- enrollment takes 2-4 years.

How can I learn more?

Contact Emily Palmer, Easement Coordinator, at (302) 519-0152 or emily.palmer@usda.gov



About WRE

Enrolling land in a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) begins a long-term commitment for both the private landowner and the government. NRCS provides assistance directly to landowners and Tribes to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands through this program.

The landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, yet retains private ownership. NRCS and the landowner work together to develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland. Benefits of WRE can include restoring, protecting and enhancing wetland ecosystems, preventing soil erosion, reducing flooding, developing wildlife habitat including threatened and endangered species habitat, improving water quality, recharging groundwater and protecting biological diversity.

Before applying for WRE, the applicant should be aware of the easement ramifications and process required before an easement is in place. The Warranty Easement Deed outlines the rights that the Government purchased through the WRE process and is recorded and stays with the property for either 30 years or in perpetuity. This means that even if the land is sold the easement cannot be canceled or modified once it is recorded for the term of the easement. This also means that your property will be protected from development and will provide water quality and environmental benefits for 30 years or forever.

Objectives of WRE

The objectives of WRE are to protect, restore and enhance the functions and values of wetland eco-systems to attain:

- Habitat for migratory birds and other wetland dependent wildlife including endangered or threatened species and species of concern.
- Protection and improvement of water quality.
- Reduction of flood risk.
- Recharge of groundwater.
- Protection and enhancement of open space and aesthetic quality.
- Carbon sequestration.
- Protection of native flora and fauna.

