



Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Fact Sheet

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment.

What Is ACEP?

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands or protect working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) delivers the largest long-term investment in NRCS conservation programs in decades, delivering over \$34 billion through fiscal year 2031, including more than \$4 billion for ACEP. This increase in funding ensures conservation remains rooted in agriculture, with benefits to producers, communities and natural resources.

ACEP protects the agricultural viability and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting nonagricultural uses which negatively affect agricultural uses and conservation values, protect grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring or conserving eligible grazing land, and protecting, restoring and enhancing wetlands on eligible land.

ACEP has two components:

Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) help private and tribal landowners, land trusts, and other entities such as state and local governments protect croplands and grasslands on working farms and ranches by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land through conservation easements.

Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) help private and tribal landowners protect, restore and enhance wetlands which have been previously degraded due to agricultural uses.

Additionally, through ACEP, USDA offers the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP), a voluntary program through which NRCS enters into agreements with eligible partners to leverage resources to carry out high priority wetland protection, restoration, and enhancement and to improve wildlife habitat.

What Type of Land is Eligible?

Land eligible for **Agricultural Land Easements** includes cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland, and nonindustrial private forest land associated with an agricultural operation. NRCS will prioritize applications that protect agricultural uses and related conservation values of the land and those that maximize the protection of contiguous acres devoted to agricultural use. To enroll land through Agricultural Land Easements, NRCS enters into agreements with eligible entities.

Land eligible for **Wetland Reserve Easements** includes farmed or converted wetlands that have been previously altered for agricultural production that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. NRCS will prioritize applications based on the easement's potential for improving water quality and protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

To enroll land through Wetland Reserve Easements, NRCS enters into purchase agreements with eligible private landowners or American Indian tribes.



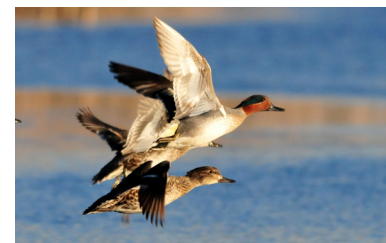
NRCS and the landowner work together to develop and implement a wetland reserve plan to guide the restoration easement process. This plan restores, enhances, and protects the wetland's functions and values.

How Do I Apply?

Contact the NRCS office at your local USDA Service Center to discuss options for your private or Tribal lands. NRCS staff are available to provide one-on-one support with your program application and explain all components of your easement options before you enroll.

More Information

For more information or to find your local USDA Service Center, visit nrcs.usda.gov or scan the QR code.



Guidance documents lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or incorporated into a contract. USDA may not cite, use, or rely on any guidance that is not available through their guidance portal, except to establish historical facts.