

Program to Aid Ag Land Owners Along Missouri River

Nebraska landowners with farm ground affected by 2011 Missouri River flooding may be eligible for wetland restoration assistance from the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) through a five-state project sponsored by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and The Nature Conservancy, said Craig Derickson, state conservationist with NRCS in Lincoln, Neb. Deadline to apply for this assistance is May 4.

Landowners in Richardson, Nemaha and Otoe counties are among those eligible. Landowners with property within 1,000 meters of the Missouri River, may apply to restore wetlands on their land through 30 year or permanent easements. A map of eligible areas is available at www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov.

Nearly \$3 million is available for easements and restoration costs to landowners in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and South Dakota.

In addition to the funding available from USDA and The Nature Conservancy, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Nebraska Environmental Trust will also provide up to \$100,000 for restoration projects in Nebraska through this WREP project. This funding is available per year for the next three years.

WREP is a voluntary program carried out through partnership agreements with state and local governments, non-governmental organizations and Indian tribes. It is a component of the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Landowners participating in WREP retain ownership and access to the land, and may be able to generate income from grazing, haying or recreation approved by NRCS.

Landowners may apply at their local NRCS office.