

Kansas NRCS Seeks Partner Proposals to Protect and Restore Critical Wetlands

Eric B. Banks, State Conservationist for Kansas' U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today that NRCS is accepting project proposals until July 31 to address high-priority wetland protection, restoration, and enhancement activities and improve wildlife habitat on eligible lands throughout Kansas.

NRCS is investing \$17 million nationwide in the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP), a special enrollment option under the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program's Wetland Reserve Easement component. Through WREP, states, nongovernmental organizations, non-profit organizations, and tribes collaborate with USDA through cooperative and partnership agreements. These partners will work with willing tribal and private landowners to enroll eligible land into easements to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their properties.

"NRCS has leveraged partnerships to accomplish a great deal on Kansas' wetlands over the past two decades," Banks said. "This year's funding will help strengthen these partnerships and achieve greater wetland conservation in the state."

Wetland reserve easements help landowners to successfully enhance and protect habitat for wildlife on their lands, reduce impacts from flooding, recharge groundwater, and provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. NRCS' easement programs provide benefits to farmers who enroll in the program, as well as benefits to the local and rural communities where the wetlands exist.

Partners will be required to provide a combination of in-kind and cash contributions of at least 25 percent of the easement, restoration, or management costs. Proposals that go above and beyond required contributions will be given higher consideration. Eligible partners may submit proposals for individual projects, watershed-wide, or larger geographical area projects to their [local NRCS office](#) by close of business on July 31, 2015. More information can be found on the Kansas NRCS Web site: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ks/programs/easements/acep/>.

For more information about NRCS and other technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted or your local NRCS office.