

USDA Seeks Project Proposals from Partner Organizations

USDA is making available up to \$40 million in technical and financial assistance to help eligible conservation partners voluntarily protect, restore and enhance critical wetlands on agricultural lands. Restored wetlands improve water quality downstream and improve wildlife habitat, while also providing flood prevention and recreational benefits to communities.

“These locally-led partnerships are instrumental in achieving greater wetland acreage and maximizing their benefits to farmers, ranchers and the local communities where wetlands exist,” said Craig Derickson, Nebraska state conservationist of USDA’s [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS). “For example, we see this program as important to helping communities respond to natural disasters, such as the flooding in Nebraska. These partnerships can help with addressing croplands that flood frequently. The restored wetlands can provide critical water storage during times of flooding.”

Proposals should be emailed to NRCS at SM.NRCS.WRE@wdc.usda.gov by June 14, 2019.

About the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership

Funding will be provided through the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP), part of the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (ACEP), a Farm Bill conservation program.

Through WREP, states, local units of governments, non-governmental organizations and American Indian tribes collaborate with NRCS through cooperative and partnership agreements. These partners work with landowners who voluntarily enroll eligible land into easements to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their properties.

Wetland reserve easements enable landowners to successfully reduce impacts from flooding, recharge groundwater, enhance and protect wildlife habitat and provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. Partners benefit from WREP by targeting outreach and enrollment priorities supported by NRCS, including places impacted by natural disasters, such as the severe flooding that has impacted Nebraska.

The voluntary nature of NRCS' easement programs enables effective integration of wetland restoration on working landscapes, providing benefits to farmers and ranchers who enroll in the program, as well as benefits to the communities where

the wetlands exist. Easements enable landowners to adopt a variety of conservation practices that improve the function and condition of wetlands.

Partners interested in WREP are encouraged to work with their NRCS state office as part of developing the proposal. Proposals must follow ACEP guidelines for wetland reserve easements.