

You are cordially invited to the March CRP Benefits Webinar.

Dr. Maria Lemke - The Nature Conservancy will be presenting “*Evaluating the Effectiveness of Agricultural Practices in Tile-drained Subwatersheds of the Mackinaw River, Illinois*”. The Webinar will be held Thursday March 14th at 2:00 Eastern time.

To participate go to the link below, enter as a guest and move to the room.

<http://nifa-connect.nifa.usda.gov/water/>

The phone call connection is provided for those of you who **do not have a microphone with their computer.** **If you use this connection please turn off your computer microphone** or you will produce feedback that disrupts the webinar. The call-in number is 888-858-2144 and access code is 9300114

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the 27.1 million acre Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a program that improves water quality, enhances wildlife populations, sequesters carbon, reduces erosion, and provides other environmental benefits. The CRP does this by working with producers and landowners to identify and protect fragile croplands and marginal pasturelands by placing them into conserving covers. FSA’s Economic and Policy Analysis Staff (EPAS) has established a Monitoring, Assessment, and Evaluation project to quantify and document the multiple benefits generated when lands are placed into the CRP, and to identify successful innovative practices.

EPAS, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), The Nature Conservancy and our partners are collaborating to present a series of webinars. The series will highlight the monitoring and assessment activities of FSA and how partnerships both within Federal agencies and through partnerships with

universities and non-governmental organizations scientists are working together to fill critical gaps and develop tools to better inform policy and management decisions. You are cordially invited to the March 2013 webinar, ***Evaluating the Effectiveness of Agricultural Practices in Tile-drained Subwatersheds of the Mackinaw River, Illinois***, which will be presented by, Dr. Maria Lemke , Aquatic Ecologist for The Nature Conservancy in Illinois. The Webinar will be held on March 14, 2013 at 2:00 PM (Eastern Time). Dr. Lemke leads The Nature Conservancy's Mackinaw River Program in Illinois that works with producers to implement and quantify the effectiveness of best management practices and constructed wetlands in the Mackinaw River watershed. In 2012, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), and the City of Bloomington (City) put years of water quality research into action by signing a memorandum to protect the city's supply of drinking water by working with producers to implement and quantify the effectiveness of constructed wetlands and adaptive nutrient management to reduce nitrate export into streams that supply drinking water reservoirs. In addition to EDF and the City, TNC is working with the McLean County Natural Resources Conservation Service, McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District, Farm Service Agency, University of Illinois, and Illinois State University to address such issues as (1) optimum placement of wetlands on the landscape, (2) wetland to watershed area ratio needed for effective tile water retention and nutrient reduction, and (3) how to conduct watershed-scale outreach and implementation.

The monthly webinars are designed to present the results of the projects that identify and quantify the environmental services generated by CRP. The webinars will provide conservationists, decision makers, scientists, and policy analysts with the opportunity to review preliminary results and talk with the scientists conducting the monitoring and assessments. EPAS's goal is to engage in an open dialogue on how to measure benefits from the CRP and to better administer the program.