



Fact Sheet

August 2004

Conservation Reserve Program Wetlands Restoration Initiative

Overview

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Wetlands Restoration Initiative aims to restore up to 250,000 acres of wetlands and playa lakes that are located outside of the 100-year floodplain.

Wetlands are low-lying ecosystems where the water table is always at or near the surface. Playas are shallow, depressional, rechargeable wetlands formed through a combination of wind, wave, and dissolution processes with each wetland existing in its own watershed. Playa lakes are scattered across the western Great Plains and average 17 acres in size. A threat to playas is sedimentation from cultivation of adjacent cropland.

Benefits

This initiative will further the large-scale accomplishments of CRP, which, as of July 2004, had restored 1.8 million wetland and wetland buffer acres nationwide.

Creating an additional 250,000 acres of large wetland complexes will:

- provide vital habitat for many wildlife species, such as upland ducks and sandhill cranes;
- filter runoff;

- recharge groundwater supplies;
- protect drinking water;
- reduce downstream flooding; and
- provide recreational opportunities, such as bird watching and hunting.

Restoring playa lakes will:

- provide habitat for migratory waterfowl during migration and winter. In fact, over 90 percent of the region's over-wintering waterfowl depend on the playas, and over 90 percent of the mid-continent population of sandhill cranes over-winter in the region;
- benefit many other species of birds, animals, and plants.
- recharge the Ogallala aquifer, one of the world's largest aquifers that lies beneath Texas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Colorado; and
- recharge groundwater supplies critical for drinking water, irrigation, and wildlife.

Eligibility

Enrollment is limited to wetlands, including playa lakes, that are beyond the 100-year floodplain. The wetlands acreage must also not be currently eligible for enrollment in either:

- CRP continuous sign-up practice CP23, Wetland Restoration, which targets land

located in the 100-year floodplain; or

- FSA's Farmable Wetlands Program, which protects farmed and previously converted wetlands of less than 40 acres per tract.

In addition, cropland must be suitably located and adaptable to the establishment of wetlands. In addition, the applicant must satisfy the basic eligibility and cropping history criteria for CRP. These requirements are listed in the CRP fact sheet, available on FSA's Web site at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/pubfacts.htm>

To determine individual eligibility for the initiative, landowners should check with their local FSA office.

Allocated Acreage

The acreage for the initiative is allocated to states as follows:

State	Acres
Alabama	700
Arizona	100
Arkansas	2,000
California	1,000
Colorado	1,600
Connecticut	100
Delaware	100
Florida	1,000
Georgia	700
Hawaii	100

Fact Sheet

Conservation Reserve Program

Wetlands Restoration Initiative

Idaho	200
Illinois	4,000
Indiana	700
Iowa	3,000
Kansas	11,000
Kentucky	100
Louisiana	12,000
Maine	900
Maryland	200
Massachusetts	300
Michigan	2,600
Minnesota	36,000
Mississippi	1,500
Missouri	1,400
Montana	1,400
Nebraska	14,000
Nevada	100
New Hampshire	100
New Jersey	200
New Mexico	3,500
New York	4,000
North Carolina	200
North Dakota	65,000
Ohio	1,100
Oklahoma	1,500
Oregon	1,900
Pennsylvania	150
Rhode Island	100
South Carolina	100
South Dakota	33,000
Tennessee	100
Texas	25,000
Utah	200
Vermont	900
Virginia	150
Washington	600
West Virginia	100
Wisconsin	4,700
Wyoming	600
Reserve	10,000
Total	250,000

Approved Conservation Practice

Program participants must apply conservation practice CP23A,

Wetland Restoration Non-Floodplain, on eligible cropland. The purpose of this practice is to restore the functions and values of wetland ecosystems that have been devoted to agricultural use.

Payments

FSA estimates the program will provide \$200 million in payments to participants through 2007. FSA will offer the following types of payments:

- A Wetland Restoration Incentive Payment equal to 25 percent of the cost of restoring the hydrology of the site;
- An Annual Rental Payment; and
- Cost-share Assistance of up to 50 percent of eligible practice installation costs.

Sign-up

Program sign-up at local FSA offices will begin Oct. 1, 2004, and will run on a continuous basis -- meaning eligible land may be enrolled at any time -- until 250,000 acres have been enrolled, or Dec. 31, 2007, whichever comes first.

For More Information

More information on the CRP Wetlands Restoration Initiative is available at local FSA offices and on FSA's Web site at: www.fsa.usda.gov

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.