Natural Resources Conservation Service Report To Papio-Missouri River NRD Board December 10, 2015 Neil Jensen, District Conservationist



USDA announces \$350 million available to help states, private partners protect and restore grasslands, wetlands, and working lands.

NRCS is making \$350 million in financial and technical assistance available to help landowners protect and restore key farmlands, grasslands and wetlands across the nation. The funding is provided through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which was created in the 2014 Farm Bill to protect critical wetlands and encourage landowners to keep lands in farming and ranching.

Agricultural Land Easements

ACEP's agricultural land easements not only protect the long-term viability of the nation's food supply by preventing conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses, they also support environmental quality, wildlife habitat, historic preservation and protection of open spaces. Native American Tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations that have farmland or grassland protection programs are eligible to partner with NRCS to purchase conservation easements.

Wetland Reserve Easements

Wetland reserve easements allow landowners to successfully restore, enhance and protect habitat for wildlife on their lands, reduce damage from flooding, recharge groundwater and provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. Eligible landowners can choose to enroll in a permanent or 30-year easement. Tribal landowners also have the option of enrolling in 30-year contracts.

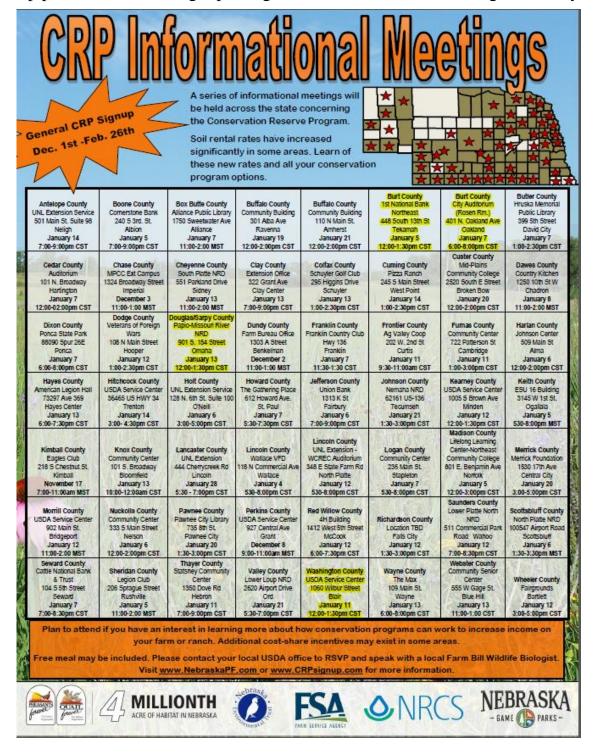
Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership

The 2014 Farm Bill replaced the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program with the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership as an enrollment option under ACEP – WRE. WREP continues to be a voluntary program through which NRCS signs agreements with eligible partners to leverage resources to carry out high priority wetland protection, restoration and enhancement and to improve wildlife habitat. The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture was recently awarded \$1.7 million for their project located in south central Nebraska.

To learn about ACEP and other technical and financial assistance available through NRCS conservation programs, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted or your local USDA Service Center.

GENERAL CRP INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS SCHEDULED

Pheasants Forever along with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Farm Service Agency and NRCS will be hosting 56 landowner meetings around the state to help promote the CRP signup being held from December 1 through February 26.





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