



United States Department of Agriculture

# Farm Bill Program Overview

Randall Dickson, District Conservationist  
USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.*

# Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is a **voluntary program** that helps producers achieve the compatible goals of agricultural production and environmental quality. Producers may receive **financial and technical assistance** to implement conservation practices that address natural resource concern and opportunities to improve:



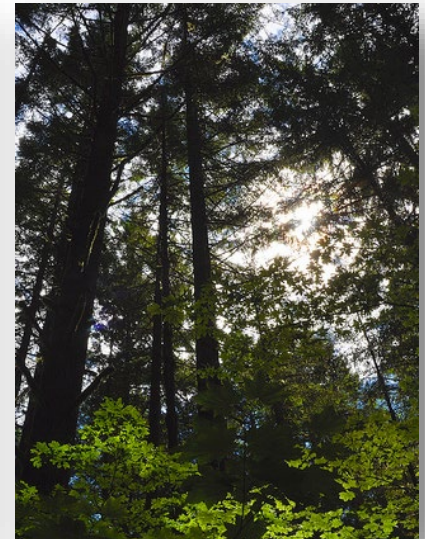
Soil



Water



Air



Other Natural  
Resource Issues

# EQIP Practices:

- Wildlife Habitat
- Livestock Watering Facilities
- Pastureland Improvement
- Manure Management
- Soil Health Practices
- Water Quality Practices
- Forestry Management
- Organic Transition



# EQIP Eligibility

- Agricultural producers and owners of non-industrial private forestland and Tribes are eligible to apply for EQIP.
- Eligible land includes cropland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland and other farm or pasturelands.
- Socially disadvantaged, beginning and limited resource farmers, Indian tribes and veterans are eligible for an increased payment rate.



# EQIP Applicants must:

- Control or own eligible land
- Comply with adjusted gross income limitation (AGI) provisions
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements.
- Develop an NRCS EQIP plan of operations



# Applying for EQIP

- NRCS will help eligible producers **develop a conservation plan**, which will become the basis of the EQIP application.
- EQIP **applications are ranked** based on a number of factors, including the environmental benefits and cost effectiveness of the proposal.



# Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

ACEP provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands (ALE) and wetlands (WRE) and their related benefits. NRCS offers easement programs to landowners who want to maintain or enhance their land in a way beneficial to agriculture and/or the environment.



Agricultural Land Easements



Wetland Reserve Easements

# Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)

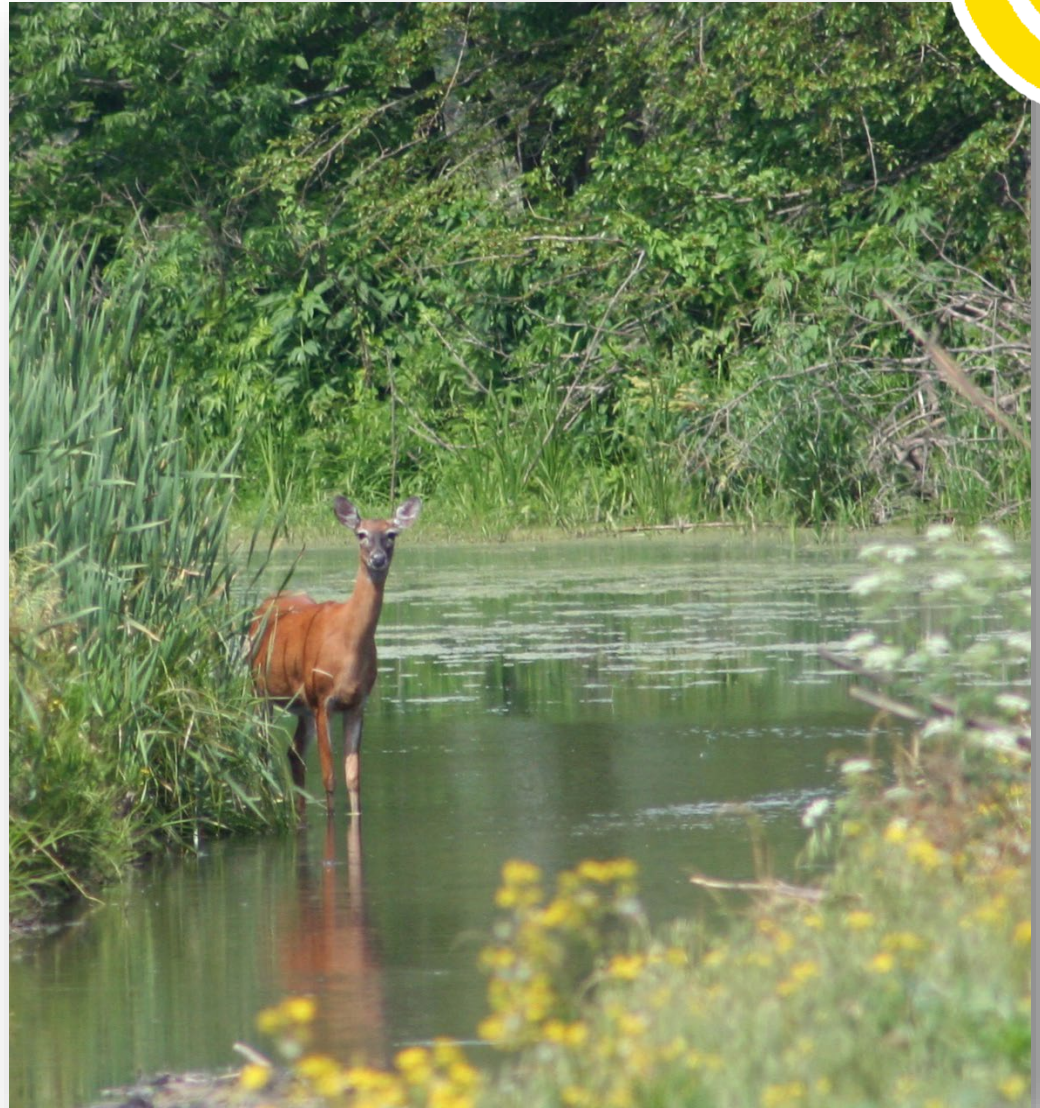
NRCS provides **technical and financial assistance** directly to private landowners and Indian tribes to **restore, protect, and enhance wetlands** through the purchase of a wetland reserve easement.





## WRE Benefits:

- provides habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species
- improves water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals
- reduces flooding
- recharges groundwater
- protects biological diversity
- provides opportunities for educational, scientific and limited recreational activities.



# Enrollment options

- **Permanent Easements** - Conservation easements in perpetuity.
- **30-year Easements** - Expire after 30 years.
- **Term Easements** - Easements that are for the maximum duration allowed under applicable State laws.
- **30-year Contracts** - only available to Indian tribes.



# WRE Eligible Land:

- Farmed or converted wetland that can **be successfully and cost-effectively restored**.
- Each easement is **required to have an agricultural land easement plan** that promotes the long-term viability of the land.
- NRCS **enters into purchase agreements** with eligible private landowners or Indian tribes that include the right for NRCS to develop and implement a wetland reserve restoration easement plan.



# Applying for WRE

Landowners **may apply at any time** at their local USDA Service Center.



# Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

The CTA program provides **voluntary conservation technical assistance** in planning and implementing conservation systems that address natural resource issues. It helps people voluntarily conserve, improve and sustain natural resources.



## CTA helps landowners:

- Develop and apply sustainable agricultural systems
- Maintain and improve private lands and their management
- Implement better land management technologies
- Protect and improve
  - Soil health and quality
  - water quality and quantity
  - wildlife and fish habitat
  - recreational opportunities
  - aesthetic character
- Explore opportunities to diversify agricultural operations



## Who can use CTA:

- farmers
- local units of government
- citizen groups
- recreation groups
- Tribal governments
- professional consultants
- State and Federal agencies
- and others interested in conserving natural resources





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## For more information about NRCS Programs:

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*Helping People Help the Land.*