

Wetland Restoration (CP23)

The purpose of this practice is to restore previously converted wetlands. Restored wetlands improve water quality and wildlife habitat.

► Environmental and Conservation Benefits from Wetlands

These programs not only provide financial incentives to the landowner/operator, but also provide a lot of benefits for the environment. Wetlands help control floods. Every wetland is a tiny flood control reservoir. Without these “reservoirs”, there is nothing to hold the water on the land. The result is devastating flooding like we saw in 1993.

Wetlands help control pollution. They trap excess nutrients and chemical contaminants, and in some cases break them down into harmless substances. Studies at the Leopold Center for the study of sustainable agriculture at Iowa State University showed that a one-acre wetland could effectively purify the nitrate runoff from about 100 acres of cropland. In fact, wetlands are now used to treat sewage, and are just as effective as the “high tech” methods.



Wetlands also reduce siltation of downstream lakes, rivers and oceans. Silt is one of the most serious pollutants we have, and any reduction is a benefit.

Many wetlands are important in re-charging ground water supplies. Water that rushes down a tile or ditch doesn't soak into the ground, but standing water in a wetland can.

Wetlands and grassland buffers around wetlands provide tremendous benefits for wildlife that make their homes near or in wetlands. Many wildlife species cannot live without wetlands. We hear a lot about ducks, and they are some of the most visible wetland creatures. However, hundreds of other species ranging from salamanders to muskrats, also require wetlands to survive.

Wetlands provide countless hours of recreation through hunting, photography and nature study. They display the beauty and diversity of nature; they are wild, open spaces that refresh the soul. Perhaps more importantly, wetlands are simply a natural and vital part of our environment.

► Financial Benefits of Shallow Water Area for Wildlife CP9

Financial Incentives include:

1. 75% cost share reimbursement for restoration of the wetland and surrounding buffer.
2. A 10-15 year annual rental payment

► An Example of How Buffers Pay

Wetland Restoration Program acres not only benefit the environment, they also benefit your pocketbook. For example, assume you decide to enroll 20 acres in Wetland Restoration Program.

If your soil rental rate is \$165/acre at the end of a fifteen year period you will receive from your rental payment \$2,475 per acre or a total of \$49,500.

▶ **Do I Qualify for the Continuous CRP?**

The continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is administered through the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA).

▶ **Do I qualify?**

You qualify for the continuous CRP if your land is:

1. You have cropland that was planted or considered planted to agricultural commodities 4 of 6 years between 1996 and 2001.
2. Land must have hydric soils (soils that are saturated with water all or part of the year).
3. Must cropland must be suitably located and adaptable to the establishment of wetlands within of the 100 year floodplain.
4. Participants must agree to restore the hydrology of the wetland to the maximum extent possible.

▶ **When can I sign-up?**

Offers for the continuous CRP are automatically accepted. If your land qualifies and if you are satisfied with the rental rates you are in the program.

▶ **Where do I sign up?**

You can sign-up at your county FSA office. It is a good idea to call in advance for an appointment to avoid a long wait or a wasted trip. If you want some help determining if you are eligible for the program before talking with FSA, a trip to your county NRCS office or a visit from your Wildlife Specialist would be a good idea.

▶ **Where Do I Get Help in Designing My Shallow Water Area for Wildlife**

Assistance for planning and installing your wetland is available from the USDA NRCS staff or the IDNR Wildlife Bureau Private Lands Program. Contact your local NRCS office or your Wildlife Specialist for assistance. Your Wildlife Specialist can meet with you on your property and design a plan for your project that will design both the wetland restoration as well as the grassland buffer including matching grass and forb species to the planting site, provide site preparation and maintenance information. Your Wildlife Specialist can also provide you with a list of local contractors as well as seed dealers.

▶ **Contact your Wildlife Specialist**

(<http://www.iowadnr.gov/wildlife/privatelands/staff.html>)

▶ **Where Do I Get Iowa grass and forb seed**

When undertaking any grassland restoration project it is always best to utilize Iowa native plant material. These grasses and forbs will be better adapted to our climate and growing conditions than seeds from other regions of the country. There are several excellent sources for purchasing Iowa native grass and forb seeds available for your wetland buffer planting. Your Wildlife Specialist can provide you with a list of local seed dealers.