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**Contact: Jeannine May
(601) 260-0298
jeannine.may@ms.usda.gov**

Landowners Can Apply for Funds to Create, Enhance Wetlands

JACKSON, Feb. 22, 2013 – Private landowners in Mississippi wanting to protect and restore wetland areas on their property can submit applications for financial and technical assistance to USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. Applications are due on March 15, 2013

Through the Wetlands Reserve program, NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to help landowners voluntarily restore and protect wetland ecosystems. Landowners may select either a permanent or 30-year easement, retaining ownership of the land once the easement is in place. To be eligible, land must have hydric soil and cropping history. Landowners enrolling into the program can earn up to \$1,800 per acre, depending on land use.

“The Wetlands Reserve Program is a great conservation tool, providing landowners a way to protect and restore wetland areas while making improvements to their land,” NRCS State Conservationist Homer Wilkes said. “It is a win-win for the environment, the landowner and the community.”

The program is best suited for frequently flooded agriculture lands, where restoration will maximize habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, and improve water quality.

Wetlands provide a tremendous ecological service to the state and country. They slow and store water, lowering the risk of flooding for nearby communities during hurricanes and other severe weather events.

Wetlands are among the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the world. Rare and endangered wildlife, such as the Louisiana black bear, are thriving on WRP easement lands.

“The farmers, ranchers and landowners in Mississippi are not our only citizens who have benefited from the Wetlands Reserve Program,” Wilkes said. “The program has led to cleaner water, aesthetic open spaces and abundant habitat for wildlife. Mississippi will continue to benefit from WRP as more land is set aside for wetland areas.”

Find your nearest [NRCS office](#), Follow NRCS of Mississippi on [Twitter](#).

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USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps America’s farmers and ranchers conserve the Nation’s soil, water, air and other natural resources. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

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