



Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture

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NEWS RELEASE

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Financial Assistance Increased To Purchase Easements For The Wetlands Reserve Program

JACKSON, MS, February 18, 2010 - The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), a conservation program of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was renewed through Title II of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, better known as the Farm Bill. The WRP is a voluntary program that protects, restores and enhances wetlands, while maximizing wildlife benefits. The NRCS manages the program and provides technical and financial support to help landowners who participate in the WRP.

Mississippi has recently completed the review of their monetary geographic rate cap for 2010. The geographic rate cap for Mississippi in 2010 with land located in Bolivar, Coahoma, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Warren, Washington and Yazoo Counties is \$1,700 per acre for cropland and \$1,200 per acre for catfish ponds. All other counties located in Mississippi will have an appraisal. Easement payments are based on the lowest of either the fair market value of the land using an appraisal or area-wide analysis, the Geographic Area Rate Cap, or an offer made by the landowner.

Landowners in Mississippi with qualifying properties are encouraged to consider applying for the 2010 WRP. The WRP is a competitive program using a statewide ranking system to fund the most environmentally beneficial projects.

The application process for the WRP is continuous throughout the year. Funds are allocated annually for the purpose of purchasing easements and restoring wetlands on qualifying lands. All completed applications will be considered and Mississippi will be holding ranking periods throughout the year until funds are depleted. The NRCS is committed to delivering all Farm Bill programs authorized through the 2008 Farm Bill and is eager to consult with all interested parties about the many benefits that the WRP and other programs have to offer. Interested landowners are encouraged to contact their local NRCS field service center to file an application.

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Interested landowners are encouraged to contact the local USDA Service Center/Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office today to apply for Fiscal Year 2010 funding. For additional information on WRP or other conservation programs is available online at: www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov

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