

WHAT IS THE WETLAND RESERVE EASEMENT PROGRAM?

The Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) program provides financial and technical assistance to private landowners interested in the restoration, enhancement and protection of wetlands on their property. WRE is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which pays all costs associated with abstracts, surveys, appraisals, title insurance and recording the deed.

If the application is selected, landowners will be offered an Agreement for the Purchase of a Conservation Easement (APCE) that includes an offer price for the easement. The landowner and NRCS must sign the APCE before NRCS proceeds with incurring costs associated with closing on the easement. The process of closing on the easement may take 18 to 24 months.

Landowners Have Two Easement Options

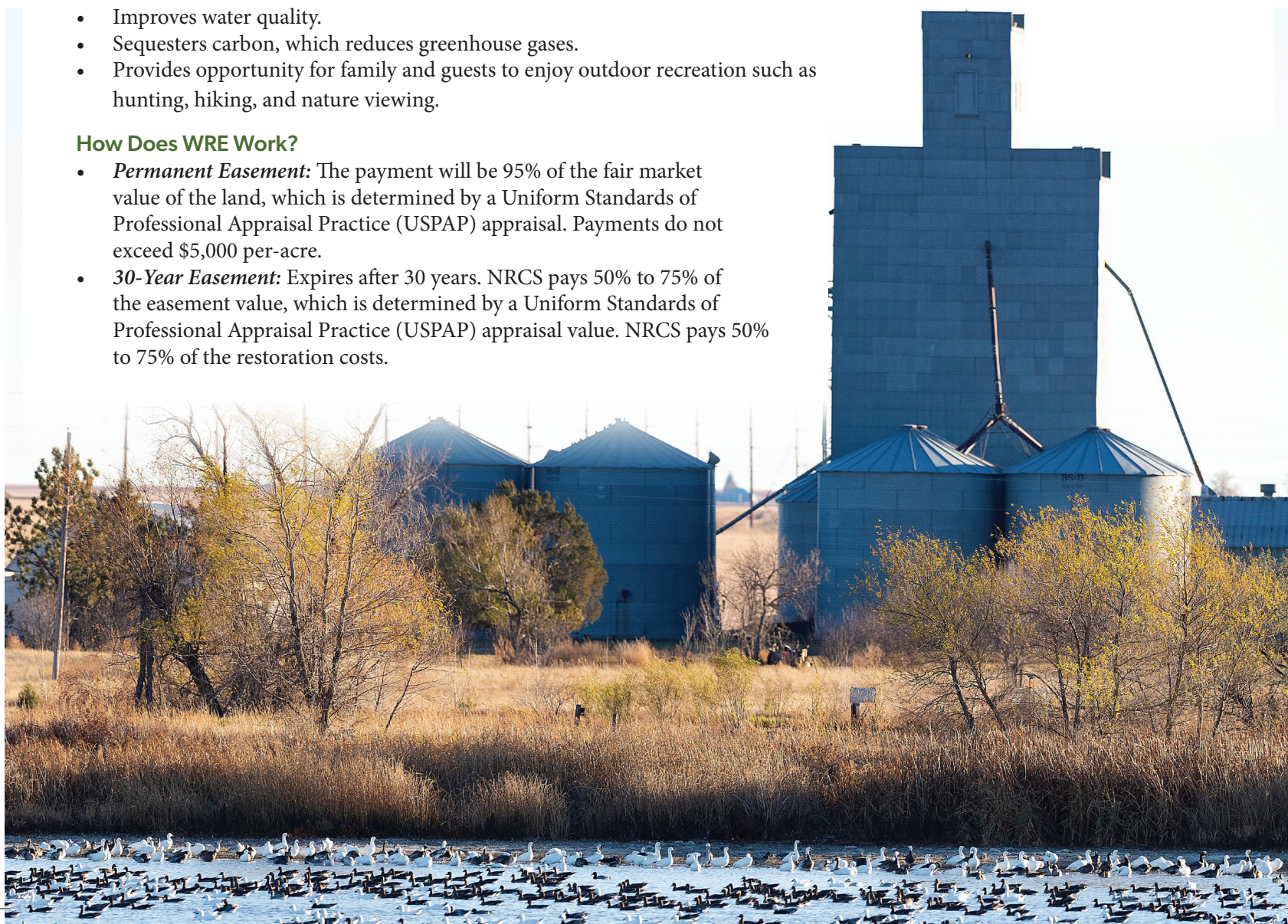
- **Permanent Easement in Perpetuity:** The NRCS pays 100% of the easement value and 100% of the restoration costs.
- **30-Year Easement:** The NRCS pays 50% to 75% of the easement value and 50 to 75% of the restoration costs.

The Benefits of WRE

- Provides income
- Keeps land in the family for future generations to enjoy
- Provides a financial incentive to remove marginal cropland from production
- Preserves wildlife habitat and promotes biodiversity
- Protects and restores wetlands
- Improves water quality.
- Sequesters carbon, which reduces greenhouse gases.
- Provides opportunity for family and guests to enjoy outdoor recreation such as hunting, hiking, and nature viewing.

How Does WRE Work?

- **Permanent Easement:** The payment will be 95% of the fair market value of the land, which is determined by a Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) appraisal. Payments do not exceed \$5,000 per-acre.
- **30-Year Easement:** Expires after 30 years. NRCS pays 50% to 75% of the easement value, which is determined by a Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) appraisal value. NRCS pays 50% to 75% of the restoration costs.



5 Rights of WRE Landowners

**** WRE enrollees MUST sign a Warranty Easement Deed:** This document guarantees the landowner has clear title to the property being encumbered by the easement. It also clearly defines the length of the appurtenant easement, the easement area, landowner reservation of rights, landowner obligations, landowner allowances, the rights of the United State and general provisions. The landowner signature(s) is notarized and the document is typically recorded by the county recorder.

- **Ownership (Title):** The landowner retains ownership of their land and has the right to transfer or sell the property. The easement survives land transfers. The landowner must follow land use requirements and agree to maintain a specific use of their land that is enrolled in WRE.
- **Control of Access:** The land remains in private ownership and the landowner has the right to control public access. The NRCS or its representative must be given access to review and monitor the easement to ensure the terms and conditions of the easement are being met.
- **Recreation:** The landowner has the right to undeveloped recreational uses, including hiking, bird watching, hunting, fishing and the leasing of those rights.
- **Quiet Enjoyment:** The right of the landowner to enjoy the rights reserved on the easement without interference from others.
- **Subsurface Resources:** The right to oil, gas, minerals, etc. Resources underlying the easement area, provided that any drilling or mining activities are located outside the easement.

Defining “Compatible Use”

Aside from the five rights retained, all other activities are restricted except as specifically authorized in a Compatible Use Authorization (CUA). Only activities consistent with the long-term protection and enhancement of the easement area will be authorized. These authorizations will define specifically the activity, method, frequency, timing, intensity and duration of the compatible use and will be reviewed annually.

Some compatible uses could include:

- Timber harvest, in consultation with a professional forester and wildlife manager, if needed to achieve or protect wildlife habitat and wetland functions
- Mowing, haying, burning, or disking to maintain wetlands and/or wildlife habitat
- Spraying to control invasive species and to improve wetland and/or wildlife habitat
- Mowing for access roads or nature trails at predetermined locations

For additional information please contact:

DU Conservation Consultant
Roger Frazier
Sustainable Conservation
Solutions LLC
573.208.8922
duxuptop@icloud.com

DU Conservation Consultant
Brad Pobst
573.887.0781
bradpobstdu@outlook.com

