



News Release

**Natural Resources
Conservation Service**

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NRCS starts signup for ag land, wetland conservation easements

Applications for new Farm Bill program due June 6, 2014

SPOKANE (May 2, 2014) – USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service is now accepting applications for its new Agricultural Conservation Easements Program. Funding will be available in 2014 for the purchase of conservation easements on eligible agricultural lands and wetlands in Washington.

“This is an exciting new opportunity for even more people to get involved in conserving natural resources,” said Washington state conservationist Roylene Rides At The Door. “We encourage Indian tribes, state and local governments, non-governmental organizations and private landowners to contact their local NRCS office to find out how to apply.”

The ACEP, created through the 2014 Farm Bill, funds easements for agricultural lands and wetland reserves.

Approved agricultural easements would prevent productive working lands from being converted to non-agricultural uses and maximize protection of land devoted to food production. Cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland are eligible. Nonindustrial private forestland may be eligible as part of an agricultural land application.

Wetland reserve easements would restore and enhance wetlands and improve habitat. Eligible lands include farmed or converted wetlands that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored.

Applications are currently being accepted for wetlands reserve easements and will be rated according to the easement's potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds, fish and other wildlife.

Applications must be submitted to Washington NRCS by June 6, 2014.

Program and application information will soon be available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wa/programs/farmbill/>. Applications are also available at local [USDA Service Center](#) and at www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted. Applications will be evaluated and 2014 funding decisions will be made by July 31, 2014.

Applications for agricultural land easements are being accepted from eligible partner entities that have pending offers with landowners to purchase conservation easements. Application packages for agricultural land easements must be submitted to the NRCS state office in Spokane by June 6, 2014.

Applications will be evaluated and 2014 funding decisions will be made by July 31, 2014. Application package information and forms will soon be available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wa/programs/farmbill/>.

The ACEP combines NRCS' former Farm and Ranch Lands Protection, Grassland Reserve and Wetlands Reserve programs.

Learn more about ACEP and other Farm Bill programs at www.nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill.

To get started with NRCS, visit your local [USDA Service Center](#) or www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted. Learn more about the Farm Bill at www.nrcs.usda.gov/FarmBill.

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