

W R P

Wetland Reserve Program

Why Do We Need To Restore and Protect Wetlands?

Wetlands are vital and dynamic ecosystems. Wetlands--

- ✓ improve water quality and filter sediment
wetlands have a cleansing effect on flowing water and remove nutrients, pesticides and minerals
- ✓ provide lush habitat for wildlife
1/3 of all bird species relies on wetland areas for survival
- ✓ reduce flooding
water is stored temporarily, allowing it to escape into the soil or evaporate
- ✓ improve water quality
wetlands act as reservoirs for rain-water and runoff, therefore protecting nearby streams or lakes from harmful pollutants

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers both technical and financial assistance in the protection, restoration and enhancement of wetlands. Since 1996, approximately 10,000 acres of restorable wetlands and adjacent upland in South Carolina have been enrolled in WRP. The program offers easement payments to landowners as well as cost-sharing for restoration. If you would like more information on applying for this program, contact your local USDA Service Center, or call (803)253-3894.



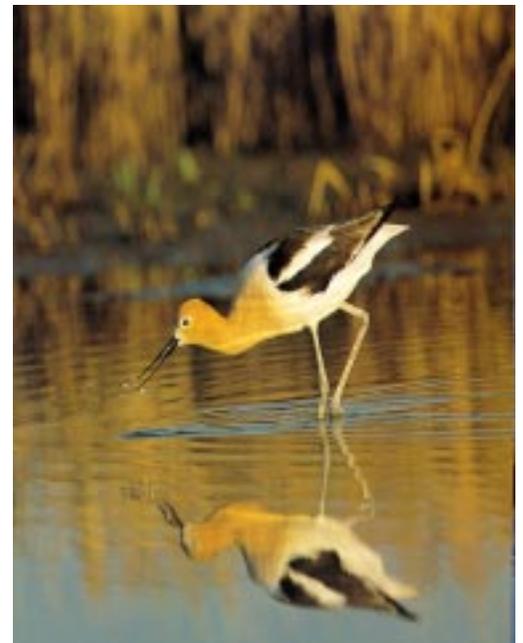
Approximately 4 million acres of natural wetlands exist in South Carolina.

Reversing the Damage

Because wetlands are so biologically rich, they provide an ideal habitat for hundreds of animal species. The United States, as well as South Carolina, has adopted a policy of 'no-net loss' on wetlands acres in an effort to halt the diking, draining, and filling that eliminated approximately 1/3 of the wetland acreage in South Carolina.

WRP in South Carolina

In South Carolina, approximately \$7 million dollars has been received since FY 96, enrolling 80 sites into the program. Many of the WRP projects in the state have been specifically designed to provide educational opportunities for South Carolina's children. Through partnerships with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (PRT), and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), NRCS has been able to create large outdoor educational classrooms to introduce both children and adults to the wonders of wetlands.



Wetlands provide many benefits including food and cover for fish and wildlife, water purification, flood protection, erosion control, food and timber products, and opportunities for recreation and enjoyment.

Restoring
South
Carolina's
Wetlands



