

# NRCS NEWS RELEASE

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Premier Wetland Restoration Easement Program Signup Begins June 26**

*Partnership of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Board of Water and Soil Resources Offers Competitive Rates for Restoring Previously Drained Wetlands*

St. Paul -- The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) announced today the signup period for a state-federal wetland restoration program that will enhance wildlife habitat, improve water quality and reduce potential flood damage in targeted areas.

“Record commodity prices and land values might seem to make wetland restorations a tough sell for landowners, but many landowners have already expressed interest in restoring previously drained wetlands, and the competitive payment rates that are available through this partnership make this an attractive option for Minnesota farmers,” said William Hunt, NRCS, State Conservationist.

The partnership combines the state’s Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve conservation easement program with the USDA Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Combining these two easement programs allows state funds to leverage federal funds for conservation that are available through the recently enacted 2008 Federal Farm Bill.

### **Details of the RIM-WRP Partnership:**

- To leverage federal funds that are available until the end of the federal fiscal year, the RIM-WRP signup period starts June 26, 2008, and the deadline to enroll is July 18, 2008.
- Interested landowners should contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff at their local USDA Service Center.
- Eligibility is statewide, but priority is given to the prairie pothole region of Minnesota. In addition, some state funds are targeted to specific areas where wetland restorations will provide much-needed flood damage reduction and other benefits.
- Competitive payment rates have been established for this partnership using township estimated market value averages. Please contact your local SWCD or NRCS field office to determine your payment rate per acre by township.

With the mission of “Helping People Help the Land,” the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides products and services that enable people to be good stewards of the

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