

# Green Infrastructure/Biodiversity Supporting Programs



*Prepared for*

## Biodiversity Initiative and Livable Delaware Green Infrastructure Subcommittee



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# DRAFT

## PREFACE

**Green Infrastructure** is Delaware's natural life support system - a strategically planned and managed network of natural areas, parks, conservation areas, and working lands all with conservation value. These green infrastructure components support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources, agricultural enterprises and contribute to the health and quality of life for Delaware's communities and people.

State, federal, and non-profit organization incentive programs can have a profound effect on land use and management decisions on public and private lands. Incentive-based and cost-share programs can guide landowners to institute management practices on their agricultural lands, wetlands, and forests that contribute to biological diversity conservation. These types of programs are particularly important in states like Delaware where a large portion of the land base is in private ownership.

This document has been developed to as a starting point for identifying those programs that are available for promoting the protection and restoration of Delaware's natural resources and the preservation of working lands, all of which are vital components to a "*Livable Delaware*."

***Please note the following eligibility requirement for receiving USDA farm program benefits:***

**Swampbuster Provision.** The swampbuster provision of the Federal Food Security Act of 1985 is aimed at discouraging the conversion of wetlands for agricultural purposes. Any conversion of wetlands to cropland use could cause an individual to be ineligible for certain U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program benefits. The swampbuster provision does not apply if wetlands were converted before December 23, 1985 and a commodity crop (annually tilled crop) was planted at least once prior to that date, or if the Natural Resources Conservation Service of USDA has determined that the conversion has minimal effect on wetland uses.

# Table of Contents

## Green Infrastructure/Biodiversity Supporting Programs

▪ Agriculture Lands Preservation Program .....	1
▪ Agriculture Tax Incentives- Farmland Assessment Act .....	1
▪ Conservation Cost Share Program .....	2
▪ Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program .....	1
▪ Conservation Reserve Program .....	2
▪ Delaware Nature Society .....	2
▪ Delaware Nutrient Management Program .....	2
▪ Delaware Wildlands .....	2
▪ Ducks Unlimited Chesapeake Bay Initiative .....	3
▪ Ducks Unlimited Delaware Bay Initiative .....	3
▪ Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) .....	3
▪ Environmental Quality Incentives Program .....	4
▪ Farmland Protection Program (FPP) .....	4
▪ Flood Risk Reduction Program (FRR) .....	4
▪ Forest Legacy .....	4
▪ Forest Management Tax Incentives – Commercial Forest Plantation Act .....	5
▪ Forestry Incentives Program (FIP) .....	5
▪ Forestry Stewardship Program .....	5
▪ Land and Historic Resources Protection Incentives Act (Tax Credit) .....	5
▪ Land and Water Conservation Fund .....	6
▪ National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program .....	6
▪ Natural Areas Program .....	6
▪ North American Wetlands Conservation Act .....	7
▪ Open Space Program .....	7
▪ Parkland Tax Incentives .....	7
▪ Partners for Wildlife .....	8
▪ Purchase of Development Rights .....	8
▪ Resource Conservation & Development Program (RC&D) .....	8
▪ Source Water Protection Funds .....	9
▪ State Wildlife Grants .....	9
▪ Stewardship Incentives Program .....	9
▪ Tax Ditch Restoration .....	9
▪ The Nature Conservancy .....	9
▪ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Restoration Program .....	9
▪ Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL-566) .....	10
▪ Watershed Surveys and Planning .....	10
▪ Wetlands Reserve Program .....	11
▪ Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program .....	11
▪ Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program .....	11

## Green Infrastructure/Biodiversity Supporting Programs

- **Agriculture Lands Preservation Program**

*Contact: Delaware Department of Agriculture*

The Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Program was formed with the adoption of House Bill 200 in July, 1991. It is the only official program that protects land for agricultural purposes. There are no such programs at the local level. Also, there are very few land use controls at the state or local levels that effectively preserve, or attempt to preserve agricultural land - they attempt to “steer” or slow growth at best.

Participation in the program is *voluntary* and has two components. First, landowners join the program by creating an Agricultural Preservation District. An Agricultural Preservation District contains at least 200 contiguous acres which are devoted to agricultural and related uses. Any lands less than 200 usable (and contiguous) acres within three miles of an established district can be enrolled into the program as a District Expansion.

Landowners who place their lands into Agricultural Preservation Districts agree to not develop their lands for at least 10 years, devoting the land only to agriculture and related uses. In return, the owners receive tax benefits, right-to-farm protection, and an opportunity to sell a preservation easement to the state which keeps the land free from development *permanently*.

- **Agriculture Tax Incentives- Farmland Assessment Act**

*Contact: Delaware Department of Agriculture*

Under the Farmland Assessment Act, owners of land actively devoted to agriculture, horticulture, or forestry may apply to have their land valued for property tax purposes according to the land’s value for that use, rather than according to the land’s most profitable use. Properties eligible for the tax break must be over 10 acres and must produce sales of agricultural, horticultural, or forestry products and/or agricultural program payments equal to at least \$1,000 per year.

- **Conservation Easements**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation*

DNREC and other land conservation agencies use conservation easements to protect lands that provide important habitat. Under a conservation easement, a landowner voluntarily places permanent restrictions on the future use of the land. Terms of the conservation easement are tailored to the piece of land and circumstance. The conservation agency that holds the easement enforces the restrictions.

- **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

*Contact: DNREC, Divis. of Soil & Water Conservation; Conservation Districts*

Established by the 1996 Farm Bill, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) allows states to leverage CRP funds by establishing a CREP in their state. By providing a state contribution to the program, states can use CREP to target a specific geographic area, such as a watershed or river, or specific resource types, such as wetlands or streams that provide habitat for endangered species. CREPs can give states the flexibility to offer landowners longer easement terms.

- **Conservation Cost Share Program**

*Contact: Conservation Districts*

The Conservation Cost Share Program is a state-funded program administered by the local Conservation Districts. Under this program, landowners and producers are eligible to receive up to 75 percent of the cost of installing qualifying Best Management Practices to prevent nonpoint source pollution.

- **Conservation Reserve Program**

*Contact: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Districts*

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is administered by the Farm Services Agency. Under CRP, agricultural landowners can apply to enroll their highly erodible and environmentally sensitive lands in the program. In return, landowners enter into 10 to 15-year contracts with USDA, under which they agree to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filterstrips, or riparian buffers. Landowners participating in CRP can receive up to 50 percent of the costs of establishing the approved practices. Landowners may also be reimbursed for up to 25 percent of the cost of restoring wetlands.

- **Delaware Nature Society**

*Contact: Delaware Nature Society, Hockessin, Delaware*

The Delaware Nature Society manages 500 acres in Nature Society-owned preserves and has protected another 275 acres through conservation easements. Through the Nature Society's leadership of the Preservation Coalition, over 100,000 acres of ecologically significant open space and agricultural land have been permanently preserved throughout the state. DNS offers education and other programs relating to backyard habitat, land preservation and forest restoration.

- **Delaware Nutrient Management Program**

*Contact: Nutrient Management Program; Conservation Districts*

The Nutrient Management Program is administered by the Nutrient Management Staff. Cost-share funds are available for the development of nutrient management plans and nutrient relocation of manure from environmentally sensitive areas.

- **Delaware Wildlands**

*Contact: Delaware Wildlands, Odessa, DE*

This is a land protection agency that acquires and holds unique and rare habitats for wildlife and biodiversity. It operates similar to TNC with a more limited budget.

- **Ducks Unlimited Chesapeake Bay Initiative**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Fish and Wildlife*

This is similar to the Delaware Bay Initiative, but focuses on private lands within the Chesapeake drainage. This initiative is funded in part by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and Farm Bill programs. Several projects have already been completed in Delaware.

- **Ducks Unlimited Delaware Bay Initiative**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Fish and Wildlife*

A partnership between Ducks Unlimited (DU) and the states of New Jersey and Delaware has been signed to provide the basis for efforts to restore some of the most important water bird habitats in the Delaware Bay and Estuary.

The Delaware Bay watershed enhancement program will initially concentrate on habitat restoration and enhancement efforts in the coastal marshes along the 50 miles of Bay coastline. The primary goal of DU Delaware Bay watershed habitat enhancement program is to identify and implement conservation efforts designed to improve water quality and to restore and enhance key waterfowl migration and wintering habitats in the Delaware Bay watershed.

The program will initially focus on the pressing need for habitat restoration and enhancement on lands in public ownership by fostering partnerships with agencies and individuals. By clustering restorations, habitat complexes of wetlands, grasslands, and forest that provide food, cover, and travel corridors for local and migratory wildlife will be created. The long-term goal of the Initiative is the restoration or enhancement of 15,000 acres of habitat in Delaware and New Jersey.

- **Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)**

*Contact: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Districts*

The purpose of the Emergency Watershed Protection program is to undertake emergency measures, including the purchase of flood plain easements, for runoff retardation and soil erosion prevention to safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and the products of erosion on any watershed whenever fire, flood or any other natural occurrence is causing or has caused a sudden impairment of the watershed.

It is not necessary for a national emergency to be declared for an area to be eligible for assistance. Program objective is to assist sponsors and individuals in implementing emergency measures to relieve imminent hazards to life and property created by a natural disaster. Activities include providing financial and technical assistance to remove debris from streams, protect destabilized streambanks, establish cover on critically eroding lands, repairing conservation

practices, and the purchase of flood plain easements. The program is designed for installation of recovery measures.

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**

*Contact: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Districts*

In each state, priority areas are defined (in cooperation with a state-level process that involves a wide variety of federal and state partners, including local conservation districts) to address specific watersheds or regions, or to address specific environmental issues, such as soil erosion, water quality, wildlife habitat, and wetlands. Under the program, landowners enter into 5 to 10-year contracts with USDA and in return receive incentive payments up to 75 percent cost-sharing for conservation practices, such as the installation of grassed waterways, filter strips, or manure management facilities. The program will fund land management practices such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, irrigation water management, and wildlife habitat management.

- **Farmland Protection Program (FPP)**

*Contact: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Districts*

The Farmland Protection Program provides funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farmland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA joins with State, tribal, or local governments to acquire conservation easements or other interests from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value. To qualify, farmland must: be part of a pending offer from a State, tribe, or local farmland protection program; be privately owned; have a conservation plan; be large enough to sustain agricultural production; be accessible to markets for what the land produces; have adequate infrastructure and agricultural support services; and have surrounding parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production. Depending on funding availability, proposals must be submitted by the government entities to the appropriate NRCS State Office during the application window.

- **Flood Risk Reduction Program (FRR)**

*Contact: USDA, Farm Service Agency*

The Flood Risk Reduction Program was established to allow farmers who voluntarily enter into contracts to receive payments on lands with high flood potential. In return, participants agree to forego certain USDA program benefits. These contract payments provide incentives to move farming operations from frequently flooded land.

- **Forest Legacy**

*Contact: Delaware Department of Agriculture, Forest Service*

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) was authorized under the 1995 Farm Bill (PL 101-624) to conserve critically important forested lands threatened by conversion to other uses. The FLP maintains healthy sustainable forests by protecting a viable forestland base to ensure economic, environmental, and social benefits.

States designate Forest Legacy areas based on various criteria and Delaware has four Legacy areas: White Clay Creek, Blackbird/Blackiston, Redden/Ellendale, and Cypress Swamp. Legacy funds are available to either purchase lands or conservation easements on lands within these four areas and the state must provide at least 25 percent of the purchase price through either nonfederal funds or donations. Landowner participation is voluntary. All land and easements purchased with Legacy funds will be held by the state; the Delaware Forest Service (a section within the Department of Agriculture) is the lead agency for the Forest Legacy program. Legacy projects must be approved by Delaware's Forest Stewardship Committee prior to submission to the U.S. Forest Service for funding consideration. Interested landowners should contact the Delaware Forest Service for more information.

▪ **Forest Management Tax Incentives - Commercial Forest Plantation Act**

*Contact: Delaware Department of Agriculture, Forest Service*

Under Delaware's Commercial Forest Plantation Act, administered by the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) Forest Service, land defined as a commercial forest plantation is entitled to a 30-year exemption from county property taxes. In order to qualify for this exemption, land must be at least 10 acres and carry sufficient forest growth as to give reasonable assurance that a stand of merchantable timber will develop. Nurseries, orchards or forests planted for ornamental purposes are not eligible for enrollment in the program.

▪ **Forestry Incentives Program (FIP)**

*Contact: Delaware Department of Agriculture, Forest Service*

The Forestry Incentives Program (FIP) supports good forest management practices on privately owned, non-industrial forest lands nationwide. FIP is designed to benefit the environment while meeting future demands for wood products. Eligible practices are tree planting, timber stand improvement, site preparation for natural regeneration, and other related activities. FIP is available in counties designated by a Forest Service survey of eligible private timber acreage.

▪ **Forestry Stewardship Program**

*Contact: Delaware Department of Agriculture, Forest Service*

Through the Forestry Stewardship Program, funded by the USDA Forest Service, the DDA Forest Service provides technical assistance to landowners voluntarily seeking to enhance wildlife habitat, establish windbreaks, enhance recreational opportunities, protect soil and water quality, increase wood production, and fulfill other multiple use objectives.

▪ **Land and Historic Resources Protection Incentives Act (Tax Credit)**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation*

The Act provides a state income tax credit for 40 percent of fair market value of permanent gifts of land or interests in land to public agencies or qualified private non-profit charitable organizations, "for the purpose of open space, natural

resource, and/or biodiversity conservation or historic preservation.” In order to be eligible for the tax credit, lands must meet the requirements of the Delaware Land Protection Act (See Ch. 5: Enactment of the Land Protection Act), consist of habitat for rare biological and natural features (based on information provided by the Delaware Natural Heritage Program, or DNHP), or protect Delaware’s important historic resources. The maximum tax credit that may be declared by a taxpayer in a year is \$50,000. The total program cost is capped at \$1 million per year over ten years.

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation*

This Department of Interior program uses revenues from offshore oil and gas receipts for the purchase of land and water to support the creation of national, state and community parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and open spaces to guarantee outdoor recreation opportunities and a clean environment. Stateside funding from the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) may be used for both acquisition and development of outdoor recreation facilities. The grant program requires a fifty-percent match.

- **National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Fish and Wildlife*

Through the Department of the Interior, yearly matching grants are made available to coastal states and U.S. territories for projects involving the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of coastal wetlands. Projects must be administered for long-term conservation benefits to wildlife and habitat. All National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants are awarded through a competitive process. Funding for the program is generated from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels. These taxes are deposited into the Sport Fish Restoration Account of the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund (commonly called Wallop-Breaux after its Congressional sponsors).

- **Natural Areas Program**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation*

In February 1978, the State of Delaware enacted the Natural Areas Preservation System Act. This legislation and the subsequent regulations provide the state, through the Office of Nature Preserves in the Division of Parks and Recreation, the ability to dedicate public and private nature preserves, to identify and maintain a statewide Natural Areas Inventory, and to establish a Natural Areas Advisory Council to review and make recommendations to the Department Secretary regarding the identification, protection, and acquisition of natural areas throughout the state. The definition of a natural area in the State of Delaware enabling legislation (Natural Areas Preservation System, 7 *Del. Code*, Ch. 73) is an area “of land or water, or both land and water, whether in public or private ownership, which either retains or has re-established its natural character (although it need not be undisturbed), or has unusual flora or fauna, or has biotic, geological, scenic or archaeological features of scientific or educational value.” Natural character refers to the native plant and animal species and associations

that occupied Delaware under the influence of Native North Americans at the time of European occupation. The following are products of the Natural Areas Program.

- **North American Wetlands Conservation Act**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Fish and Wildlife*

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) was signed in 1989 to provide funds to support the NAWMP. It provides approximately 70 million dollars annually for continental migratory bird habitat protection, restoration and enhancement. Over the last seven years, Delaware has received over \$3,000,000 to protect and enhance over 5000 acres of habitat in the State.

**Standard Grants**—Provides up to \$1,000,000 per project to protect, restore and/or enhance wetlands and associated uplands for waterfowl and other wetland dependent migratory birds and wildlife. Four grants have been received in Delaware.

**Small Grants**—Provides up to \$50,000 per project for similar work covered by standard grants. Delaware has received one grant for the maximum allowed.

- **Open Space Program**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation*

In 1990, the General Assembly expanded the ability of the Division of Parks and Recreation to acquire land through the passage of the Land Protection Act, which created the Open Space Program. Under this program, 20 state resource areas (SRAs) were created, comprising 250,000 acres, including state, federal, local, and private conservation lands, and in holdings and potential additions to these areas. Part of the mission of the Open Space Program is to protect lands within these SRAs through purchase, donation, or conservation easement. The nine member Open Space Council prioritizes and approves acquisition of lands with open-space funding. While the Division of Parks and Recreation administer this program, lands purchased under the program are purchased for the Division of Parks and Recreation, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Division of Forestry, and the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.

The Open Space Program receives \$3 million annually from the state's real estate transfer tax until the principal of the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund reaches \$60 million in approximately 2003. The Open Space Program is expected to receive an additional \$15 million from the Bond Bill for fiscal year 2001.

- **Parkland Tax Incentives**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation*

Parkland owned by a non-profit organization is exempt from taxation under state law. This exemption is conditional on the property's being used for recreational

purposes and its being open, without charge, to the public or the members of the organization or the local community.

▪ **Partners for Wildlife**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Fish and Wildlife*

Partners for Wildlife offers technical and cost-share assistance to landowners that wish to restore wildlife habitat, including degraded or converted wetlands. The assistance provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can range from giving informal advice on the design and location of a potential restoration project, to designing a restoration project and funding up to 50 percent of the implementation cost under a formal cooperative agreement with the landowner. Projects may include, but are not limited to restoring or enhancing wetland habitats, re-vegetating with native plants, or fencing riparian areas to exclude livestock.

The program focuses on the re-establishment of original natural communities. Projects given preference are those that will (1) contribute to the survival of endangered, threatened or candidate species or migratory birds of management concern; (2) benefit important spawning grounds of anadromous fish; (3) contribute to achieving the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; (4) be located near to existing habitat, (by proximity encouraging re-colonization by native plants and animals and reducing habitat fragmentation); (5) contribute to the restoration of globally or nationally imperiled natural communities; (6) result in a self-sustaining system that is not dependent on artificial structures; or (5) use native self-propagating species.

▪ **Purchase of Development Rights**

*Contact: Delaware Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Lands Preservation Program*

The intent of Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) is to preserve farmland. A PDR program pays farmers in exchange for their right to develop farmland. Purchasing development rights reduces land values, thus property taxes and inheritance taxes are also lowered. The purchase of farmland development rights is the most effective but most costly method of farmland preservation.

▪ **Resource Conservation & Development Program (RC&D)**

*Contact: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Districts*

The purpose of the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program is to accelerate the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, improve the general level of economic activity, and to enhance the environment and standard of living in authorized RC&D areas. It improves the capability of State, tribal and local units of government and local nonprofit organizations in rural areas to plan, develop and carry out programs for resource conservation and development. The program also establishes or improves coordination systems in rural areas. Current program objectives focus on improvement of quality of life achieved through natural resources conservation and community development which leads to sustainable communities, prudent use

(development), and the management and conservation of natural resources. Authorized RC&D areas are locally sponsored areas designated by the Secretary of Agriculture for RC&D technical and financial assistance program funds. NRCS can provide grants for land conservation, water management, community development, and environmental needs in authorized RC&D areas.

- **Source Water Protection Funds**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Water Resources*

Under the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), states may designate a portion of the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to protect both surface and underground sources of drinking water as part of a state run Source Water Assessment and Protection Program (SWAPP). Delaware has elected to designate a portion of the DWSRF to assist public water suppliers in acquiring land or conservation easements in an effort to protect drinking water sources.

- **State Wildlife Grants**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Fish and Wildlife*

Delaware will receive approximately \$776,000 to conduct planning, research and habitat conservation. Individuals, private conservation agencies and state government agencies can receive financial assistance to conduct this work.

- **Stewardship Incentives Program**

*Contact: Delaware Department of Agriculture, Forest Service*

The Stewardship Incentive Program provides technical and financial assistance to encourage non-industrial private forest landowners to keep their lands and natural resources productive and healthy. Qualifying land includes rural lands with existing tree cover or land suitable for growing trees and which is owned by a private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian tribe, or other legal private entity. Eligible landowners must have an approved Forest Stewardship Plan and own 1,000 or fewer acres of qualifying land. Authorizations may be obtained for exceptions of up to 5,000 acres.

- **Tax Ditch Restoration**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Soil and Water Conservation*

Clean Water Act Section 106 provides funds allocated by the U.S. EPA for restoration work.

- **The Nature Conservancy**

*Contact: TNC, Wilmington, DE*

TNC provides funds to protect sensitive habitats for biodiversity. As a private agency, it can often act under limited time constraints to take advantage of changing opportunities.

- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Restoration Program**

*Contact: Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia or Baltimore Districts*

Section 206 of the Resource Development Act of 1986 provides authority for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers investigate, study, modify, and construct projects for aquatic ecosystem restoration. There is no connection to a previous Federal project. The sponsor must demonstrate that the project is cost effective and contributes to an approved environment that is in the general public interest. These projects are limited to a Federal cost of \$5 million per project.

Section 1135(b) of the Water Resource Development Act of 1986 provides authority for the Corps to investigate, study, modify, and construct project modifications for improvement of the environment. This authority is applicable where degradation is attributable to water resource projects previously constructed, funded, or operated by the Corps. Project modifications are limited to a Federal cost of \$5 million per project. It must be established that the restoration would result in improvements to the environment, which are significant, and in the general public interest.

▪ **Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL-566)**

*Contact: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Districts*  
Public Law 83-566 authorizes NRCS to provide technical and financial assistance to local organizations for planning and implementing small watershed projects. PL-566 projects provide flood prevention, watershed protection, and both agricultural and nonagricultural water management for water quality improvement. Projects reduce damage from erosion, floodwater, and sediment; improve water quality problems; improve wildlife habitat; and provide safety for residents.

▪ **Watershed Surveys and Planning**

*Contact: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Districts*  
The Watershed and Flood Prevention Act, P.L. 83-566, August 4, 1954, (16 U.S.C. 1001-1008) authorized this program. Prior to fiscal year 1996, small watershed planning activities and the cooperative river basin surveys and investigations authorized by Section 6 of the Act were operated as separate programs. The 1996 appropriations act combined the activities into a single program entitled the Watershed Surveys and Planning program. Activities under both programs are continuing under this authority.

The purpose of the program is to assist Federal, State, and local agencies and tribal governments to protect watersheds from damage caused by erosion, floodwater, and sediment and to conserve and develop water and land resources. Resource concerns addressed by the program include water quality, opportunities for water conservation, wetland and water storage capacity, agricultural drought problems, rural development, municipal and industrial water needs, upstream flood damages, and water needs for fish, wildlife, and forest-based industries.

Types of surveys and plans include watershed plans, river basin surveys and studies, flood hazard analyses, and flood plain management assistance. The

focus of these plans is to identify solutions that use land treatment and nonstructural measures to solve resource problems.

▪ **Wetlands Reserve Program**

*Contact: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Districts*

The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, authorizes the direct purchase of permanent easements from landowners by the restoration of prior-converted croplands. Other eligible lands include buffer and riparian areas, natural wetlands, and wetlands restored under the CRP or other federal or state programs. The objectives of the WRP are to restore wetland hydrology and vegetation to its native state and to protect wetland functions and values. The program is a cooperative venture, with implementation responsibilities shared among the eligible landowners, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, Conservation District, Extension Service, state agencies, and Environmental Protection Agency. The WRP provides an opportunity for farmers to be compensated for marginally productive cropland as well as federally regulated wetlands, and buffer areas. This program holds significant promise for the acquisition of degraded, restorable, or natural wetlands associated with agricultural development.

Participating landowners can establish conservation easements of either permanent or 30-year duration, or can enter into restoration cost-share agreements where no easement is involved. In exchange for establishing a permanent easement, the landowner receives payment up to the agricultural value of the land and 100 percent of the restoration costs for restoring the wetlands. The 30-year easement payment is 75 percent of what would be provided for a permanent easement on the same site and 75 percent of the restoration cost. The voluntary agreements are for a minimum 10-year duration and provide for 75 percent of the cost of restoring the involved wetlands. Easements and restoration cost-share agreements establish wetland protection and restoration as the primary land use for the duration of the easement or agreement. In all instances, landowners continue to control access to their land.

▪ **Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program**

*Contact: DNREC, Division of Fish and Wildlife; Conservation Districts*

The Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program makes approximately \$500,000 available for wildlife surveys, information and education programs, private land incentives, and habitat management on public lands.

▪ **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program**

*Contact: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service*

Under the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), NRCS provides landowners with up to 75 percent costshare funds to develop habitat for upland and wetland wildlife, endangered species, fisheries, and other wildlife. Landowners work with NRCS to develop a 5 to 10-year wildlife habitat development plan in consultation with the local conservation district. The plan

describes the landowner's goals for improving wildlife habitat, includes a list of practices and a schedule for installing them, and details the steps necessary to maintain the habitat for the life of the agreement. The plan may or may not be part of a larger conservation plan that addresses other resource needs, such as water quality and soil erosion.