

466.5 Conservation reserve enhancement program.

1. A conservation reserve enhancement program is established within the department of agriculture and land stewardship to restore or construct wetlands for the purposes of intercepting tile line runoff, reducing nutrient loss, improving water quality, and enhancing agricultural production practices. The program shall be directed primarily, but not exclusively, toward the tile-drained areas of the state.

2. The department of agriculture and land stewardship shall request the assistance of and consult with the United States department of agriculture's natural resources conservation service and farm service agency to implement the conservation reserve enhancement program. The department shall also consult with county boards of supervisors, county conservation boards, drainage district representatives, department of natural resources, and soil and water conservation districts affected by the implementation of the conservation reserve enhancement program. The department shall also collaborate with other public agencies and private organizations to develop wetland habitat and related projects to improve water quality.

3. The department of agriculture and land stewardship shall maintain a record of all wetlands established pursuant to the conservation reserve enhancement program including any conditions that may apply to the landowner's right to remove the wetland after the provisions of the conservation reserve enhancement program contract or easement are concluded.

4. When establishing a wetland under this section, the department of agriculture and land stewardship shall be governed by the following requirements:

a. Wetland construction or restoration shall not damage the value of property in any public or private drainage system without the property owner's consent.

b. Wetland construction or restoration shall improve water quality and provide aesthetic and habitat benefits.

c. Wetland construction or restoration under this section may be used to mitigate wetland removal by the landowner if it meets the requirements of federal agencies with wetland jurisdictional authorities. Where practicable, priority shall be given to mitigating wetland removal within the same United States geological survey hydrologic unit code 8 watershed, but a watershed confines shall not limit the use of duly authorized wetland mitigation banks.

5. The five-year goal of the conservation reserve enhancement program is the establishment of thirty-two thousand five hundred acres of wetlands.

2000 Acts, ch 1068, §5; 2000 Acts, ch 1232, §75; 2003 Acts, ch 108, §88