



Non-Cropped Wetland Restoration Initiative

“Partnering with landowners to restore wetlands in grassland habitats”

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH & PARKS
Division of Wildlife – Private Lands Habitat Program

A panoramic view across much of South Dakota reveals numerous wetlands scattered across the landscape, especially in the Prairie Pothole Region east of the Missouri River. High densities of wetlands of all shapes, sizes and depths support unique plant communities and wildlife species that depend on these diverse and valuable habitats.

While many wetlands in agricultural fields and pastures have been drained by tile and drainage ditches, or lost to urban expansion, the public’s view of wetlands has changed over the last few decades. Many now recognize the benefits wetlands provide, such as improving water quality, serving as natural sponges to reduce flooding, supplying water, providing hay and forage for livestock, and providing habitat for wildlife and fish species.

Many programs exist for restoring cropped wetlands (CRP, WRP, etc.), but few financial incentives exist for landowners to restore non-cropped wetlands and still allow use of these wetland/grassland complexes for livestock production.

The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks (SD GFP) recognizes the opportunity to restore hydrology and function of drained wetlands in grassland settings. Therefore, SD GFP is offering a voluntary program to landowners interested in restoring wetland hydrology and benefiting from additional livestock water and forage production, yet providing substantial habitat benefits to wildlife.

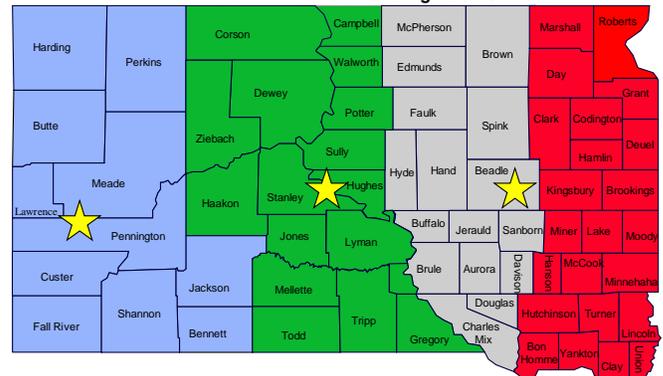
SD GFP will provide 100% cost share to restore wetland hydrology and a “one-time payment” of \$150 per surface acre of wetlands restored, with no limit per cooperator. SD GFP will survey, design and manage construction for all projects.



In return, cooperating landowners will agree to maintain the cost share practices on the ground for fifteen years. Landowners still retain control of all access to their property.

It’s important to recognize that restored wetlands, particularly temporary and seasonal wetlands will often be dry. Nevertheless, in most years breeding waterfowl and other wildlife species will benefit substantially from habitat restored through this program. Landowners will benefit by improving the distribution of water throughout pastures and the potential to increase forage production.

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