

Programs and Services offered by the NRCS

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Wexford Conservation District

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been a partner of the Wexford Conservation District for over 70 years. Since their beginnings, the two agencies have worked closely to assist Wexford County landowners in protecting and sustaining their natural resources in the present as well as for future generations. The mission of NRCS is to develop and deliver high quality products and services that enable people to be good stewards of the Nation's soil, water, and related natural resources. NRCS is the only federal agency that provides on-site technical assistance to private landowners interested in conserving and enhancing the natural resources on their property.

In addition to technical assistance, the NRCS also administers financial assistance programs which are allocated by Congress through the U.S. Farm Bill. The programs aim to address a wide variety of environmental problems, or resource concerns, on private land. To be eligible for these programs, you must be an agricultural producer or owner of productive forestland.

The most popular NRCS program is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This program provides assistance to agricultural producers that address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, energy conservation, or improved or created wildlife habitat. Cost-share payments will typically cover 75% of the cost of the project. Historically underserved producers (limited resource farmers, beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged producers, and Veteran farmers) may be eligible for payments that cover up to 90% of a project's cost.

Through this program, Wexford county residents have implemented a range of conservation practices on the local landscape. NRCS assists farmers with the design and installation of adequate manure and agrichemical storage which protects the County's valuable surface and groundwater resources. NRCS can also help plan crop rotations that incorporate practices like cover crops and reduced tillage to promote healthy soils that will continue to be productive into the future. Wildlife enthusiasts can benefit from habitat restoration practices like prescribed burning, tree and shrub plantings, and native grass and wildflower establishment.

NRCS also offers easement programs for landowners who want to maintain their land and protect it against future development. The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help preserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands. To be eligible, these wetlands must have been previously degraded or modified and in need of restoration.

Applying for NRCS programs requires an NRCS approved conservation plan. A conservation plan is the result of on-site inventory and evaluation of resources on the farm. An NRCS staff member will walk the property with the landowner and work with them to develop a plan of action that solves environmental issues that should be addressed. Applications for NRCS programs are accepted on a continuous basis,

however, NRCS establishes application "cut-off" or submission deadline dates for evaluation and ranking of eligible applications for distinct funding periods. The cut-off to request a conservation plan for the 2016 application period is October 30, 2015. If you would like to learn more about our programs please contact our office.

The Wexford Conservation District works in conjunction with the NRCS to provide technical assistance and education to area residents related to pollinating insects as well as other natural resources – our soils, water, forests, plants, and wildlife – so that they can be wise stewards of these, their resources. You can contact the District and the USDA-NRCS by calling (231) 775-7681 ext.3, stopping by the office at 7192 E. 34 (Boon) Road in Cadillac.



This new fueling facility replaces aging tanks and provides the farmer with a concrete pad for loading. This facility protects groundwater from any contamination by any accidental spills.



A red pine plantation was established after removing invasive species from this property. A tree planting machine was used, and you can see the furrows where the trees were planted.



A Wexford County landowner watches as a prescribed burn takes place on his property. This burn will prepare the site for a native grass and wildflower planting to benefit a variety of wildlife.