



Partnerships with Landowners

All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in the community, but his ethics prompt him also to cooperate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for). The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, animals, or collectively, the land.

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

An increasingly popular way to strengthen wetlands protection is to foster innovative public/private partnerships and promote landowner participation in voluntary stewardship of wetlands. This fact sheet discusses ways the EPA is encouraging partnerships with landowners.

Why Should Landowners Be Interested in Wetlands Protection?

Wetlands conservation has positive, long-term impacts on the environment, commerce, and quality of life. In contrast, continued wetland loss has negative impacts on water quality, biodiversity, the economy, and human health and safety.

Approximately 75% of the remaining wetlands in the lower 48 States are privately owned. Recently, much of the national focus on wetlands protection has been on regulatory programs. However, regulatory programs only provide partial protection. In contrast, numerous voluntary programs in the public and private sectors provide educational, technical, and financial assistance to private landowners in protecting wetlands.

Landowner Assistance Available

Private landowner assistance and partnership programs among government, nonprofit, and private groups are areas of growing national interest. The potential for voluntary programs to protect wetland resources is being recognized by Federal, State, and local governments. EPA has actively promoted landowner assistance and partnership programs through such activities as

- American Wetlands Month
- Audubon's America
- the EPA Wetlands Information Hotline (contractor operated).

EPA also helped develop a pilot project promoting voluntary wetlands programs in the State of Maryland. A report that came out of that project, *Private Landowner's Wetlands Assistance Guide: Voluntary Options for Wetlands Stewardship in Maryland*, is available by calling the EPA Wetlands Information Hotline (contractor operated).

Upcoming Programs

Other States have indicated a strong interest in initiating a program similar to the Maryland program, including California, Arizona, and Oregon.

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For more information, contact the EPA Wetlands Information Hotline at 1-800-832-7828 (contractor operated).

