



Natural Resources Conservation Service
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MEDIA RELEASE

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\$6.5 MILLION TO RESTORE NEW YORK'S WETLAND SITES 2002 FARM BILL EXPANDS POPULAR PROGRAM

Ithaca, Tompkins County —April 24, 2003 Dan Dostie District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, announced today that New York has received \$6.5 million for financial assistance to implement the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in New York in this fiscal year 2003 as part of the 2002 Farm Bill. These funds will permit NRCS to restore sites from marginal agricultural land to a native wetland's condition.

The Wetlands Reserve Program began in 1992, but hit its Congressionally-sanctioned ceiling of 1,075,000 restored acres in 2001. Many states, including New York, had long lists of Farmers eager to participate in the program, which pays agricultural landowners for easement rights. The 2002 Farm Bill, signed by the President in May, gave permission and funding to restore another 250,000 acres annually for the next six years. Additionally, NRCS provides technical and financial assistance for the ecological restoration needed to reestablish the wetland and associated upland habitat.

Producers may now contact their local USDA Service Center to obtain information on how to sign-up.

To find out more about the Farm Bill call or visit the Tompkins & Schuyler USDA Service Center at 903 Hanshaw Road, Community Corners, in Ithaca or go to our Web site: <http://www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov>.