



Western Reserve Land Conservancy  
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY

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March 4, 2009

WRP-Easements Programs Division  
Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Wetlands Reserve Program Comments  
P.O. Box 2890, Room 6819-S  
Washington, DC 20013

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To Whom It May Concern:

The current proposed changes to the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) would include eliminating the riparian component of this program. The protection of riparian corridors is one of the most effective ways to buffer watersheds against land use changes. Current WRP requirements for eligibility include a clause that requires a seven-year ownership.

These two changes to the WRP requirements place hundreds of acres of critical land (projects that are currently in the pipeline for protection) in jeopardy in northern Ohio. The conservation of riparian corridors is one of the true success stories in our country. Western Reserve Land Conservancy currently has hundreds of acres of riparian corridors in need of protection and they would be eligible for a WRP riparian easement if these two stipulations remain as they have been for years.

There is an added risk that NRCS grants will be viewed as ever changing and inconsistent. These WRP grants often take a year or longer to organize and over the last two years the rules have changed. When this occurs, field personnel from NRCS and nonprofits need to explain to the landowners why they were eligible, but now due to changes are not. The decision to permanently protect property is serious and should not be taken lightly. These rule changes during an application process cause the landowners to lose confidence when their property that would have otherwise been permanently protected is not.

I urge you to consider keeping the riparian component of the WRP easement intact and eliminating the requirement for a seven-year ownership by the owner that is applying

Very truly yours,

Scott Hill  
Field Director

SH/dmh

cc: John Niedzialek  
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