

# NRCS **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service  
607 9<sup>TH</sup> ST NE Long Prairie MN 56347 • (320) 732-6618 ext. 3  
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The Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) landscape, known for its diverse wetlands and large areas of native prairie, provides critical habitat for many of the nation's migratory birds, including grassland birds. Maintaining wetlands and grasslands in the region provide diverse benefits, including water quality protection, potential flood reduction, carbon sequestration and enhanced wetland and wildlife habitat.

Recent expansion of corn and soybean production in the PPR, located in the upper Midwest and Northern Plains, has created new pressures on grasslands and wetlands. Several factors are driving the expansion and intensity of crop production, including commodity prices, warming weather patterns, and improved crop varieties that allow for the growing of more corn and soybeans. These drivers create short-term incentives to convert existing grasslands -- both native prairie or expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage -- and some wetlands to crop production.

Significant conversion of these working agricultural lands can have adverse impacts on water quality, wildlife habitat and water quantity in the region.

To stem the tide of conversion, NRCS is offering farmers and ranchers various financial and technical options to consider before they convert grasslands or wetlands to cropland. These options will provide farmers and ranchers with economically viable alternatives to protect their grasslands and wetlands. Protecting the soil, water and wildlife habitat resources of the region is compatible with making a living off the land.

If you would like to improve soil, water and wildlife habitat in the Prairie Pothole Region, contact the Long Prairie NRCS office is located at 607 9<sup>th</sup> Street NE, Long Prairie and we can be reached via telephone at 320-732-6618 ext. 3.

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
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