

Landowners Encouraged to Convert Old Farmland to Wetlands

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A swamp in Breton Basin. Weenta Girmay

By [Tegan Wendland](#)

State officials want landowners to convert old farmland to wetlands. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is accepting applications for its Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.

The government helps landowners install levees and plant native grasses and trees. It's part of the national Farm Bill and is designed to restore and protect wetlands across the nation.

Tim Landreneau, assistant state conservationist with the program, says private landowners play an important role in environmental restoration efforts, both on the coast and across the state.

“We do have a lot of land that was historically bottomland hardwood swamps and wetlands that years ago were converted — either cleared and turned to agriculture land, or drained and converted in some way,” he says. “It’s a very good fit for Louisiana.”

He says most of the land already enrolled in the program is in the Mississippi River delta, in northeast Louisiana. The state could add about 9,000 acres to program this year. Landowners must apply by February 29.

Up to \$17 million in financial and technical assistance is available for participants in Louisiana.

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