



**Natural Resources
Conservation Service**

355 East Hancock Ave., Ste. 212
Athens, GA, 30601
Voice: 706-546-2069
Email: chris.groskreutz@ga.usda.gov
Web: <http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov>

News Release

Release No.: 000002.17

Contact:
Chris Groskreutz, (706) 546-2069
Chris.groskreutz@ga.usda.gov

USDA-NRCS IN GEORGIA ANNOUNCES SIGNUP FOR CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

ATHENS, GA, (November 1, 2016)-- State Conservationist Terrance O. Rudolph, for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Georgia today announced a sign-up for this year's [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (ACEP). To be considered for the fiscal year 2017 program, applications must be submitted by December 16, 2016.

“ACEP is a program which allows more opportunities for even more people to get involved in conserving the state’s natural resources,” said Rudolph. “We encourage Indian tribes, state and local governments, non-governmental organizations and private landowners to contact their local NRCS office to find out how to apply.”

The ACEP, created through the 2014 Farm Bill, is a program that has two components, known as Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE). The ACEP combines NRCS’ former Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).

Applications for the ACEP-ALE are accepted from eligible partners. These eligible entities may submit proposals to NRCS to acquire a conservation easement on eligible agricultural land. NRCS does not accept applications for ACEP-ALE directly from producers. Producers will need to work with an eligible entity to pursue funding for an ACEP-ALE conservation easement. Some examples of eligible entities include county Board of Commissioners, Land Trusts and Land Conservancies.

Approved ACEP-ALE easements would prevent productive working lands from being converted to non-agricultural uses and maximize protection of land devoted to food production. Cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland and nonindustrial private forestland are eligible.

The ACEP-WRE applications are accepted directly from producers on eligible lands. These easements would restore and enhance wetlands and improve habitat. Eligible lands include farmed or converted wetlands that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. Applications will be rated according to the easement’s potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds, fish and other wildlife.

****MORE****

Applications must be submitted to Georgia NRCS by December 16, 2016 for both ACEP-ALE and ACEP-WRE. Conservation program applications are available at your local USDA Service Center and at our [Programs web page](#).

You can learn more about ACEP and other Farm Bill programs in Georgia at <http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov>.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.