

Field Trip Opportunities – Sunday, June 3, 2012

Wetlands Reserve Program Restoration Tour (*Tour is Limited to 30 people*)

Itinerary:

9:30am	Bus departs Caribe Royale Hotel
10:30am	Arrive at WRP site and tour
12:30pm	Picnic lunch at tour site
1:30pm	Board bus and depart
2:30pm	Bus returns to Hotel

Description:

Florida's wetlands provide habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species; improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals; reduce flooding; recharge groundwater; protect biological diversity; and provide opportunities for educational, scientific, and limited recreational activities. Since 1992, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has administered the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). WRP is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and Tribes to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring eligible land from agriculture. The cumulative benefits of the wetlands restored through WRP reach well beyond their boundaries to improve watershed health, the vitality of agricultural lands, and aesthetics and economies of local communities.



Participants will enjoy a guided tour through a restored wetland site of approximately 1,000 acres in Polk County. This land sits in the area of the headwaters of the largest restoration project in the world, the Florida Everglades. Wildlife such as bears, whooping cranes and bald eagles are a frequent site. The landowners, as good stewards of the land, contracted with NRCS for a WRP easement on portions of their typical Florida ranch. These easements restrict development and conserve the land for future generations. The wetland restoration project was completed in 2006. Participants will become familiar with the wetland ecosystems of this site. In addition,

participants will be introduced to the hydrological principles behind the structural restoration work performed. Wetland management topics will also be discussed including the use of prescribed grazing for invasive plant control. Time permitting participants will view a Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) site in the same area.



What to wear and bring: Dress in comfortable clothes and wear boots or athletic shoes. Rain jackets, hats and sunscreen protection are recommended.

Food Offered: Water and lunch will be provided.

Driving Distance: Is approximately 50 miles to the tour site.
Map: wetlands-reserve.notlong.com

Cost of Tour: \$75.00 per person
(Fees include lunch and transportation)

For Questions about the Tour Site, Contact:

Roney Gutierrez, TOUR LEADER, USDA NRCS Assistant State Conservationist
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For Questions about Tour Logistics, Contact:

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