

For Immediate Release

Date: February 6, 2014

NRCS Conservation Incentive Program Opportunity – Bird-Friendly Farming Workshop

The Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership, a collaboration of Audubon California, Point Blue Conservation Science and The Nature Conservancy, and the California Rice Commission will host a free workshop on February 18 at 9 am in the Winters Public Library.

The workshop is being held in support of the Waterbird Habitat Enhancement Program (WHEP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). WHEP works with farmers interested in promoting bird-friendly farming practices on eligible farms in the Sacramento Valley. This conservation program has a strong focus on several specific practices beneficial to birds and other wildlife, including:

- staggered draining of winter-flooded fields
- post-harvest residue management
- post-harvest flooding in late summer/early fall
- creating loafing and breeding islands within fields
- wetland restoration

This is a voluntary program. Interested growers must apply to NRCS for this special habitat program through Friday, February 21, 2014. The Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership and California Rice Commission will be hosting the workshop and NRCS Conservationists will be available to discuss this opportunity with farmers and to explain program elements.

Workshop
Tuesday, February 18, 2014
9 am - noon
Winters Public Library 708 Railroad Ave. Winters, CA

WHEP was first offered to producers in 2012; since that time, NRCS has committed approximately \$10 million to support more than 200 producers who are actively managing their crops to enhance habitat for migratory birds. The program recognizes that water is a critical resource for birds and people and that maximizing the benefits of water use will be critical in the coming year.

The program is available in the following counties: **Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba.**

Interested parties should contact their local NRCS Service Center as soon as possible to learn more about the program and application process. A prioritization process will determine the highest-ranking contracts and fund those contracts on a priority basis. This process and other key information will be explained at the workshop.

**For additional information, contact
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