

How the Program Works

The program makes the following assumptions:

- Not all access is of equal quality and value
- Better habitat will provide for more diverse and higher quality hunting experiences.

Two rate zones have been created:

- Population/Platte Rate
- Standard Rate

The Commission will pay more and emphasize enrollment in the Population/Platte Rate zone.

How to Enroll Land

- The Commission is enrolling private lands now.
- In order to identify new access lands in an atlas, contracts need to be signed by June.
- Contracts for the program will be offered to landowners until available funds are obligated.
- Interested landowners should contact the nearest Game and Parks district office.

Game and Parks District Offices

Panhandle - Alliance	(308) 763-2940
North-central - Bassett	(402) 684-2921
Northeast - Norfolk	(402) 370-3374
Southwest - North Platte	(308) 535-8025
Southeast - Lincoln	(402) 471-5597
South-central - Kearney	(308) 865-5310

Liability

Landowners who enroll in Open Fields and Waters program are afforded protection from liability through the Nebraska Recreation Liability Act.

Nebraska Recreation Liability Act (Nebraska Statutes 37-729 to 37-736) states that landowners or tenants do not assume responsibility or incur liability for injury to any persons who enter land opened to public hunting and fishing under agreement with the state.

OPEN FIELDS AND WATERS

More places to hunt and fish.



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OutdoorNebraska.org.

Open Fields and Waters

The Open Fields and Waters (OFW) program was created as a component of the Commission's Recruitment, Development and Retention (RDR) plan, which seeks to increase the participation of hunters and anglers in Nebraska.

The motivation for the Open Fields and Waters program is to attract new or inactive hunters and anglers, especially into activities with expanding opportunities, such as deer and turkey hunting. The program also provides for the enrollment of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams to create expanded opportunities for anglers.

The Conservation Reserve Program-Management Access Program (CRP-MAP) is merging into the OFW program. The combined two public access programs include participation by more than 600 landowners and open nearly 200,000 acres to public access statewide.

Benefits to Landowners

- Increased rates for CRP land – OFW will offer as much as \$10 per acre.
- Focus on woodlands along rivers – A new rate of up to \$15 per acre has been established.
- Signing bonus – There is a one-time signing bonus for contracts of five years or longer.
- Spring turkey rate – Allow access only for spring turkey hunting and get a rate equal to 25 percent of the regular annual payment.
- Partial-year fishing rate – reduced rates available for allowing access only for ice fishing and access only for open water fishing.
- Hunters and anglers would be provided walk-in access. No vehicles are allowed, except on trails specified by the landowner.
- Play a role in conservation by providing a means to control problematic wildlife populations.
- All enrolled lands will be published in an atlas.

Open Fields and Waters Rates

Hunting Access Rates

Enrollment Zones (all rates per acre for all seasons)	Riparian Woodland	High Rate Woodland*	Wetland*	High Rate/Managed CRP	CRP	Low Rate Woodland or High Rate Grassland or Low Rate CRP	Roundout Acres (Low Rate Grassland, Wetland or Cropland)**
Target Area***	\$15	\$12	\$12	\$10	\$8	\$3	\$1
Standard	\$12	\$6	\$12 Statewide, except \$6 Sandhill Wetlands	\$10	\$4	\$1.50	\$0.50

Signing bonus for 5 year or longer contract = 25% of annual payment amount, payable in first year after contract signed

Enrollment without Rifle Deer = 25% annual payment reduction

Enrollment for Spring Turkey only = 75% annual payment reduction

* A base of riparian woodland, 10 acres of mature deciduous woodland or 40 acres of coniferous woodland (high or low rate), 10 acres of wetland (with waterfowl hunting potential), or fishing access is required to enroll.

** Roundout acres that can be enrolled are limited by higher value acres offered: 10 acres of roundout for every acre of riparian woodland, high rate woodland, or wetland and 3 acres of roundout for every acre of low rate woodland or high rate grassland.

*** The Target Area is the Population/Platte River Zone, which represents 89 percent of Nebraska's human population.

Habitat improvement projects may be completed on OFW enrollments based on staff recommendation, depending on availability of funds.

Habitat improvement activities may require a longer-term contract (eg. 10 years) to ensure public hunting benefits offset costs of improvements.

Fishing Access Rates

Ponds and Lakes	\$250 base for first surface acre and \$40/acre for each additional acre
Cold Water Streams (with trout fishing opportunities)	\$750 per mile if both sides of stream are enrolled \$375 per mile if only one side of stream is enrolled
Warm Water Streams/Rivers (typical river fish species)	\$500 per mile if both sides of stream/river are enrolled \$250 per mile if only one side of stream/river is enrolled.
Ice fishing only, December to February = 50% payment reduction	
Signing bonus for 5 year or longer contract = 25% of annual payment amount, payable in first year after contract signed	
Open water fishing only, March through November = 25% payment reduction	
Habitat improvement projects may be completed on OFW enrollments based on staff recommendation, depending on availability of funds.	
Fisheries renovations will require a longer-term contract (eg. 10+ years) to ensure that sufficient high quality public fishing access is provided to offset renovation costs. However no payment will be made for the first two years following renovation while the fishery is being reestablished.	