



## Divots in the Pivots:

*A solution to wetlands  
in your operation...*



Gayle Marsh—Giltner, NE

### Gayle Got It...

Not long ago, the Marsh family was evaluating options to deal with 50-plus acres of flood-prone cropland west of Giltner. The Marshes and the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture partners wanted to ensure the wetland's long-term value, both to the farm operation and to migratory birds. With that, two things were necessary: an ability to precisely control irrigation inputs, and a method for controlling undesirable invasive species such as reed canary grass.

Gayle Marsh values the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture partners' expertise in his wetland project saying, ***"It's developed economic alternatives for the wetland acres, and you can tell it's definitely a great habitat for wildlife. It has allowed me to make prescriptions to put the water where it needs to be and no water where it doesn't need to be. This new, whole-field approach has helped my farm operation grow from flood prone crop land to a different use without a substantial loss of income. It's working well."***

*The Divots in the Pivots-Regional Conservation Partners Program is designed to develop whole-field solutions that maximize irrigation efficiency, restore wetland habitat, and address water quality and quantity issues through recharge to the Ogallala Aquifer.*



This "whole-field" approach includes modifications to the valves and sprinklers, plus GPS and specialized software at the pivot panel. Together these upgrades allow producers to control when nozzles are turned on and off, according to their location in the field. Soil moisture probes along with precision mapping allow the producer to understand in real time how much moisture is needed, and where.

Gayle and his family chose to construct wildlife-friendly perimeter fence, as well as a solar livestock well and tank. Sixteen pivot-crossing ramps were installed on the fence so that the pivot can cross over and make a complete rotation. The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture partners helped the Marshes develop a grazing plan maximizing habitat and forage production, which not only improves wildlife habitat, but continues to produce income. Each plan is a custom prescription that is tailor-fitted to the producer's operation and expected outcomes.





## Divots in the Pivots...



*Gayle likes it!*

### ***Frequently Asked Questions:***

#### **Who...qualifies for these funds?**

A producer must meet adjusted gross income level, comply with highly erodible land and wetland conversion provision, demonstrate ownership for two years or meet exceptions, hold clear title to land, and farm on a playa wetland in the Rainwater Basin.

#### **How...much money is available in each option?**

[Landowner selects ACEP option—WRE or ALE—and EQIP practices].

**WRE:** Landowners are compensated at Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC) per acre enrolled. The 30 year or reserved grazing right options have a 25% payment reduction. The site is restored to the extent possible. NRCS and partners will pay for 100% of restoration. Easement length is either perpetual or 30 year duration. Easement held by NRCS.

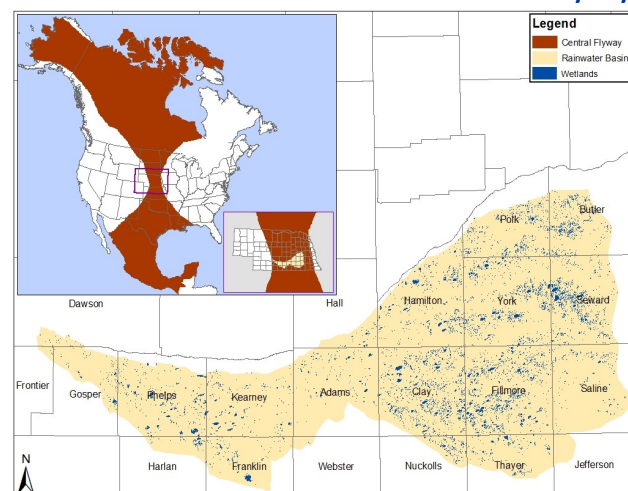
**ALE:** The site is restored to the extent possible. Partners will pay for 100% of restoration. The cost of easement is calculated as the difference in land value with and without the easement. Easement held by local Natural Resources District.

**EQIP:** Along with partner funds will cover 85% cost-share for irrigation upgrades. A landowner agreement between the landowner and partners will be used to facilitate payment. Partners include CropMetrics, Ducks Unlimited, Lindsay, local Natural Resources Districts, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Reinke, Valmont, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

#### **Where...is the Rainwater Basin?**

There are 21 Nebraska counties in the Rainwater Basin, including Adams, Butler, Clay, Dawson, Fillmore, Franklin, Frontier, Gosper, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Jefferson, Kearney, Nuckolls, Phelps, Polk, Saline, Seward, Thayer, Webster, and York. At goal, 10 projects will be enrolled in the Divots in the Pivots-Regional Conservation Partners Program impacting approximately 1,600 acres. Delivery will focus on sites where pivot irrigation systems travel over a significant area of flood-prone cropland (>25% of the field).

**Rainwater Basin Wetlands in Nebraska & Central Flyway**



#### **Why...should I do this? What's in it for me?**

The Divots in the Pivots-Regional Conservation Partners Program is designed to develop whole-field solutions that maximize irrigation efficiency, restore wetland habitat, and address water quality and quantity issues through recharge to the Ogallala Aquifer. Each prescription maximizes habitat and forage production, which not only improves wildlife habitat, but continues to produce income.

#### **When...are application deadlines?**

Divots in the Pivots-Regional Conservation Partners Program (RCPP) applications can be submitted through NRCS at any time. The RCPP application deadline for Fiscal Year 2018 is January 5, 2018.

#### ***Here's how you can get started right now:***

The landowner will work with their local pivot dealer or NRCS Irrigation Specialist to determine necessary VRI upgrades to maximize pivot irrigation efficiency. The landowner should contact their local pivot dealer or local USDA Service Center. To locate and contact your local NRCS office go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

