

Landowner participation in Open Fields and Waters grows

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Open Fields and Waters, the program that pays landowners to open private acres to public walk-in hunting and fish access, added 211 new contracts in 2011, according to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Game and Parks increased payment rates this year and saw increased landowner participation, including 456 contract renewals.

The program currently has 768 contracts, including 271,220 land acres enrolled, 480 water acres and 60 miles of stream. The land acres include 129,467 acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, 17,772 acres of woodland, 93,292 acres of grassland, 748 acres of wetland, 7,973 acres of cropland, and approximately 18,000 unspecified or mixed-habitat acres.

The 2012 sign-up period is April through July. There will be no changes in rates next year.

For more information, visit <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/hunting/programs/openaccess/>.