



January 10, 2019

Subject: Conservation Program Opportunity—**CRC Workshop Notice**

The California Rice Commission (CRC) is pleased to announce the first year of implementation of a new conservation program opportunity. In 2018, the State Legislature passed AB 2348, a bill carried by Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry to enact the California Winter Rice Habitat Incentive Program (Winter Rice Habitat Program).

This new legislation marks the first time that the significant habitat value of California's winter-flooded ricelands is specifically highlighted in state law and establishes a winter flooding habitat incentives program to be administered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife ("Department"). In addition, \$5 million has been authorized in the current State Budget to support the initial development and start-up of the Program. CRC and several of its conservation partners have been working closely with the Department to develop the first version of this Program to be rolled out this year.

CRC Workshop

Key information about the Winter Rice Habitat Program will be presented by Department staff at the following CRC-hosted Workshop:

Winter Rice Habitat Program Workshop Information	
Date:	Monday, January 28, 2019
Time:	10:00 am to 11:30 am
Location:	Colusa Casino Community Room 3770 State Highway 45, Colusa, CA

Please note that RSVP's are requested for those who plan to attend this event. Please RSVP by Thursday, January 24, 2019 via email or telephone at pbuttner@calrice.org or (916) 387-2264. This will help with event planning, ensure you get any additional information and enable us to send you a workshop reminder.

Background on Winter Rice Habitat Program

The Department has released its Proposal Solicitation Notice (PSN) for growers/landowners to apply to this Program. Their PSN can be found at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/CWHP/Private-Lands-Programs>.

The California Winter Rice Habitat Incentive Program provides economic incentives to applicants who agree to manage their properties in accordance with a management plan. Management plans will require participants to flood harvested rice fields for a minimum of 70 continuous days during the winter months (October-March). Properties that can maintain water during critical months (January through middle of March) will be given additional points in the ranking process. Properties located within 5 miles of an active airstrip on a military base or international airport cannot be considered for enrollment under this program.

The program pays participants an annual incentive of \$10/acre, under 3-year contracts, for the winter-flooding of harvested rice fields. Fields must have been planted at least two of the last three years to be eligible. The program will start after the 2019 harvest and will continue during the 2020 and 2021 seasons.

Applications to this program must be submitted no later than February 11, 2019. For questions regarding the PSN, please contact Brian Olson at (916) 445-3486 or Brian.Olson@wildlife.ca.gov, or Helen Swagerty at (916) 445-3561 or Helen.Swagerty@wildlife.ca.gov.

CRC appreciates the efforts of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to work closely with us on the development of this new program. Please feel free to contact me at (916) 206-5340 or pbuttner@calrice.org if you have any questions. Alternatively, you may contact Luke Matthews, CRC's Wildlife Program Manager, at (916) 607-8988 or LMatthews@calrice.org to inquire about this program.

Sincerely,



Paul Buttner
Manager of Environmental Affairs