

## COMMENTS ON GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM

Comments Must Be Submitted by: March 23, 2009

**Submit by Mail:** Easement Programs Division; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Grassland Reserve Program Comments, P.O. Box 2890, Room 6819-S, Washington, DC 20013

Or

**Fax:** (202) 720-9689

Or

**Email:** [grp2008@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:grp2008@wdc.usda.gov)

- We commend NRCS for limiting wind power development on GRP easements to on farm use only. Though wind power is a valuable alternative energy source, its footprint can have adverse effects on biological diversity, which puts it at odds with the purposes of the program. The Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines should be used to site on farm wind energy developments.
- We commend NRCS for continuing to recognize the value of *native* grasslands in the Interim Final Rule. We recommend that that NRCS give priority to native grasslands for program eligibility.
- Each State, at the request of Congress, has developed a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. These plans are important tools for focusing attention to the highest priorities for wildlife conservation and sites of high biological diversity. We recommend that NRCS use them in establishing priorities for the Grassland Reserve Program.
- We recommend that NRCS use the following definition for biological diversity: The variety and variability among living organisms native to the ecological subregion and ecological complex.