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**(Wyo.)-Experts: Loss Of Fed Leases Can Be Loss Of Habitat**

By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 12/08/2012 05:13 PM



CASPER, Wyo. (AP) - Conservation Reserve Program lands in Wyoming and other states are where thousands of pheasant and upland bird hunters go every year. It's also where millions of ducks and other birds nest and hatch their young.

But those lands are going away. The federal government doesn't have as much money to pay farmers for returning their land to a more native state. And in many cases the payouts aren't keeping up with current crop prices.

Gregor Goertz, of the Wyoming Farm Service Agency, says that nationally, 1.6 million acres left the CRP from 2011 to 2012.

Wyoming lost 11,000 acres in 2012, mostly in Laramie County. Some hunters and wildlife advocates say the loss of CRP acres could mean fewer ducks for Wyoming hunters.