

WHAT IS THE CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM?

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a resource for agricultural landowners to use to help meet their conservation goals, particularly those who currently till or graze land along rivers, stream, lakes and wetlands.

CREP pays landowners to voluntarily install filter strips along waterways or to return continually flooded fields to wetlands while leaving the remainder of the adjacent land in agricultural production. The size of land put into CREP is variable and can be a strip as narrow as 30 feet with no minimum acreage size. This allows landowners to put what land is needed into the program and leave the remainder for farming. Options for enrollment are through either a 15 year agreement or a perpetual easement.

There is no waiting period; enrollment and eligibility determinations are made on a first-come basis.

CREP is a joint effort between Federal, State, and County governments to complement working agriculture and the protection of Wisconsin's soils and water resources.

HOW DOES CREP BENEFIT ME?

Annual Payments - On the federal side, USDA makes rental payments annually for 15 years. Rates are determined by soil type, county, and whether the land was cropland or marginal pasture land. Annual rental rates for cropland range from \$50-\$250 per acre. USDA also provides an additional annual federal incentive payment of 35%-60% the annual rental rate, depending on the practices installed.

Up-front Payments - In addition to annual payments, the federal government pays \$100 per acre as an up-front, one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) for filter strips, riparian buffers, grassed waterways and wetland restorations enrolled for the first time.

The State of Wisconsin also provides an additional one time up-front incentive payment of 1.5 times the annual rental rate for 15-year agreements and 12 times the annual rental rate for perpetual conservation easements.

Practice Payments - The federal government pays 50% of the cost of installing the eligible practices along with a practice incentive payment (PIP) of 40% of practice installation costs. Additionally, the state pays 20% of the cost of installing eligible practices.

Note: Check with your tax advisor to determine if these payments have tax consequences for you.

IS MY LAND ELIGIBLE?

If your land falls within the designated towns on the CREP project area map (see back page), your land has a crop history (in commodity crops 4 out of 6 years from 2008 to 2013, or meets rotation requirements with grass or legumes), or the land meets the qualifications as marginal pastureland, you may be eligible and should fill out an application.

In the riparian project areas, eligible lands are within 150 feet of a stream or water body. In the grassland project area, additional lands are eligible that meet the crop history and are within 1000 feet of a water body. In the southern grassland project area the land must also be highly erodible. In the northern grassland project area the land does not have to be highly erodible.

Lands expiring from a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract, or in the last year of their CRP contract, may be eligible for enrolling qualifying acres into CREP.

WHAT ABOUT PUBLIC ACCESS?

Public access is not required for CREP.

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Contact your county FSA, NRCS or LCD office and ask them for a CREP application. A site visit will be completed and FSA will notify you if your land is eligible for CREP. Make sure you indicate which lands you wish to enroll and what type of practices or project you would like to undertake.

WHAT IS A 15-YEAR AGREEMENT?

The 15-Year agreement is a contract to install and maintain practices for 15 years in exchange for federal and state incentive payments and cost-sharing. The landowner enjoys recreational use of the land during the contract period. The restrictions on land use are specified in the agreement and state that the land must be maintained in the vegetation type indicated in the conservation plan. If you sell the property, the state may require a transfer of the agreement to a new owner. Repayment of state program funds may be required if the agreement is violated.

WHAT IS A PERPETUAL EASEMENT?

The perpetual conservation easement is a permanent land use restriction which will be held by the county or the state, with an underlying 15-year federal contract. The landowner enjoys recreational use of the land in perpetuity. The restrictions on land use are specified in the easement and generally state that the land must be maintained in the vegetation type indicated in the conservation plan. No structures may be built on the lands enrolled.

Through a conservation plan the landowner may indicate what types of uses they desire to have after the federal 15-year contract expires. Some of these uses may include: timber harvest, limited pasturing or haying, prescribed burns or other management techniques.

Repayment of state program funds are required if the easement is violated.

WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED FOR A PERPETUAL EASEMENT?

If you are planning on enrolling land into a perpetual conservation easement you need to provide some important information. Perpetual easements require a title search which the landowner must obtain and applicants must supply a copy of the last property tax bill. Also, be prepared to have ALL owners of the property sign the easement document along with signatures of mortgage holders or lenders. Costs of establishing the easement, such as the title search, are reimbursed to the landowner for all perpetual easements after they have been recorded.

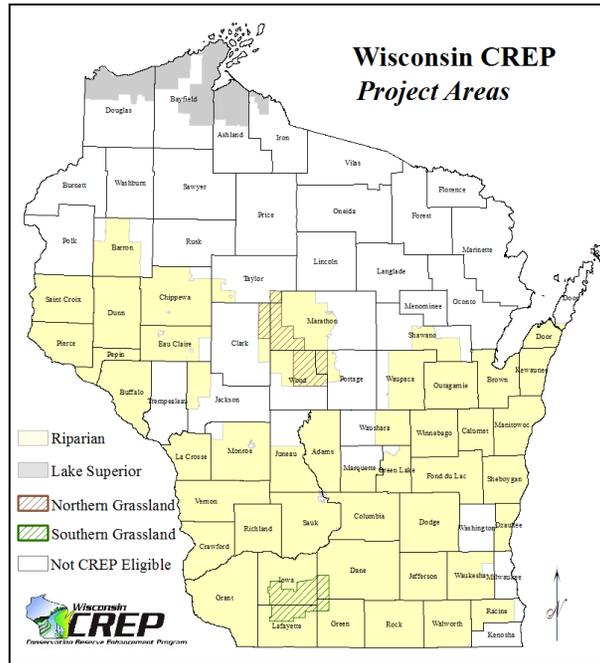
ELIGIBLE PRACTICES:

- Filter Strips (CP21)
- Riparian Buffers (CP22)
- Grassed Waterways (CP8a), up to 1000 feet
- Wetland Restorations (CP23 or CP23a)
- Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer (CP29)
- Permanent Introduced Grasses (CP1)*
- Permanent Native Grasses (CP2)*
- Established Legumes and Grasses (CP10)*
- Oak Savanna Ecosystem Restoration and Tall Grass Prairie Ecosystem Restoration (CP25)*

* Practices only eligible within the grassland project areas.

MORE INFORMATION ONLINE AT:

https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/CREP.aspx



Partner Agencies:



Wisconsin Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

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Fact Sheet