



### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – Wisconsin

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#### OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Wisconsin are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 100,000 acres in all or a portion of Adams, Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Brown, Buffalo, Calumet, Chippewa, Clark, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Door, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Fond Du Lac, Grant, Green, Green Lake, Iowa, Iron, Jackson, Jefferson, Juneau, Kewaunee, La Crosse, Lafayette, Manitowoc, Marathon, Marquette, Monroe, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Pepin, Pierce, Portage, Racine, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Shawano, Sheboygan, St. Croix, Vernon, Walworth, Waukesha, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago and Wood counties. The Wisconsin CREP is intended to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, reduce the amount of sediment, phosphorous and other pollutants entering waterbodies and improve wildlife habitat through the establishment of riparian buffers, native and other grasses, grass waterways and the restoration of wetlands.

#### BACKGROUND

CREP is part of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP is a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. CRP participants establish permanent, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. CRP is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 and was reauthorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014.

With CREP, high-priority conservation goals are identified by the state, and then federal funds are supplemented with non-federal funds to achieve those goals.

Through the Wisconsin CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants

to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 14-year to 15-year contracts. Participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to native grasses, trees and other vegetation or restore wetlands. This will improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, reduce the amount of sediment, phosphorous and other pollutants entering waterbodies and improve wildlife habitat.

#### GOALS

The goals of the Wisconsin CREP are to:

- Reduce sediment, phosphorus, nitrogen and other pollutants entering streams and other waterbodies;
- Restore and protect wetlands; and
- Improve wildlife habitat for grassland birds and other wildlife.

#### ELIGIBLE CONSERVATION PRACTICES

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- CP1, Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes;
- CP2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses;
- CP8A, Grass Waterways;
- CP21, Filter Strips;
- CP22, Riparian Buffer;
- CP23, Wetland Restoration;
- CP23A, Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain;
- CP25, Rare and Declining Habitat;
- CP29, Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer; and
- CP30, Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer.

#### ENROLLMENT AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Enrollment for the Wisconsin CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in the project area and be either cropland or marginal pastureland. Cropland must meet cropping history criteria and be physically and legally capable of

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being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Marginal pastureland is also eligible for enrollment provided it is suitable for use as a riparian buffer planted to trees.

Participants must enter into a perpetual easement or an agreement for the term of the CRP contract. The perpetual easement and agreement are between the participant and the State of Wisconsin.

### PAYMENTS

Under the Wisconsin CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre for installing practices CP8A, CP21 and CP22. Example: 10 acres enrolled to be devoted to practice CP21 result in a \$1,000 (10 acres x \$100) SIP. This payment is made after the contract has been signed and approved.
- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to install practices CP8A, CP21 and CP22. Example: Producer’s total eligible reimbursable cost for installing the practice is \$2,000. The PIP would be \$800 (\$2,000 x .40).
- An annual rental payment consisting of:
  - o A base soil rental rate, determined by (1) for cropland, the three predominant soils of the eligible land offered; or (2) for marginal pastureland, the posted marginal pastureland rate for the county;
  - o A maintenance payment, determined by the practice offered; and
  - o An incentive, as a percentage of the base soil rental rate, determined by the land and practice offered (see table below).

- A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to install the approved conservation practice.

In addition, the State of Wisconsin provides the following payments:

- An incentive payment in an amount equal to 20 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost of installing the approved practice.
- For land enrolled in the state’s perpetual easement, a one-time payment equal to:
  - o 12 times the CRP base soil rental rate times the number of acres enrolled for land located in the grassland and riparian project areas; and
  - o 24 times the CRP base soil rental rate times the number of acres enrolled for land located in the Lake Superior project area.
- For land enrolled in the state’s agreement program, a one-time payment equal to:
  - o 1.5 times the CRP base soil rental rate times the number of acres enrolled for land located in the grassland and riparian project areas; and
  - o 2.5 times the CRP base soil rental rate times the number of acres enrolled for land located in the Lake Superior project area.

### EXAMPLES

An Iron County producer elects to enroll 10 acres of land to be devoted to a filter strip (practice CP21) in a 15-year contract, and enters into a perpetual easement with the state. The base soil rental rate for the land is \$41 per acre. The incentive payment is \$35 per acre (\$41 x .85). The annual maintenance payment is \$10 per acre. The producer’s annual rental rate will be \$86 per acre (\$41 + \$35 + \$10) for a total annual payment of \$860 (\$86 x 10 acres). The producer will receive \$12,900 in annual rental payments over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. In addition, the producer will receive a one-time SIP of \$1,000 (10 acres x \$100). The producer will receive cost-share payments equal to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the filter strip, plus a PIP equal to 40 percent of the cost of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the filter strip. In addition, the State of Wisconsin will pay the producer an incentive payment equal to 20 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the filter strip. The state will also pay the producer \$9,840 (\$41 x 10 acres x 24) for entering into the perpetual easement.

Practice	Land Location*	Incentive
CP1, CP2, CP8A, CP21, CP22 and CP29	Grassland and Riparian Project Area	35 percent
CP23, CP23A and CP25		60 percent
CP8A, CP21, CP22, CP23, CP23A, CP29 and CP30	Lake Superior Basin Project Area	85 percent

\*Contact your local USDA service center FSA office for information about the project areas.

A Lafayette County producer elects to enroll 20 acres of land to be devoted to native grasses (practice CP2) in a 15-year contract, and enters into a state agreement that is concurrent with the term of the CRP contract. The base soil rental rate for the land is \$240 per acre. The incentive payment is \$84 per acre ( $\$240 \times .35$ ). The producer's annual rental rate will be \$324 per acre ( $\$240 + \$84$ ) for a total annual payment of \$6,480 ( $\$324 \times 20$  acres). The producer will receive \$97,200 in annual rental payments over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. The producer will receive cost-share payments equal to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the native grasses. In addition, the State of Wisconsin will pay the producer an incentive payment equal to 20 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the native grasses. The state will also pay the producer \$7,200 ( $\$240 \times 20$  acres  $\times 1.5$ ) for entering into the state agreement.

**Note:** The preceding are examples only.

## **ENROLLMENT OPTIONS**

CREP is another option under CRP that farmers and ranchers may select to enhance their land. Eligible producers may still enroll in CRP through general or continuous signup; however, the Wisconsin CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the Wisconsin CREP, producers receive higher incentive payments and longer contract lengths that increase the total amount of payments received.

## **HAYING AND GRAZING**

Haying and grazing are not allowed during the CRP contract period unless authorized by USDA. Contact your local FSA office for more information about authorized haying and grazing activities.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. For more information on CREP, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about FSA conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation).

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