



Farm Service
Agency

The Conservation Reserve Program: 49th Signup Results



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Photos made available by US Fish & Wildlife Service and USDA.



United States Department of Agriculture

OCT 18 2016

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Conservation Supporters:

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continues to thrive more than 30 years after its authorization in the 1985 Farm Bill. Being the largest voluntary conservation program, CRP provides environmental and economic benefits through partnerships with supporters like you.

CRP is no longer just an erosion-control program. It is a multifaceted program that not only provides natural habitat for wildlife, but also restores wetlands, protects streams, and removes carbon dioxide from the air. The environmental benefits and impacts are seen locally and nationally. CRP is one of the Department of Agriculture's most successful conservation programs.

CRP has prevented the erosion of more than 9 billion tons of soil, restored approximately 2.7 million acres of wetlands including grasses and trees, protected nearly 175,000 miles of streams, and removed hundreds of millions of tons of carbon dioxide from the air.

These conservation lands provide water quality protection, enhance wildlife habitat, and maintain soil productivity. CRP benefits local communities and suburban and urban residents, by protecting the water supply and air quality. It also provides numerous recreation benefits to Americans in the form of wildlife hunting and viewing.

CRP continues to promote partnerships with State and local conservation groups through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Currently, there are 47 CREP agreements in 33 States that improve water quality by filtering agricultural runoff, reducing soil erosion, aiding in flood control, enhancing wildlife habitat, and providing additional protection for watersheds.

The 2016 announcement of the 49th CRP Signup built upon the 30-year legacy of cooperative conservation and continues to help our Nation's farmers and ranchers maintain a healthy environment and a sound agricultural economy. I hope you will come away from this report with informed perspectives about how farmers and ranchers make conservation programs an investment to conserve and protect America's greatest treasure: our natural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom J. Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

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CRP Overview

Background

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary land conservation program for agricultural producers who agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve the health and quality of the environment. Producers enrolled in the CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers, such as introduced or native grasses or trees, to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, the FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance for 10 to 15 years. CRP may also be used to preserve existing grasslands.

CRP has a 30 year legacy of successfully protecting the Nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States. In 2015, as a result of CRP, the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous leaving farm fields were reduced by 500 million pounds and 100 million pounds, respectively. CRP has restored more than 2.7 million acres of wetlands and associated buffers and reduces soil erosion by more than 200 million tons per year.

CRP also provides about \$2 billion annually to landowners through rental, cost share, and incentive payments—dollars that make their way into local economies, supporting small businesses and creating jobs. In addition, CRP sequesters more carbon dioxide than any other conservation program on private lands. Over the past 5 years, CRP has sequestered an average of 49 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent per year. This is equal to removing 9 million cars from the road annually.

The 49th CRP Signup

The 49th CRP general signup began on December 1, 2015, and continued through February 26, 2016. As of August 2016, 24.2 million acres of land were enrolled in a CRP contract.

Eligibility Criteria

For land to be eligible for general signup, it must be:

- Cropland that has been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity 4 of the 6 years between 2008 and 2013; and
- Physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

Note: Alfalfa or other multiyear grasses and legumes grown in a rotation, not to exceed 12 years, also may be eligible.

Also, cropland must meet one of the following criteria:

- Have a weighted average Erodibility Index of eight or greater;
- Be expiring CRP; or
- Be located in a national or State conservation priority area.



CEPD, USDA.

CRP Overview

General Signup

FSA enrolls most CRP acres during periodic “general sign ups” at special times announced by USDA. Land is bid into the program on a competitive basis and ranked based on environmental benefits and costs.

Land offers are evaluated and ranked using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) based on the environmental benefits expected to improve the land if it is enrolled in the CRP.

The EBI is used to ensure that the most environmentally-sensitive lands relative to cost are selected and that all offers are fairly considered.

The six EBI factors are:

- N1, Wildlife Habitat Cover Benefits;
- N2, Water Quality Benefits From Reduced Erosion, Runoff and Leaching;
- N3, On-Farm Benefits of Reduced Erosion;
- N4, Enduring Benefits;
- N5, Air Quality Benefits; and
- N6, Cost.

Rental and Cost Share Payments

CRP rental rates are based on local dryland cash rental rates. Producers may offer land at these rates or may offer a lower rental rate to increase the likelihood that their offer will be acceptable.

CRP cost share assistance is available to eligible participants in an amount not to exceed 50 percent of the eligible costs of establishing the approved practice.



CEPD, USDA.

Other CRP Initiatives

CRP - Grassland Initiative

The grassland component of CRP was established through the 2014 Farm Bill. The program provides up to 50 percent cost-share assistance for conservation covers such as cross fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to benefit pollinators or other wildlife.

On May 5, 2016, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that up to 101,000 acres will be accepted during the first ranking period for the CRP sign-up, which will provide participants who maintain long-term, resource-conserving covers with annual rental payments up to 75 percent of the grazing value of the land

The Department received nearly 4,629 offers on more than 1.0 million acres of land.

Over 97 percent of the acceptable acres were enrolled by a beginning farmer/rancher, veteran, or underserved producer. More than 70 percent of these acres are diverse native grasslands under threat of conversion.

Acres and offers are selected and ranked based on six CRP Grassland ranking factors that include:

1. Current and future use,
2. New and underserved producer involvement,
3. Maximizing grassland preservation,
4. Vegetative cover,
5. Various environmental factors, and
6. Pollinator habitat.

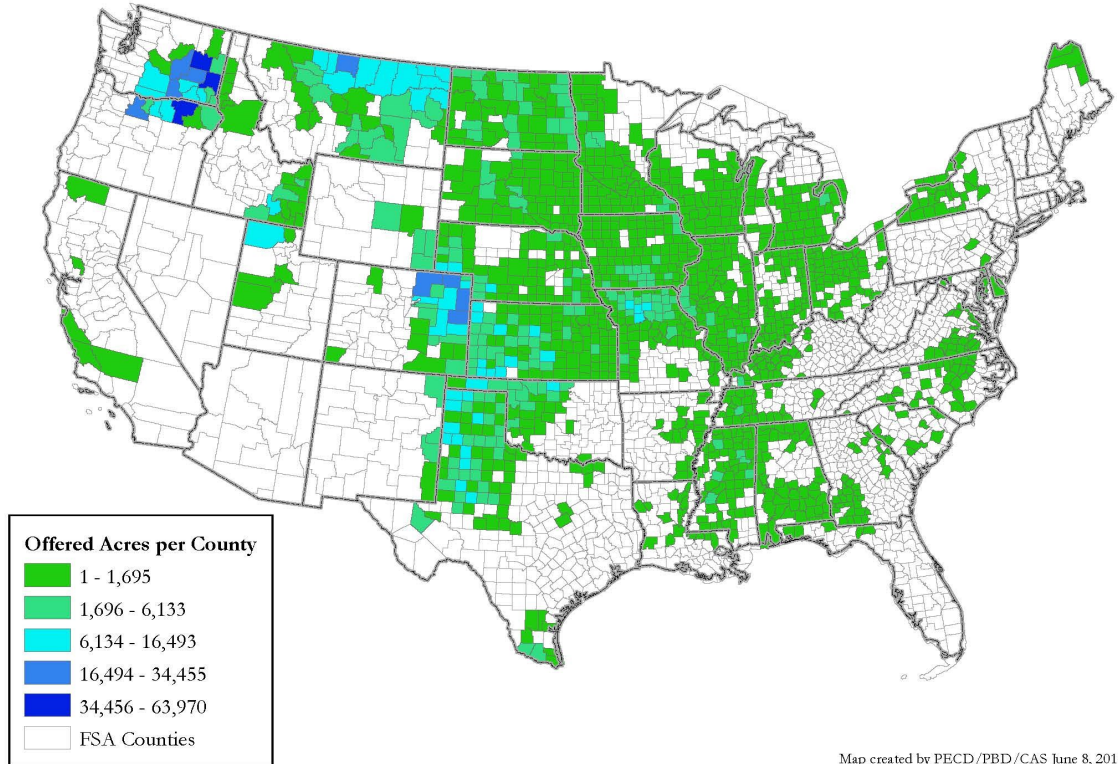


Range Pasture near Trinidad, Colorado, photo by Gary Kramer

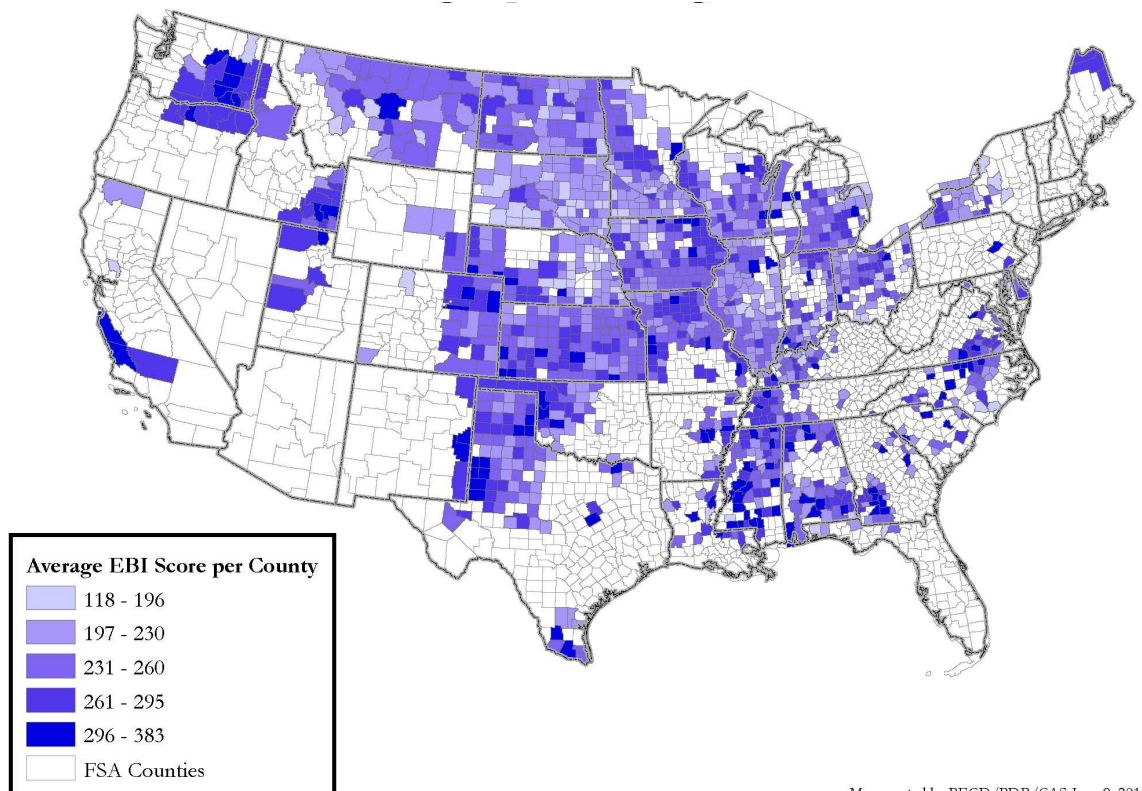
The 49th CRP Signup Results

Offered Acres

FSA received 26,279 offers to enroll about 1.86 million acres



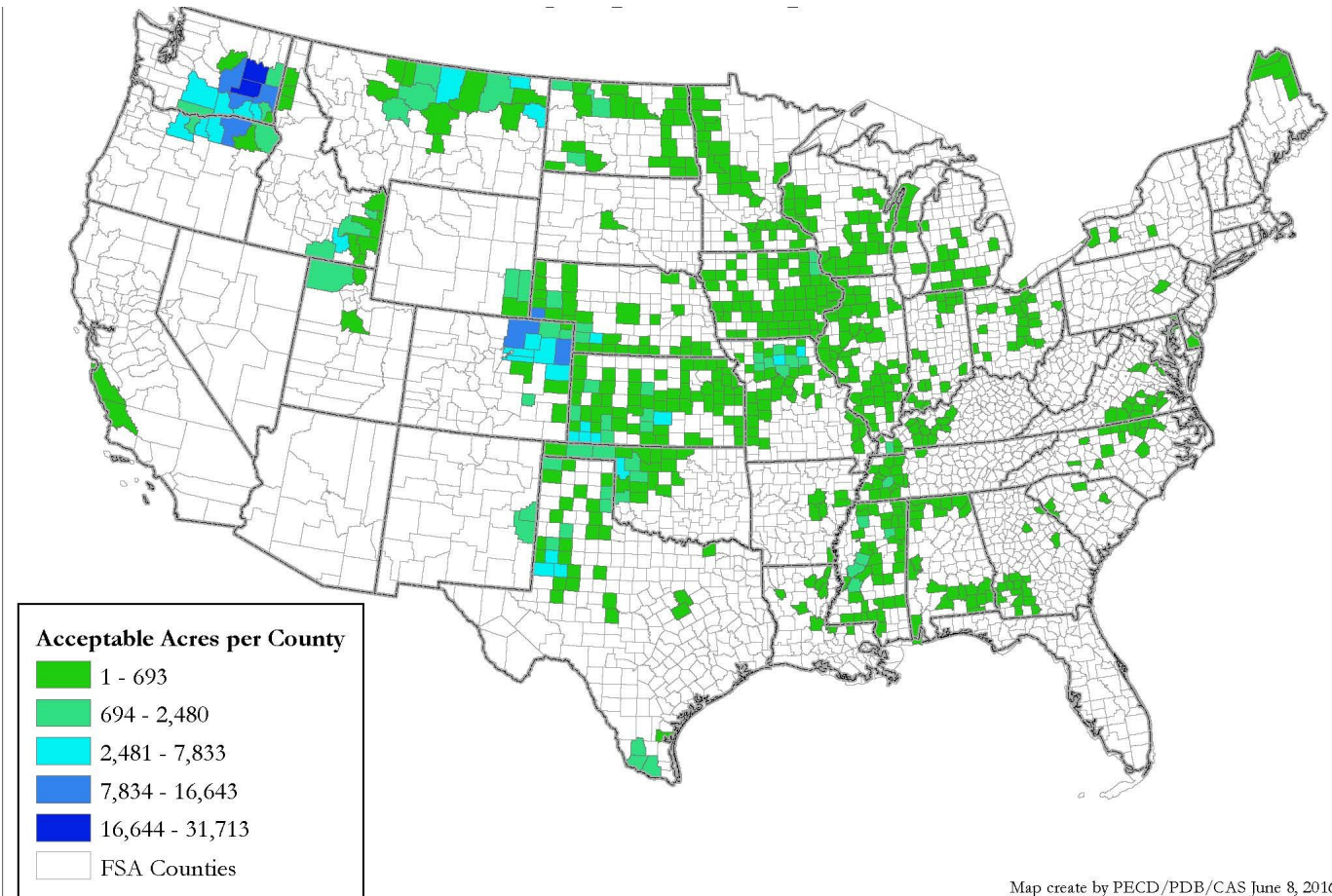
Average EBI Score



The 49th CRP Signup Results

Acceptable Acres

About 407,116 acres on 4,842 offers were acceptable.



The 49th CRP Signup Results

Table 1 - Offers Received, Acceptable Offers, and CRP Acreage

STATE	Offers Received	Acceptable Offers	Offered Acres	Acceptable Acres	Enrollment September 2016	Expiring 9/30/2016	Oct. 2016 Enrollment 1/
U.S.	26,279	4,842	1,857,414	407,416	23,880,556	1,657,034	23,491,305
ALABAMA	250	64	9,808	2,193	255,214	20,304	242,788
ALASKA	0	0	0	0	17,424	0	17,424
ARIZONA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ARKANSAS	108	28	4,971	1,046	231,506	14,965	230,093
CALIFORNIA	11	3	2,021	718	79,611	5,919	74,410
COLORADO	1,093	342	180,921	48,005	1,853,269	150,305	1,777,478
CONNECTICUT	0	0	0	0	49	0	49
DELAWARE	26	5	458	176	4,568	1,620	4,207
FLORIDA	20	0	585	0	31,478	1,282	30,239
GEORGIA	123	35	3,894	1,161	238,647	5,866	238,764
HAWAII	0	0	0	0	996	19	977
IDAHO	224	57	28,902	10,544	569,089	20,915	566,895
ILLINOIS	2,426	160	49,330	2,157	894,302	94,394	890,179
INDIANA	365	44	7,638	851	236,075	21,982	232,117
IOWA	2,310	401	63,391	9,725	1,688,975	99,542	1,788,890
KANSAS	2,802	498	212,939	44,156	2,132,782	142,932	2,078,551
KENTUCKY	367	111	9,620	2,790	251,035	17,549	250,714
LOUISIANA	81	20	4,041	811	289,305	5,744	287,975
MAINE	5	1	130	18	7,996	202	7,812
MARYLAND	20	6	303	130	63,326	9,948	58,484
MASSACHUSETTS	0	0	0	0	10	0	10
MICHIGAN	568	30	13,539	923	158,051	41,386	126,033
MINNESOTA	1,367	149	31,662	2,966	1,153,092	92,319	1,129,200
MISSISSIPPI	622	210	36,419	13,155	724,431	59,868	705,052
MISSOURI	2,649	472	121,307	20,867	990,321	84,867	967,893
MONTANA	1,084	138	188,276	17,829	1,408,702	71,663	1,367,171
NEBRASKA	1,599	288	88,381	25,024	781,976	63,103	799,969
NEVADA	0	0	0	0	146	0	146
NEW HAMPSHIRE	0	0	0	0	13	8	5
NEW JERSEY	0	0	0	0	2,062	132	2,058
NEW MEXICO	39	12	8,926	2,332	435,521	4,016	449,454
NEW YORK	61	3	1,365	75	38,544	5,605	34,424
NORTH CAROLINA	152	70	2,263	1,171	75,699	10,620	66,881
NORTH DAKOTA	1,094	69	74,059	5,944	1,539,085	44,103	1,533,228
OHIO	350	37	5,625	541	263,371	21,559	257,456
OKLAHOMA	598	139	55,528	12,188	717,251	42,324	688,901
OREGON	508	169	110,534	27,812	523,269	69,637	485,727
PENNSYLVANIA	3	2	20	9	155,703	9,244	150,002
PUERTO RICO	0	0	0	0	807	0	807
RHODE ISLAND	0	0	0	0	28	0	28
SOUTH CAROLINA	35	11	1,166	443	79,965	3,693	78,016
SOUTH DAKOTA	727	2	42,352	101	977,434	58,038	972,785
TENNESSEE	306	99	8,957	3,665	139,150	12,852	135,816
TEXAS	1,452	197	216,735	28,505	2,988,614	136,682	2,912,294
UTAH	54	13	9,302	1,287	170,856	5,293	166,850
VERMONT	0	0	0	0	2,882	586	2,715
VIRGINIA	211	43	4,236	982	51,370	10,401	45,529
UTAH	54	13	9,302	1,287	170,856	5,293	166,850
VERMONT	0	0	0	0	2,882	586	2,715
VIRGINIA	211	43	4,236	982	51,370	10,401	45,529
WASHINGTON	1,578	783	227,729	113,086	1,223,354	171,442	1,206,330
WEST VIRGINIA	1	0	40	0	6,564	355	6,277
WISCONSIN	957	124	17,886	1,988	238,305	22,821	231,770
WYOMING	33	7	12,155	2,043	188,337	932	190,435

1/ Includes FY2016 continuous signup and the first grasslands signup

The 49th CRP Signup Results

Table 2 - Description of Signup 49 Acceptable Acres

STATE NAME	Expiring Sept. 2013 (Acres)	New Lands (Acres) 1/	Average Rental Payment (\$/Acre)	Total Rental Payment (\$/Year)	Average EBI Score	
					without cost	with cost
NATIONAL	199,397	208,019	\$62.55	\$25,482,767	224	321
ALABAMA	2,135	58	\$52.16	\$114,392	213	315
ARKANSAS	532	514	\$74.97	\$78,444	249	335
CALIFORNIA	718	0	\$43.04	\$30,921	237	338
COLORADO	27,803	20,202	\$37.96	\$1,822,483	204	314
DELAWARE	176	0	\$77.01	\$13,549	200	302
GEORGIA	910	251	\$75.31	\$87,414	233	317
IDAHO	2,034	8,510	\$46.25	\$487,697	214	316
ILLINOIS	1,200	958	\$161.05	\$347,430	270	310
INDIANA	751	99	\$134.25	\$114,177	252	313
IOWA	4,472	5,253	\$198.09	\$1,926,480	290	311
KANSAS	19,244	24,912	\$49.53	\$2,187,219	226	326
KENTUCKY	790	2,000	\$143.37	\$400,026	269	315
LOUISIANA	663	148	\$53.44	\$43,332	208	314
MAINE						
MARYLAND	45	85	\$100.77	\$13,130	240	314
MICHIGAN	531	392	\$89.42	\$82,521	214	306
MINNESOTA	904	2,062	\$101.04	\$299,726	233	312
MISSISSIPPI	11,502	1,652	\$68.06	\$895,305	214	313
MISSOURI	6,333	14,534	\$136.17	\$2,841,322	260	310
MONTANA	4,285	13,544	\$36.13	\$644,191	200	307
NEBRASKA	5,219	19,805	\$42.63	\$1,066,747	244	346
NEW MEXICO	0	2,332	\$31.76	\$74,078	226	342
NEW YORK	58	17	\$56.98	\$4,267	221	318
NORTH CAROLINA	920	251	\$58.18	\$68,134	218	317
NORTH DAKOTA	2,315	3,629	\$45.19	\$268,594	202	307
OHIO	283	258	\$105.13	\$56,849	240	320
OKLAHOMA	3,784	8,404	\$36.34	\$442,960	203	313
OREGON	16,636	11,176	\$67.96	\$1,890,181	215	314
PENNSYLVANIA						
SOUTH CAROLINA	443	0	\$33.12	\$14,665	201	331
SOUTH DAKOTA						
TENNESSEE	2,425	1,240	\$112.88	\$413,705	250	313
TEXAS	12,963	15,542	\$38.79	\$1,105,690	217	323
UTAH	561	726	\$42.30	\$54,439	211	317
VIRGINIA	660	322	\$43.40	\$42,617	218	321
WASHINGTON	66,931	46,155	\$64.28	\$7,269,386	225	325
WISCONSIN	1,154	834	\$109.09	\$216,860	247	322
WYOMING	0	2,043	\$28.94	\$59,123	184	306

1/ Includes land that may have been in CRP in the past.

The 49th CRP Signup Results

Table 3 - Description of Signup 49 Acceptable Acres

STATE NAME	Average Erodibility Index (EI)	Highly Erodible (Acres)	National Priority Area (Acres)	State Priority Area (Acres)	Rare and Declining Habitat (Acres)	Permanent Wildlife Habitat (Acres)	Pollinator Habitat Offers	Pollinator Habitat (Acres)
NATIONAL	21	393,630	36,327	219,354	54,341	25,019	444	3,530
ALABAMA	25	2,193	1,432	1,048	0	62	0	
ARKANSAS	19	923	0	909	0	10	0	
CALIFORNIA	19	718	0	718	0	0	0	
COLORADO	17	48,005	0	0	384	6,370	50	860
DELAWARE	2	0	176	0	0	3	1	1
GEORGIA	12	1,069	1,063	104	0	21	0	
IDAHO	26	10,544	0	6,686	0	999	4	86
ILLINOIS	28	2,144	0	1,271	0	263	17	35
INDIANA	19	705	454	202	0	140	3	5
IOWA	34	9,701	923	6,805	5,462	269	67	320
KANSAS	17	40,066	0	32,999	19,328	6,443	39	250
KENTUCKY	52	2,790	0	2,707	628	1	5	32
LOUISIANA	19	708	197	578	0	0	1	5
MAINE								
MARYLAND	19	130	130	78	0	15	1	1
MICHIGAN	7	379	923	923	0	82	7	224
MINNESOTA	14	2,010	2,512	585	1,718	21	24	88
MISSISSIPPI	32	11,943	4,723	5,173	0	43	0	
MISSOURI	22	20,773	0	18,701	969	73	113	533
MONTANA	18	17,829	17,345	258	2,168	0	8	46
NEBRASKA	17	25,020	0	20,921	14,443	532	52	647
NEW MEXICO	17	2,332	0	0	0	0	0	
NEW YORK	19	75	75	0	0	0	0	
NORTH CAROLINA	22	1,062	58	1,114	0	74	0	
NORTH DAKOTA	16	5,944	4,521	1,369	641	3,357	4	32
OHIO	33	431	226	24	18	39	14	28
OKLAHOMA	15	11,896	0	10,778	117	136	1	7
OREGON	26	27,812	0	22,852	8,236	392	0	
PENNSYLVANIA								
SOUTH CAROLINA	14	300	411	30	0	0	0	
SOUTH DAKOTA								
TENNESSEE	30	3,665	0	116	0	5	0	
TEXAS	22	28,505	0	21,210	0	20	9	179
UTAH	17	1,287	0	728	0	0	0	
VIRGINIA	18	906	370	393	0	74	6	68
WASHINGTON	21	107,703	0	57,123	108	5,521	5	37
WISCONSIN	25	1,889	780	808	121	56	13	48
WYOMING	15	2,043	0	2,043	0	0	0	

Note: Acceptable acres may be listed in multiple categories.

The 49th CRP Signup Results

Table 4 - Description of Signup 49 Acceptable Acres

STATE NAME	Introduced Grass	Native Grass	Total Grass	Hardwood Trees	Softwood Trees	Total Trees
NATIONAL	61,958	232,531	294,489	10,691	18,692	29,383
ALABAMA	0	0	0	95	2,032	2,128
ARKANSAS	0	139	139	867	31	897
CALIFORNIA	718	0	718	0	0	0
COLORADO	54	40,325	40,378	0	0	0
DELAWARE	0	0	0	172	0	172
GEORGIA	0	0	0	40	1,100	1,140
IDAHO	4,883	4,497	9,380	0	79	79
ILLINOIS	754	243	997	826	5	831
INDIANA	108	95	203	492	0	492
IOWA	962	972	1,934	1,673	7	1,680
KANSAS	48	18,012	18,060	0	0	0
KENTUCKY	1,458	561	2,020	91	0	91
LOUISIANA	5	0	5	328	468	796
MAINE						
MARYLAND	78	30	108	0	7	7
MICHIGAN	189	201	391	174	37	210
MINNESOTA	168	116	284	611	209	820
MISSISSIPPI	294	0	294	2,490	10,302	12,792
MISSOURI	11,359	5,904	17,263	1,937	0	1,937
MONTANA	5,844	9,747	15,591	0	0	0
NEBRASKA	173	9,204	9,377	5	0	5
NEW MEXICO	0	2,332	2,332	0	0	0
NEW YORK	52	0	52	3	21	23
NORTH CAROLINA	0	14	14	0	1,083	1,083
NORTH DAKOTA	1,542	311	1,852	15	0	15
OHIO	130	120	250	177	22	199
OKLAHOMA	879	11,039	11,917	0	0	0
OREGON	11,954	7,148	19,102	0	79	79
PENNSYLVANIA						
SOUTH CAROLINA	0	0	0	0	443	443
SOUTH DAKOTA						
TENNESSEE	889	856	1,744	138	1,770	1,908
TEXAS	684	27,609	28,293	0	0	0
UTAH	1,287	0	1,287	0	0	0
VIRGINIA	10	74	84	0	741	741
WASHINGTON	14,963	92,260	107,223	0	106	106
WISCONSIN	348	687	1,035	551	150	701
WYOMING	2,043	0	2,043	0	0	0

Note: Acceptable acres may be listed as multiple categories.

Continuous CRP

Continuous CRP Signup

Continuous signup provides an effective, ongoing means to enroll certain practices such as filter strips, riparian buffers, grass waterways, shelterbelts, field windbreaks, wetlands restoration, and high-valued wildlife habitat. Unlike general sign up, there is no bidding and ranking; the land is enrolled automatically if it meets the legibility criteria.

As of October 31, 2016, 23.5 million acres of land are enrolled in a CRP contract; 7.3 million acres were cumulatively enrolled for all continuous CRP sign up conservation practices; and 1.1 million acres were enrolled in 47 CREP projects in 34 states.

Overall, nearly 4.45 million acres are enrolled in the following nine targeted continuous signup initiatives:

- Upland Bird Habitat Nesting: 228,622 acres.
The Upland Bird Habitat Nesting initiative helps producers plant ground covers, shrubs, and grass, to provide appropriate habitat conditions for common upland birds such as northern bobwhite quail. Studies show that these conservation practices have increased the upland bird species populations. Up to 500,000 acres can be enrolled in this initiative.
- Prairie Pothole Duck Habitat: 357,703 acres
The Prairie Pothole Duck Habitat initiative helps increase duck populations by an estimated 60,000 birds annually and may enroll up to 600,000 acres in this initiative.
- Bottomland Hardwood: 137,789 acres
The Bottomland Hardwood initiative works to improve air quality and water quality on up to 250,000 acres as well as increase wildlife habitat along wetland areas.
- Non-Floodplain Wetland Restoration: 467,989 acres
Since 2005, the Non-Floodplain Wetland Restoration initiative has provided an opportunity to enroll up to 568,000 acres of wetlands and playa lakes located outside of the 100-year floodplain.
- Floodplain Wetlands Restoration: 361,751 acres.
Available since 2004, the Floodplain Wetlands Restoration initiative provides an opportunity to enroll up to 482,000 acres of wetlands located in the 100-year floodplain.
- State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): 98 projects in 37 states, and 1,453,757 acres.
State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) provides states and regions the opportunity to conserve 1,750,000 acres for high-priority wildlife such as sage grouse, lesser prairie chicken, and ring-necked pheasant.
- Longleaf Pine: 164,125 acres.
The Longleaf Pine initiative's goal is to repopulate the natural longleaf pine forest ranges by enrolling up to 250,000 acres throughout nine Southern states. Re-establishing some of the original range of 60 million acres will improve water quality, provide critical habitat for wildlife, and help sequester greenhouse gases.
- Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI): 544,778 acres.
Enrollment under the Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI) began in late 2012 to protect up to 750,000 acres of the Nation's most highly erodible croplands. Eligibility is limited to land with an Erodibility Index of 20 or more.
- Pollinator Habitat initiative: 341,684 acres
The Pollinator Habitat initiative is used in addition to the pollinator practice under General Signup to permit producers to develop pollinator habitat for many pollinator species by enrolling up to 400,000 acres.

The Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP): 393,732 acres
The FWP is allowed to restore up to 750,000 acres of farmable wetland and associated buffers by improving the land's hydrology and vegetation through CRP. Eligible land types authorized include certain cropped wetlands, former commercial aquaculture, flooded land located in the prairie pothole region, and constructed wetlands to receive flows from row crop drainage systems.

About the Farm Service Agency's Conservation and Environmental Programs Division (CEPD):

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency's Conservation and Environmental Programs Division serves the Nation's agricultural producers, providing assistance and opportunities for producers to voluntarily invest in safeguarding environmentally sensitive lands.

CEPD implements multiple diverse programs that help accomplish these goals, including the following programs:

- Biomass Crop Assistance Program
- Conservation Reserve Program
- Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- Emergency Forest Restoration Program
- Emergency Conservation Program
- Farmable Wetlands Program
- Source Water Protection Program

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency
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