

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Louisiana Coastal Prairie Region

Overview

USDA and the State of Louisiana have entered into an agreement to implement CREP II in the Coastal Prairie region, which includes portions of Acadia, Allen, Calcasieu, Evangeline, Jefferson Davis, St. Landry and Vermilion Parishes.

This voluntary program encourages landowners to enroll environmentally sensitive cropland into CRP for 14 to 15 years.

Goals

The goal of the Coastal Prairie CREP II is to enroll up to 15,050 acres into CRP to help reduce the delivery of agricultural non-point source pollution through the establishment of native grasses, shallow water areas for wildlife, and rare and declining habitat areas. The specific goals of the Coastal Prairie CREP II are to:

- Reduce sediment loading to streams, bayous and lakes by 30 percent;
- Reduce runoff containing dissolved nitrogen and phosphorus by a reduction of 86,000 to 258,000 tons from current levels over 10 years;
- Minimize declining water levels by reducing groundwater consumption by 8.4 billion gallons per year from current levels and;
- Increase the native Coastal Prairie acreage by 500 percent to more than 2,500 acres.

CRP Contract

Applicants will enroll eligible cropland into a 14 to 15 year CRP contract.

For purposes of the Coastal Prairie CREP II, all approved CREP practices shall be eligible for enrollment on a continuous basis.

All CREP enrolled practice acreage must be established at planting rates for species as specified within CRP provisions or as written into the Conservation Plan by the USDA's Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) or other technical service provider (TSP).

No acreage may be enrolled unless it equals or exceeds 0.1 acre.

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Eligible Coastal Prairie CREP II Practices

The following practices are eligible for Coastal Prairie CREP II:

Practice CP2 – Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses (up to 11,000 acres).

Practice CP9 – Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife (1,550 acre limit).

Practice CP25 – Rare and Declining Habitat (2,500 acre limit).

Eligibility Requirements

Land that meets the eligibility criteria set forth in the USDA-

Louisiana CREP Agreement and in current CRP provisions of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) may be considered for enrollment under this CREP. Land offered for this CREP must be located within the Mermentau watershed.

Acreage offered must be cropland that was planted or considered planted to a crop in four of the six years that range from 2002 through 2007. Land that meets cropping history requirements must be physically and legally capable of being cropped in a normal manner.

Landowners must meet a 12-month ownership requirement, as set forth within current CRP provisions.

Every offer will have not less than 10 percent, nor greater than 20 percent, of the offered acreage suitable for the establishment of CP25, Rare & Declining Habitat, as determined by NRCS or TSP.

Practice CP9 acres will be limited to a maximum of 45 acres per FSA tract.

Additional eligibility requirements are applicable and may be obtained from USDA Service Centers located within the CREP project area.

Program Benefits

Cost-share up to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs of all approved CRP conserva-

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tion practices. Cost-share from all sources shall not exceed 100 percent of the participant's out of pocket expenses.

The annual payment shall be the sum of two components comprised of the base soil rental rate (SRR) and an incentive payment (.5 X SRR). All such rental payments are subject to payment limitation laws and regulations.

A one-time Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) is authorized for practice CP9 that is equal to 40 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost of the practice.

A one-time state Best Management Practice (BMP) payment of \$61.10 per acre is available for all Coastal Prairie CREP II approved contracts.

A one-time State Habitat Incentive Cost-Share Payment (SHIP) payment is available at a rate of 50 percent cost-share for CP25 acres.

A one-time (SHIP) payment is available at a rate of 40 percent cost-share for CP2 acres.

More Information

More information on the Louisiana Coastal Prairie CREP II is available at local FSA offices and on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.

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