

# Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – Idaho Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer

(CREP)



## Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Idaho are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 50,000 acres of agricultural land within the State of Idaho. The Idaho Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer CREP is intended to reduce the amount of irrigation water use, conserve energy, and reduce the amount of agricultural chemicals and sediment entering the waters of Idaho from agricultural lands.

## Background

CREP is a voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water.

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 agricultural 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.

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 Idaho Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 10- to 11-year contracts. Participants remove cropland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses, trees, or other approved vegetation. This will enhance wildlife habitat in the area and improve water quality by reducing the pollutants that enter streams and rivers.

## Goals

The goals of the Idaho Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer CREP include:

- To cease the application of water on up to 50,000 acres of irrigated cropland;
- To reduce consumptive water use from the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer by up to 100,000 acre-feet annually; and
- To provide up to 50,000 additional acres of native grassland habitat for wildlife.

## Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- CP2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat

## For More Info

CREP is one option under CRP that farmers and ranchers may select to enhance their land. Eligible producers may also enroll land in CRP through the general, continuous, or grassland signups; however, CREP may provide additional benefits not available through those signup types such as higher incentive payments and longer contract lengths that increase the total amount of rental payments received.

For more information on this project, contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

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Credit to "Idaho Fish and Game".

## Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the Idaho Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be irrigated cropland located in the project area. Cropland must be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity and have been irrigated at a rate of at least one-half acre-foot per acre per year for four of the last six years.

## Payments

Under the Idaho Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- An annual rental payment based on county per-acre irrigated rental rates, as determined by CCC
- A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible cost to install approved conservation practices

In addition, the State of Idaho will make an annual payment equal to 13 percent of the CCC per acre annual rental payment.

## Enrollment Options

CREP is another option under CRP that farmer and ranchers may select to enhance their land. Eligible producers may still enroll eligible land in CRP through general or continuous enrollment authority; however, the Idaho Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer CREP provides additional benefits, not available through the general and/or continuous enrollment.

## Haying and Grazing

Contact your local FSA office for more information about authorized haying and grazing activities.