

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program-Oregon State

Overview

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and the state of Oregon are jointly implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to protect environmentally sensitive land along streams and other water bodies. The original agreement was signed in 1998 and is viewed as a community-based, results oriented effort based on local participation and a unique partnership between agricultural land owners, the state and federal government and, in some cases, municipalities.

Oregon's CREP addresses high-priority conservation issues of both local and national significance, such as impacts to water quality, loss of critical habitat for threatened and endangered wild-fire species, soil erosion and reduced habitat for fish populations such as the nine salmon and two trout species listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Program Goals

Goals of the Oregon CREP are:

- Reducing water temperature to natural levels;
- Reducing the sediment and nutrient pollution from agricultural land adjacent to streams;
- Restoring stream bank vegetation to a properly functioning condition and;
- Stabilizing stream banks to normal non-flood conditions.

Program Authorizations

The Oregon CREP is authorized to enroll up to 100,000 acres including forested riparian buffers, filter strips, restored wetlands and herbaceous wildlife buffers.

Program Responsibilities

Under this agreement CCC provides a signing incentive payment equaling 50 percent of the cost of establishing conservation practices plus a practice incentive payment, an annual rental rate, an annual maintenance payment when applicable under national policy and a portion of the technical assistance cost.

The state of Oregon will pay 25 percent of the cost of establishing conservation practices, all the costs of monitoring requirements and a portion of the technical assistance costs.

Payments and Incentives

Annual rental payments will be based on the soil rental rate for cropland acres and a county-based rental rate for marginal pastureland. Rates for irrigated land may be paid on the condition that the participant also signs an agreement with the state to lease irrigation rights on the contract acreage under an in-stream use for the length of the contract.

In addition to annual rental rates and, under certain practices, maintenance payments, CCC will make annual incentive payments at the following rates:

- For filter strips, 25 percent of the normal rental rate;
- For riparian buffers and wetland restoration, 50 percent of the normal rental rate.

In any case in which more than 50 percent of the land along a five-mile stream segment is enrolled, producers will receive a one-time cumulative impact incentive payment of four times the basic annual rental rate.

Eligible Practices

For Oregon's CREP eligible practices are:

- CP21 (Filter Strip);
- CP22 (Forested Riparian Buffer);
- CP23 (Wetland Restoration);
- CP29 (Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer) and;
- CP30 (Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer).

Eligibility

Eligible land includes those acres along a stream (or wetland) with a historic presence of a salmonid species or in areas covered by Oregon's Water Quality Management Plans. In addition to offering eligible acreage along seasonal or perennial streams or hydrologically connected wetlands the applicant must satisfy the basic eligibility requirement for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Land must be cropland that has been planted or considered planted four of the six crop years 2002 through 2007 and must be physically and legally capable of being

cropped. Marginal pastureland also is eligible to be enrolled as long as it is suitable for the selected practice.

Producers are eligible if the land has been owned or operated by the applicant for at least one year prior to enrollment. Land with an existing CRP contract or an approved offer with a contract pending are not eligible for CREP until that contract expires.

Oregon CREP enrollment is on a continuous basis and interested applicants can sign up at the local USDA Service Center.

More Information

Additional information about CREP is available at the Oregon State FSA Office and on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/.

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