

Farm Service Agency

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – West Virginia Cheat, Kanawha, Little Kanawha, Monongahela, Potomac, and Ohio Rivers Watersheds

FACT SHEET
May 2018

Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of West Virginia are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 9,160 acres of agricultural land in the Cheat, Kanawha, Little Kanawha, Monongahela, Potomac, and Ohio Rivers Watersheds. The West Virginia CREP is intended to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, reduce the amount of sediment, phosphorous and other pollutants entering waterbodies, improve wildlife habitat and restore 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 agricultural land is not farmed, 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 and Security Act of 1985, as amended.

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 West Virginia CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 10-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 by reducing sediment, nutrients, nitrogen and other pollutants from entering streams and rivers, and enhance wildlife habitat in the area.



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Goals

The goals of the West Virginia CREP are to:

- Reduce sediments, nutrients, nitrogen and other pollutants from entering waterbodies;
- Reduce soil erosion;
- Improve water quality through wetland restoration; and
- Enhance wildlife habitat, including aquatic 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;
CP3A	Hardwood Tree Planting
CP21	Filter Strips
CP22	Riparian Buffer
CP23	Wetland Restoration

Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment for the West Virginia 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 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.

Payments

Under the West Virginia CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre for installing practices CP21 and CP22; or \$150 per acre for installing practice CP23. Example: 10 acres enrolled to be devoted to practice CP22 result in a \$1,000 (10 acres x \$100) SIP. This payment is made soon after the contract has been signed and approved.
- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) for installing practices CP21, CP22, and CP23. The PIP is equal to 40 percent of eligible cost of installing the practice. Example: Producer’s total eligible cost of installing the practice is \$2,000. The PIP would be \$800 (\$2,000 x .40).
- An annual rental payment consisting of:
 - A base soil rental rate, determined by (1) for cropland, the three predominant soils of the land offered; or (2) for marginal pastureland, the posted marginal pastureland rate for the county;
 - An incentive payment, as a percentage of the base soil rental rate, of 100 percent; and
 - A maintenance payment, determined by the practice offered.
- A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to install the approved practice.



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- A one-time Chesapeake Bay incentive payment (CBIP) in an amount equal to (1) \$200 per acre for land not previously enrolled in CRP; and (2) \$500 per acre for land currently enrolled in CRP that is re-enrolled. This one-time payment is available for practice CP22 only, only for land located within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and only for CRP contracts that are 14 to 15 years in duration. Example: 10 acres of land currently enrolled in CRP located within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed are re-enrolled in CRP to be devoted to practice CP22 under a 15-year contract. The one-time CBIP is \$5,000 ($\500×10 acres).

In addition, the State of West Virginia provides the following payments to eligible participants:

- A one-time lump-sum incentive payment the base soil rental rate times the number of acres enrolled; and
- A one-time incentive payment in an amount equal to \$40 per acre. This one-time payment is available for practice CP22 only, only for land located within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and only for CRP contracts that are 14 to 15 years in duration.

Examples

A Hampshire County producer elects to re-enroll 10 acres of land currently enrolled in CRP as a riparian buffer (practice CP22) in a 15-year contract. The base soil rental rate for the land is \$34 per acre. The per-acre incentive payment is \$34 per acre ($\34×1.0). The annual per-acre maintenance payment is \$10 per acre. The producer's annual rental rate will be \$78 per acre ($\$34 + \$34 + \10), for a total annual payment of \$780 ($\78×10 acres). The producer will receive \$11,700 in annual rental payments over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. In addition, the producer will receive the following payments:

- A one-time lump-sum incentive payment from the State of West Virginia of \$340;
- A one-time Chesapeake Bay incentive payment from FSA of \$5,000; and
- A one-time incentive payment from the State of West Virginia of \$400.

A Mercer County producer elects to enroll 40 acres of to be devoted to hardwood trees (practice CP3A) in a 15-year contract. The base soil rental rate for the land is \$45 per acre. The per-acre incentive payment is \$45 per acre ($\45×1.0). The producer's annual rental rate will be \$90 per acre ($\$45 + \45), for a total annual payment of \$3,600 ($\90×40 acres). The producer will receive \$54,000 in annual rental payments over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. In addition, the producer will receive the following payments:

- Cost-share payments equal to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the practice; and
- A one-time lump-sum incentive payment from the State of West Virginia of \$1,800 ($\45×40 acres);

Note: The preceding are examples only.



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Enrollment Options

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

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.