

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

New York City



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of New York, and New York City are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 5,000 acres of agricultural land, of which 2,000 acres will be reserved for enrollment as riparian buffers in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds. The purpose of the New York City CREP is to enhance water quality by reduction of agricultural sources of sediment, nutrients, and waterborne pathogens and the enhancement of wildlife habitats in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds of the New York City drinking water supply system.

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 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 New York City CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 10 to 15-year contracts. Participants

remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses, trees, or other approved vegetation. 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.

Goals

The goals of the New York City CREP include:

- To reduce sediment and nutrient pollution from entering the tributaries, main stems, and reservoirs in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds.
- To promote the continued health and viability of natural habitats and ecosystems.
- To establish riparian buffers on 2,000 acres.



More Information

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. Consult your local FSA office for details.

For more information, contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: farmers.gov/service-locator, or,

USDA Farm Service Agency New York State Office
441 S. Salina St
Suite 536
Syracuse, NY 13202
(315) 477-6300



Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

Eligible CRP practices for lands qualifying on the basis of erodibility will be:

- CP 1, Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses
- CP 2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- CP 3, Tree Planting
- CP 3A, Hardwood Tree Planting
- CP 4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat

Eligible CRP practices for lands qualifying as riparian buffers will be:

- CP 21, Filter Strip
- CP 22, Riparian Buffer
- CP 23, Wetland Restoration

Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the New York City CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in New York in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds of the New York City drinking water supply system. Land must be either cropland or marginal pastureland. Cropland must meet cropping history criteria according to current FSA National CRP Directives and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

Payments

Under the New York City CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP).
- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of eligible reimbursable costs incurred for installation of CP21, CP22 practices.
- An annual rental payment consisting of:
 - A base soil rental rate, determined by the soils of the land offered.
 - An incentive payment equal to as follows, except for land enrolled or re-enrolled under infeasible-to-farm provisions.
 - 100 percent of the established county rental rate, for land qualifying on the basis of erodibility.
 - 100 percent of the established county rental rate, for land to be established to riparian buffers.
 - A maintenance incentive payment for CP21 and CP22 practices.
- A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible cost to install the approved practice.

In addition, the State of New York will pay 50 percent of the reimbursable costs for conservation practice installation.

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 New York City CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup.

Haying and Grazing

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