

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Skaneateles Lake, New York



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the city of Syracuse, New York are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 1000 acres of agricultural land in the Skaneateles Lake watershed. The purpose of the Skaneateles Lake CREP is to assist in the maintenance of current water quality conditions through the reduction of agricultural sources of sediment, nutrients, and waterborne pathogens.

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 Skaneateles Lake 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 or 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 Skaneateles Lake CREP include:

- To reduce the risk of pathogens from animal waste applied to pasture and cropland.
- To reduce sediment deposits attributed to cropland erosion in Skaneateles Lake and its tributaries.
- To reduce nutrient runoff from animal waste and fertilizer applied to adjacent cropland and pastures.
- To assist the city of Syracuse to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- To establish, preserve, or enhance wildlife habitat leading to an increase in populations and diversity of birds, mammals, and aquatic organisms.



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:

- CP1, Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes
- CP2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- CP3, Tree Planting
- CP3A, Hardwood Tree Planting
- CP8A, Grass Waterway
- CP9, Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife
- CP15A, Establishment of Permanent Vegetative Cover-Contour Grass Strip
- CP21, Filter Strip
- CP22, Riparian Buffer

Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the Skaneateles Lake CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in New York. 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 Skaneateles Lake 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.
- An annual rental payment consisting of:
 - A base soil rental rate, determined by the soils of the land offered.
 - An incentive payment for lands qualifying as riparian buffers or on the basis of erosion, except for land enrolled or re-enrolled under infeasible-to-farm provisions.
 - A maintenance incentive payment for applicable 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 provide further cost-share assistance not to exceed 100 percent of the total eligible costs to establish eligible practices.

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 Skaneateles Lake CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the Skaneateles Lake CREP, producers receive higher incentive payments and longer contract lengths that increase the total amount of rental payments received.

Haying and Grazing

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