

For: State and County Offices

Preparing for CRP General Signup 39

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

General signup 39 is being developed to continue acceptance of offers of environmentally-sensitive acreage for new 10- to 15-year contracts to cost effectively enroll acreage for program year 2011.

For signup 39, FSA will use the environmental benefits index (EBI) to rank offers for selection. The Tool for Environmental Resource Results Assessment (TERRA) and Conservation Online System (COLS) are web-based EBI determination tools which must be used for the general signup 39. These tools will use similar databases (soils, conservation priority areas (CPA's), zones, etc.) that were used for previous general signups.

B Setting Priorities

State and County Offices shall set workload priorities and plan office activities accordingly to ensure timely program implementation.

C Purpose

This notice provides the following:

- signature requirements and deadline for CRP-1's
- policy for using interim conservation plans
- Interim Conservation Plan Addendum (Exhibit 1)
- Interim Conservation Plan (Exhibit 2)
- other general information.

Disposal Date	Distribution
June 1, 2011	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

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2 Pre-Signup Activities for General Signup 39

A Preparing for Signup

County Offices will use TERRA and COLS to process offers for general signup 39. To assist State and County Offices in preparing for general signup 39, the following notices and pre-populated files have been provided.

- National and State CPA's and conservation priority zones according to Notice:
 - CRP-651, Renewing and Revising State Conservation Priority Areas (CPA's)
 - CRP-653, Additional Policy for Renewing and Revising State Conservation Priority Areas (CPA's)
 - CRP-668, National and State Conservation Priority Area (CPA) Start Date.
- Updated CRP soils data according to Notice:
 - CRP-661, Preparing Soils Data for General Signup
 - CRP-663, Revised Soil Rental Rates (SRR's) for 2010
 - CRP-665, Grouped Soil Productivity Factors for 2010 SRR's
 - CRP-667, Effective Dates for 2010 SRR's.
- Cropland provisions according to Notice:
 - CRP-662, Revised Policy and Reporting Requirements for County Cropland Limits
 - CRP-666, Revised Policy and Reporting Requirements for WRP.
- Rainfall and climatic factors according to Notice CRP-669, Rainfall (R) and Climatic (C) Factors for Soil Erosion Equations.
- Look-up tables for EBI factors N2b, N2c, and N5a, as established.

B Running COLS Downloader after July 28, 2010

Updates to COLS and the Soils Data Management System are ongoing and are expected to occur July 26 through July 28, 2010. Therefore, County Offices **must** re-run the COLS downloader **on or after** July 29, 2010, and **before** August 3, 2010. The COLS downloader **must** be re-run **before** creating offers scenarios in TERRA and processing offers in COLS on August 2, 2010.

Note: The COLS downloader is computer specific. All computers that will run the TERRA tool will require the COLS downloader to be run.

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2 Pre-Signup Activities for General Signup 39 (Continued)

C Producer Post Card Notifications

Post cards notifications will be sent by the National Office the week of August 2, 2010, to **all** participants with **general** signup CRP-1's scheduled to expire on September 30, 2010.

See Exhibit 3 for an example of the postcard notifications.

3 Required Practice Information for Final Conservation Plan

A Job Sheets

When developing the final conservation plan, State Conservation Program Specialists must work with the NRCS State CRP Program Manager, State fish and game officials, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to update or develop job sheets by practice, to provide County Offices, on seeding practice requirements for all applicable practices.

Notes: It is possible that multiple job sheets could be needed if there is a variance because of soil properties, moisture regimes, etc., that would impact planting requirements.

The National Office did **not** revise the practice point values or seeding mixes used in EBI.

As part of these job sheets, State Offices shall request soil limitations for suitable vegetation by practice about the following that include, but is not limited to:

- grasses
- legumes
- forbs
- shrubs
- trees.

These tables must list the factors (salinity, water table, depth to bedrock, etc.) that would limit planting decisions or practice options for CRP.

Example: Depth to bedrock may limit potential to plant CP3A, hardwood trees, on a site. County Office personnel must have soil limitation data to ensure that all practices listed with CRP offers have suitable soil types.

Note: Longleaf pine suitability index information is recorded in the CRP Soil Database automatically applied by the TERRA and COLS offer system.

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3 Required Practice Information for Final Conservation Plan (Continued)

A Job Sheets (Continued)

These job sheets should include a minimum of the following:

- seed bed and site preparation
- timing of seeding or planting
- fertilization requirements
- weed control
- varieties of seed or planting material
- amount of seeding or planting
- maintenance requirements for the practice
- soil limitations
- management measures by practice.

B Cost Estimates for Practices

For the “new offer” COLS process, FSA will establish a cost for each practice to be used for the total estimated practice cost for each offer. County Offices shall establish an estimated total C/S amount using flat rate C/S rates for components that accurately reflect the average per acre cost of installing the whole practice. Do **not** use “not to exceed” rates when establishing this cost. This cost data will be used in the COLS software.

4 Signup 39 Signature Requirements

A Requirements

To ensure CRP-1’s for general signup 39 are approved by September 30, 2010, **all** participants are strongly encouraged to sign and date CRP-1 no later than COB September 17, 2010.

Note: See 2-CRP, paragraph 335 for signature requirements during signup.

5 Interim Conservation Plan Provisions for Signup 39

A Background

Generally, an approved conservation plan must be completed and signed before CRP-1 may be approved. However, because of the timing of general signup 39, interim conservation plans are authorized.

B Authority to Use Interim Conservation Plan

The interim conservation plan is authorized for signup 39 **only**.

5 **Interim Conservation Plan Provisions for Signup 39 (Continued)**

C Interim Conservation Plan Policy

FSA has developed the Interim Conservation Plan Addendum (Exhibit 1) and the Interim Conservation Plan (Exhibit 2) to be used for signup 39 CRP-1's. The interim conservation plan may **only** be used for signup 39 CRP-1's.

The interim conservation plan must contain:

- the CRP practice number (CP1, CP2, etc.)
- NRCS technical practice code 327, Conservation Cover.

County Offices must ensure that all data entries on the interim conservation plan are completed based on information from TERRA and COLS. The Interim Conservation Plan **and** Interim Conservation Plan Addendum must be signed by at least one CRP-1 participant and CED after completion but no later than September 17, 2010.

Notes: The specifications for all applicable practices shall be included in the final conservation plan.

All signatories to the CRP contract must sign CRP-1 by COB September 17, 2010; however, only one CRP-1 participant signature is required on the Interim Conservation Plan Addendum and Interim Conservation Plan.

Interim conservation plans are **not** authorized for CRP-1's for any other CRP signup.

Note: Job sheets are **not** required for interim conservation plans.

County Offices must reproduce the Interim Conservation Plan Addendum (Exhibit 1) and the Interim Conservation Plan (Exhibit 2) locally.

D Final Conservation Plan Completed

A final conservation plan must be completed no later than December 31, 2010. The NRCS National Office has agreed with this deadline. For signup 39, a final conservation plan is the approved conservation plan completed after an interim plan has been in effect for CRP-1.

Notes: COC's shall **not** approve CRP-1 until at least 1 signature is obtained on the Interim Conservation Plan and Interim Conservation Plan Addendum.

Participants must be notified that starting a practice before approval of CRP-1 is at their own risk. C/S will only be paid for those eligible costs that are approved under the interim or final plan.

The specifications for all applicable practices shall be included in the final conservation plan, consistent with procedure in 2-CRP.

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5 Interim Conservation Plan Provisions for Signup 39 (Continued)

D Final Conservation Plan Completed (Continued)

SED's shall:

- inform CED's that they can approve CRP-1's with an interim conservation plan
- instruct COC's to terminate CRP-1 if the participant does not sign the final conservation plan. Liquidated damages and refunds shall apply, as applicable.

6 Continuous Signup Provisions

A Continuous Signup

2-CRP, subparagraph 171 B provides that CRP continuous signup numbers shall change at the beginning of each FY. County Offices are currently taking continuous offers for program year 2010 under continuous signup number 38. For FY 2011, continuous signup number 40 will begin on October 1, 2010.

B PIP and SIP

PIP and SIP payments will continue to be made according to established procedure.

C Concurrent Signups

General signup 39 will be held concurrently with continuous signup 38. County Offices shall process offers of acreage under continuous signup provisions during the general signup period.

7 Action

A State Office Action

State Offices shall:

- make preparation for CRP general signup a high priority when setting workload priorities and scheduling office activities
- follow the provisions of this notice
- ensure that County Offices follow the provisions of this notice.

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7 Action (Continued)

B County Office Action

County Offices shall:

- make preparation for CRP general signup a high priority when setting workload priorities and scheduling office activities
- follow the provisions of this notice, including re-running the COLS downloader **on or after** July 29, 2010.

Interim Conservation Plan Addendum

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM SIGN-UP 39 FY 2011 CONTRACTS INTERIM CONSERVATION PLAN ADDENDUM	
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> NAME	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> FARM NUMBER
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> TRACT NUMBER	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> FIELD NUMBER(S)
<p>The attached interim conservation plan is general in nature but is intended to allow your contract period to begin upon approval of the CRP-1 while a final plan is developed for your land for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract for that land. It may be that your interim plan requires nothing more than continuing certain practices. You need to check the plan (attached) and call any questions to the attention of your local Natural Resources and Conservation Services (NRCS) or Technical Service Provider (TSP).</p> <p>Personnel from the Department of Agriculture’s NRCS or TSP will conduct a field visit and develop site specific requirements unique to your CRP offer no later than December 31, 2010. An on-site field visit and evaluation of the existing CRP field conditions will determine the present condition and species mix of exiting grasses, legumes, forms, and shrub cover. In addition, NRCS or TSP will identify any site specific planting requirements or treatments required to meet the selected CRP practice and related technical specifications. Modification of the interim plan and CRP contract will be made after the on-site evaluation.</p> <p>The requirements, shown in the attached interim conservation plan, may be revised when the final plan is completed after the field visit; however, you will be required to comply with the interim plan as a condition for being considered eligible for payments for the CRP in this interim period. Specifically, you will be eligible for payment from the first day of the month following the date of the County Committee approves your contract, including this interim plan, provided you comply with all the terms and conditions of the contract. The final plan will be consistent with the interim plan and with the terms of the CRP contract to which you have agreed. Cost shares during this interim period will only be paid for those costs which are approved in connection with the interim plan. Cost shares under the final plan will only be paid for those activities which occur after the final plan has, in fact, been finalized and agreed to.</p> <p>If you are not comfortable with the interim plan, contact your local NRCS office or TSP to ask that they work with your immediately on a detailed (final) plan. However, the timeline for final plan development is dependent on field office workload that may otherwise delay the beginning of your contract term. In these cases, it is unlikely a contract could be approved by September 30, 2010.</p> <p>Accordingly, by signing below, the participant acknowledges receipt of this Interim Conservation Plan Addendum including the attached Interim Conservation Plan, and this addendum and agrees to comply with the terms and conditions hereof as well as the terms and conditions of the basic CRP contract and its appendix.</p>	
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Producer Signature	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Signature of CCC Representative
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Date	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Date

(Reproduce locally)

Interim Conservation Plan

GENERAL SIGN UP 39 INTERIM CONSERVATION PLAN				
NAME	COUNTY	STATE	CONTRACT NO.	TOTAL ACRES UNDER CONTRACT
CRP Practices: (Example: CP1, CP2, etc.) _____ _____ _____ _____				
<p>The appropriate NRCS Technical Practice Code for Conservation Cover, is attached.</p>				
Producer Signature _____			Date _____	
CED Signature _____			Date _____	
<p>Note: All General Sign Up 39 final plans for all States are scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2010. Final conservation plans may vary.</p>				

(Reproduce locally)

Postcard Notification

USDA Farm Service Agency
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Stop 0506
Washington, D.C. 20250-0506



July 26, 2010

Dear Producer,

You currently have land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). All or part of this land was enrolled during a general signup with a contract expiration date of September 30, 2010.

Your expiring CRP acres may be eligible to be re-offered in the upcoming general CRP signup number 39 recently announced by Secretary Tom Vilsack. The new CRP enrollment signup will take place between August 2 and August 27, 2010, at the county FSA office where your farm records are maintained.

Please contact your county FSA office to re-offer expiring CRP acres or additional land in the general CRP signup, or to obtain information on continuous CRP or any other FSA program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Coppess', is written over the typed name.

Jonathan W. Coppess
Administrator, Farm Service Agency