



USDA and State of Kansas Continue Conservation Successes With the Upper Arkansas River CREP

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MANHATTAN, KS, June 6, 2022- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Kansas have renewed their partnership to implement a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 40,000 acres of agricultural land within the Upper Arkansas River Basin and Rattlesnake Creek Sub-basin in Kansas. Zach Ducheneaux, Administrator for the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), which manages all CREP projects, personally visited the site to learn first-hand about the conservation goals and achievements made possible by this partnership. The Kansas Upper Arkansas River CREP, which originally began in 2007, opened enrollment in the expanded CREP project area on June 1.

"I am thrilled to be able to visit the site of the Upper Arkansas River CREP and better understand the conservation achievements that will be made possible through this innovative agreement," said Ducheneaux. "The State of Kansas has been a phenomenal partner in reopening and bolstering this agreement and demonstrating what is possible through dynamic partnerships that support voluntary, producer-led conservation on working lands. I appreciate the long history associated with this CREP and look forward supporting the new, expanded opportunities that are now available for agricultural producers who choose to participate."

Through the Kansas CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for 14-to-15-year contracts. High-priority conservation goals are identified by the state, and participants voluntarily enroll marginal agricultural land and implement conservation practices such as planting grasses, trees, or other approved vegetation. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Enrollment will improve water quality by reducing sediment, nutrients, nitrogen, and other pollutants from entering streams and rivers, and enhance wildlife habitat in the project area. In addition, the program will support drought resilience by reducing consumption of ground water and annual soil lost to erosion.

Partners of the Upper Arkansas River CREP, with the addition of new participants, will focus their work to reduce water pollution and sediment in the waters in the High Plains aquifer, the Arkansas River,

and its tributaries and associated alluvial aquifers. Other conservation goals for these areas include:

- To reduce the consumption of groundwater for irrigation by 65,000 acre-feet;
- To reduce the amount of soil lost to erosion by 150,000 tons per year; and
- To reduce annual electricity use by 16 million kilowatt hours.

Enrollment in CRP through the Upper Arkansas River CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, cropland must be located within Kansas and at least 51 percent of the cropland per contract must be located within the project area. Irrigated cropland must meet cropping history criteria and have been irrigated at least one-half acre-foot per acre for three of the five years preceding its enrollment offer.

Interested farmers, ranchers and agricultural landowners are encouraged to contact FSA at their local USDA Service Center to learn more about CREP enrollment requirements and benefits or to participate. Find contact information at farmers.gov/service-locator.

Currently, CREP has 35 projects in 27 states. In total, more than 860,000 acres are enrolled in CREP. The Kansas CREP is part of USDA's broader effort to leverage CREP as an important tool to address climate change and other natural resources challenges while expanding opportunities for producers and communities, especially those historically underserved by USDA. Last December, [USDA announced improvements](#) to the program as well as additional staff to support the program.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.

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