



Fact Sheet

April 2005

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – Minnesota II

Overview

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – Minnesota II is a federal-state natural resource conservation program that works to meet state environmental objectives and to protect environmentally sensitive land on 120,000 acres in parts of Northwest, Southeast, and Southwestern Minnesota. Under CREP, program participants voluntarily enroll certain practices in the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Minnesota Re-invest in Minnesota (RIM) program.

Under the CREP, participants receive financial incentives for both the CRP and RIM contracts for removing cropland from agricultural production and converting the land to native grasses, trees, and other native vegetation. CRP is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended.

CRP contracts are for 14-15 years and RIM easements are for 45 years or permanent (an exception is contour grass strips in Southeast Minnesota, which is restricted to 14- to 15-year CRP contracts only). The total cost over a 14- to 15-year period is about \$250 million, with FSA contributing \$200 million and the state funding \$50 million. The \$250 million does not include any costs that may be assumed by producers.

Minnesota CREP II targets enrollment in environmentally sensitive acreage in the Red River Watershed in northwestern Minnesota, the Lower Mississippi Watershed in southeastern Minnesota and the Missouri/Des Moines River Watershed in southwestern Minnesota.

The program is a results-oriented community-centered cooperative project among landowners, FSA, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), Watershed Districts, and other partners.

Benefits

The program will convert environmentally sensitive cropland to native vegetation in order to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, increase flood water storage, and provide for fish and wildlife habitat. Establishment of certain practices in native vegetation will greatly reduce runoff of sediments, nutrients, pesticides, and pathogens from agricultural sources. CREP will also increase the water storage capacity of the watersheds through wetland restoration. Restoring native vegetation will increase wildlife habitat, which will benefit flora and fauna including threatened and endangered species. Other agricultural impacts mitigated by a CREP

include fragmentation of riparian corridors, grasslands, and forestlands.

Goals

The goals of the CREP – Minnesota II include:

- Reducing sediment loading in the three targeted watersheds by 420,000 tons per year;
- Reducing phosphorus loading in streams and rivers by 530,000 pounds per year;
- Helping to protect the drinking water supplies of 250,000 people by enrolling up to 8,195 acres of land in sensitive groundwater areas through the use of 14- to 15-year CREP contracts and 45-year RIM easements;
- Enhancing long-term fish and wildlife habitat in the targeted watersheds for the preservation of natural diversity of Minnesota's biological resources, including threatened and endangered species;
- Helping to protect 2,500 linear miles of streams, rivers and ditches by enrolling up to 61,897 acres of riparian buffers through the use of 14- to 15-year CREP contracts and 45-year RIM easements;
- Restoring up to 24,000 acres of wetlands and adjacent upland acres through the use of 14 to 15-year CREP contracts

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and permanent RIM easements. These wetland restoration measures will also help reduce future flood damage by increasing water storage capacity by 10,000 to 20,000 acre feet per year;

- Restoring up to 5,000 acres of flood-damaged land through the use of 14- to 15-year CREP contracts and permanent RIM easements;
- Enrolling up to 18,058 acres of highly erodible cropland with an Erodibility Index (EI) of 15 or greater to reduce soil erosion and achieve related high-priority natural resource benefits; and
- Enrolling up to 2,850 acres of highly erodible cropland with an EI of 8 or greater to help reduce soil erosion through the use of contour buffer strips.

Up to 120,000 new acres of environmentally sensitive land within the three designated watersheds will be targeted with the following enrollment goals:

- 51,000 acres in the Red River Watershed in northwestern Minnesota;
- 51,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi Watershed in southeastern Minnesota; and
- 18,000 acres in the Missouri and Des Moines River Watershed in southwestern Minnesota.

Sign-up and Contract Duration

Sign-up for the CREP begins June 6, 2005, and continues until

enrollment goals are attained, or through December 31, 2007, whichever comes first. Land enrolled in CREP remains under CRP contract for a period of 14 to 15 years, and a 45-year or perpetual RIM easement, as specified in the contract.

Approved Conservation Practices

To better serve the program goals the following CRP conservation practices are approved for each of the three CREP areas:

Lower Mississippi Watershed in Southeastern Minnesota:

- CP2 - Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- CP3A - Hardwood Tree Planting
- CP4D - Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- CP12 - Wildlife Food Plot
- CP15A - Establishment of Permanent Vegetative Cover (Contour Grass Strips)
- CP21 - Filter Strips
- CP22 - Riparian Buffer
- CP23 - Wetland Restoration 100-Yr Flood Plain
- CP23A - Wetland Restoration Non-Flood Plain

Missouri and Des Moines River Watersheds in Southwestern Minnesota:

- CP2 - Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- CP4D - Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- CP12 - Wildlife Food Plot
- CP21 - Filter Strips

- CP22 - Riparian Buffer
- CP23 - Wetland Restoration, 100-Yr Flood Plain
- CP23A - Wetland Restoration, Non-Flood Plain

Red River Watershed in Northwestern Minnesota:

- CP2 - Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- CP12 - Wildlife Food Plots
- CP21 - Filter Strips
- CP22 - Riparian Buffer
- CP23 - Wetland Restoration, 100-Yr Flood Plain
- CP23A - Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain
- CP34 - Structure for Flood Control

Payments

Subject to contract terms and certain limitations, CREP participants will be eligible for the following types of FSA payments:

- 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs (cost-share) to establish CREP conservation practices. Cost-share reimbursement to CREP participants from all sources may not exceed 100 percent of the cost to install CREP conservation practices;
- A one-time Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) for all CRP practices currently eligible to receive a PIP payment according to FSA's published national CRP directives;
- A one-time Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) for all CRP practices currently eligible to

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receive a PIP payment according to FSA's published national CRP directives;

- A one-time Incentive to Restore Wetlands payment for practices CP23 and CP23A according to FSA's published national CRP directives.

For More Information

For more information about FSA and its programs, visit your local USDA Service Center or online at www.fsa.usda.gov

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