

Montana Missouri and Madison Rivers

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Montana are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 26,000 acres of agricultural land in portions of the Missouri and Madison Rivers. The purpose of the Missouri and Madison River CREP is to improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat and restore degraded wetlands along the Missouri and Madison Rivers.

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 Missouri and Madison Rivers CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 14 to 15-year contracts. Participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses,

trees, or other approved vegetation. The Missouri and Madison River CREP project area is along approximately 524 miles of the Missouri and Madison Rivers and their tributaries within a mile on either side of the rivers in the following counties: Blaine, Broadwater, Cascade, Chouteau, Fergus, Gallatin, Lewis and Clark, Madison, and Phillips. 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 Missouri and Madison Rivers CREP include:

- Establish, restore and improve up to 11,000 acres of riparian buffers.
- Establish and improve up to 14,000 acres of permanent, native and introduced wildlife habitat.
- Restore up to 1,000 acres of degraded wetlands.

Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- CP1, Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes
- CP2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grass
- CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- CP9, Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife
- CP21, Filter Strips

For 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.

Montana State Farm Service Agency

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Eligible Conservation Practices Continued

- CP22, Riparian Buffer
- CP23, Wetland Restoration
- CP23A, Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain
- CP25, Rare and Declining Habitat (Low elevation grasslands)
- CP29, Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer
- CP30, Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer

Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the Missouri and Madison Rivers CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in Montana. 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 Montana Missouri and Madison Rivers CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) is paid as follows:

- ◇ \$10 per acre for CP21, CP22, CP29 and CP30;
- ◇ \$15 per acre for CP23 and CP23A.

A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of eligible reimbursable costs incurred for installation of CP9, CP21, CP22, CP23, CP23A, CP29 and CP30 practices.

An annual rental payment consisting of:

- ◇ A base soil rental rate, determined by the soils of the land offered
- ◇ An incentive payment, as a percentage of the base soil rental rate as follows, except for land enrolled or re-enrolled under infeasible-to-farm provisions
 - * 20 percent for land established as dryland cropland;
 - * 40 percent for land established as irrigated cropland or marginal pastureland
 - * Weighted average of the types of land offered if a combination of more than one type of land is offered
- ◇ A maintenance incentive payment for CP21, CP22, CP29 and CP30 practices in accordance with FSA National CRP Directives

A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible cost to install the approved practice.

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 Montana Missouri and Madison Rivers CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the Montana Missouri and Madison Rivers 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.