

North Carolina

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of North Carolina are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 100,000 acres of agricultural land in the Neuse, Tar-Pamlico, Chowan, Lumber, White Oak, Yadkin-PeeDee, Cape Fear (including Jordan Lake), Roanoke, and Pasquotank River basins which includes all or a portion of the following counties: Alamance, Alexander, Anson, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Camden, Carteret, Caswell, Chatham, Chowan, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Davidson, Davie, Duplin, Durham, Edgecombe, Forsyth, Franklin, Gates, Granville, Greene, Guilford, Halifax, Harnett, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Iredell, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Martin, Montgomery, Moore, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Onslow, Orange, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Person, Pitt, Randolph, Richmond, Robeson, Rockingham, Rowan, Sampson, Scotland, Stanly, Stokes, Surry, Tyrrell, Union, Vance, Wake, Warren, Washington, Watauga, Wayne, Wilkes, Wilson and Yadkin.

The purpose of the North Carolina CREP is to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, reduce the amount of sediment, phosphorous and other pollutants entering waterbodies, improve wildlife habitat and restore wetlands.

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 North Carolina 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 and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses, trees, or other approved vegetation, or restore wetlands. 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 North Carolina CREP are to:

- ◆ Reduce the amount of sediment, nitrogen, phosphorous and other pollutants from reaching streams and waterbodies
- ◆ Restore and protect wetlands
- ◆ Restore and enhance riparian habitat corridors next to streams, drainage ditches, estuaries, wetlands, and other water courses by enrolling riparian forested buffers, grass filter strips and other riparian tree planting practices.



For More Information

Contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: farmers.gov/service-locator.

North Carolina Farm Service Agency

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Raleigh, NC 27609-6293
Phone: (919) 875-4800
Fax: (844) 325-6871

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. Consult your local FSA office for details.



Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

CRP Practices

CP3	Tree Planting, Shortleaf Pine
CP3A	Hardwood Tree Planting
CP21	Filter Strips
CP22	Riparian Buffer
CP23	Wetland Restoration
CP23A	Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain
CP31	Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands

Enrollment And Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the North Carolina CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in North Carolina. Land must be located in the project area and 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. Marginal pastureland along streams may also be eligible for enrollment.

Producers must enter into a permanent conservation agreement with the state for land to be eligible to be enrolled in the North Carolina CREP as CP23 or CP23A.

Producers must enter into a 30-year or permanent conservation agreement with the state for land enrolled in riparian areas under practices CP3, CP3A, CP21, CP22 and CP31 that are an average width greater than 100 feet and total 10 acres or more per FSA tract. No conservation agreement is required when the land enrolled in the North Carolina CREP is less than 10 acres.

Payments

Under the North Carolina CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

An annual rental payment consisting of:

- ◆ A base soil rental rate determined by

(1) for cropland, the three predominant soils of the land offered; or

(2) for marginal pastureland, the posted marginal pastureland rate for the county;

- ◆ An incentive payment, as a percentage of the base soil rental rate, as follows, except for land re-enrolled or land enrolled under infeasible to farm provisions:
 - 70 percent for land established as CP21
 - 100 percent for land established as CP3, CP3A, CP22, CP23, CP23A, and CP31
- ◆ A maintenance incentive payment for CP21 and CP22 practices in accordance with FSA National CRP Directives

Note: A maximum per-acre rental rate cap may be applied.

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



Payments continued

In addition, the State of North Carolina provides the following payments to eligible participants:

- ◆ A cost-share payment of:
 - 25 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to install the approved conservation practice for producers who enroll solely in a 10-year CRP contract;
 - 30 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to install the approved conservation practice for producers who enroll solely in a 14-year to 15-year CRP contract;
 - 40 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to install practice CP3, CP3A, CP21, CP22 or CP31, and enroll in a 30-year conservation agreement with the state; and
- 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to install practice CP3, CP3A, CP22, CP23, CP23A or CP31, and enroll in a permanent conservation agreement with the state.
- ◆ A one-time incentive payment of \$250 per acre for land enrolled in a 30-year easement with the state.
- ◆ A one-time incentive payment of \$1,000 per acre for land enrolled in a permanent easement with the state.

Note: Not all state payments apply to re-enrolled land.

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 North Carolina CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the North Carolina 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.