

Lake Erie Watershed

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Ohio are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 67,000 acres of agricultural land in the Lake Erie watershed within the State of Ohio. The purpose of the Ohio Lake Erie Watershed CREP is to create permanent vegetative cover adjacent to rivers and streams within the Lake Erie Watershed to increase wildlife populations as well as sustain suspended solids levels.

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 Lake Erie Watershed CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 14–15-year contracts. Participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses, trees, or 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 Lake Erie Watershed CREP include:

- Create 67,000 acres of permanent vegetative cover adjacent to rivers and streams within the Lake Erie Watershed when full enrollment is reached.
- Increase the population of migratory birds and waterfowl, grassland birds, and other wildlife on land enrolled in CRP through this CREP by 50 percent, when compared to similar land managed for agricultural production.
- Maintain CREP enrollment to sustain total suspended solids levels at the rate of 135 mg/l as an annual flow weighted mean concentration.

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.

**Ohio State
Farm Service Agency**
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Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- CP1 Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses
- CP2 Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- CP5A Field Windbreak Establishment
- CP21 Filter Strips
- CP21S Saturated Filter Strips
- CP22 Riparian Buffer
- CP23 Wetland Restoration
- CP23A Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain

Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the Lake Erie Watershed CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in Ohio. 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 Lake Erie Watershed CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) is paid for land enrolled in CP5A, CP21, CP21S, CP22, CP23, and CP23A practices.
- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40% percent of eligible reimbursable costs incurred for installation of CP5A, CP21, CP21S, CP22, CP23, and CP23A practices.
- An annual rental payment consisting of:
 - A base soil rental rate, determined by the soils of the land offered
 - An incentive payment as follows, except for land enrolled or re-enrolled under infeasible-to-farm provisions:
 - ◇ 100 percent, for new land enrolled in practice CP5A, CP22, CP23, and CP23A;
 - ◇ 75 percent, for re-enrolled land enrolled in practice CP5A, CP22, CP23, and CP23A;
 - ◇ 75 percent, for new land enrolled in practice CP2, CP21, and CP21S; and
 - ◇ 50 percent, for re-enrolled land enrolled in practice CP1, CP2, CP21, and CP21S.
 - ◇ New land enrolled in practice CP1 is not eligible for a per-acre incentive payment.
- A maintenance incentive payment for CP21, CP21S, and CP22 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.

In addition, the State of Ohio will provide eligible participants with a one-time incentive payment following practice completion. State incentive payment amounts will vary based on the practice enrolled or reenrolled.

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 Lake Erie Watershed CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the Lake Erie Watershed CREP, producers receive higher incentive payments and longer contract lengths that increase the total amount of rental payments received.

Haying and Grazing

Haying and grazing is not authorized on land enrolled in CRP through the Ohio Lake Erie Watershed CREP.