

Mississippi Delta

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Mississippi are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 8,000 acres of agricultural land in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley located in Bolivar, Coahoma, Issaquena, Holmes, Humphreys, Leflore, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Washington, and Yazoo counties within the state of Mississippi. The purpose of the Mississippi Delta CREP is to increase the bottomland hardwood acres and restore wetlands within targeted watersheds in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley.

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 Mississippi Delta CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily

enroll in CRP for a 14 to 15-year contract. Participants remove cropland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses, trees, or other approved vegetation. 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 Mississippi Delta CREP include:

- Increase the native bottomland hardwood forest acreage;
- Reduce nutrient and sediment loadings in impaired streams, and;
- Restore wetlands to serve as a habitat for several migratory waterfowl and shorebird species.

Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- CP22, Riparian Buffer
- CP23, Wetland Restoration
- CP31, Bottomland Hardwood Establishment on Wetlands

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.

Mississippi State Farm Service Agency

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Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the Mississippi Delta CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, at least 51 percent of the cropland must be physically located within the Mississippi Delta CREP project area. Cropland must meet cropping history criteria and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. The practice offered must be an eligible practice under the Mississippi Delta CREP. CREP applications must satisfy the basic eligibility criteria for CRP.

Payments

Under the Mississippi Delta CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) as follows:
 - ◊ \$100 per acre for CP22 and CP31;
 - ◊ \$150 per acre for CP23.
- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of eligible reimbursable costs incurred for installation of CP22, CP23, and CP31.

- An annual rental payment consisting of:
 - ◊ A base soil rental rate, determined by the soils of the land offered
 - ◊ An incentive payment equal to 20 percent, except for land enrolled or re-enrolled under infeasible-to-farm provisions
 - ◊ A maintenance incentive payment for CP22 and CP31 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.

Contact your local FSA office for more information about authorized haying and grazing activities.

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

Haying and Grazing