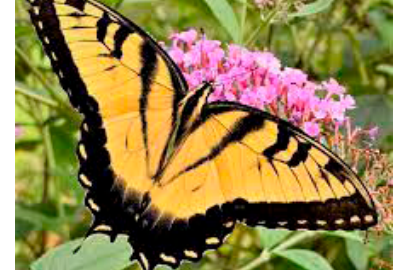


Virginia Southern Rivers Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Commonwealth of Virginia are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 15,000 acres of agricultural land in Southern Rivers Basins (outside the Chesapeake Bay drainage basin) within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The purpose of the Virginia Southern Rivers CREP is to achieve nutrient reductions from agricultural areas, reduce the amount of sediment entering the water courses, and enhance habitat for the preservation of biological resources of the Commonwealths including threatened and endangered species dependent on riparian areas.

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 Virginia Southern Rivers 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. 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 Virginia Southern Rivers CREP include:

- ♦ Helping agricultural producers meet nutrient and sediment reduction goals;
- ♦ Establishing and restoring cropped wetland areas;
- ♦ Establishing, restoring and enhancing riparian areas;
- ♦ Enhancing riparian and wetland habitat for wildlife.

Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- ♦ CP21, Filter Strip
- ♦ CP22, Riparian Buffer
- ♦ CP23, Wetland Restoration
- ♦ CP29, Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer

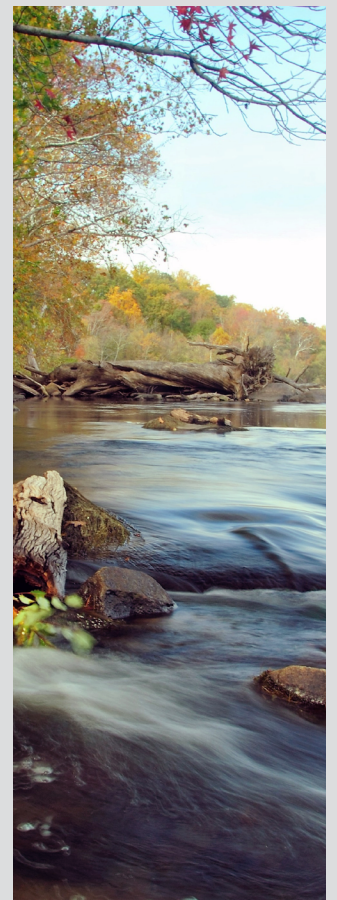
Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the Virginia Southern Rivers CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in Virginia and outside the Chesapeake Bay Drainage Basin in Appomattox, Bedford, Bland, Botetourt, Brunswick, Buchanan, Campbell, Carroll, Charlotte, Chesapeake, Craig, Dickenson, Dinwiddie, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Greensville, Halifax, Henry, Isle of Wight, Lee, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Northampton, Nottoway, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Prince Edward, Prince George, Pulaski, Roanoke, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Southampton, Suffolk, Surry, Sussex, Tazewell, Virginia Beach, Washington, Wise and Wythe counties. 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.

For More Information

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

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





Payments

Under the Virginia Southern Rivers CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- ♦ A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) is paid in accordance with FSA National CRP Directives of \$100 per acre for CP21, CP22 and CP29 practices.
- ♦ A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of eligible reimbursable costs incurred for installation of CP21, CP22, CP23 and CP29.
- ♦ A one-time Wetland Restoration Incentive (WRI) payment in an amount equal to 25 percent of the cost of restoring the hydrology of the site, for CP23 practice acres.
- ♦ A per-acre annual rental payment, not to exceed \$90 per acre, consisting of:
 - A base soil rental rate, determined by the soils of the land offered.
 - An incentive payment equal to 120 percent, except for land enrolled or re-enrolled under infeasible-to-farm.
 - A maintenance incentive payment of \$5 for practices CP21, CP22, CP23 and CP29.
- ♦ A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs incurred for the installation of the approved conservation practice.

In addition, the Commonwealth of Virginia will provide eligible participants a cost-share payment and offer one-time lump-sum incentive payments of \$50 or \$75 per acre, based on the length of the contract.

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 Virginia Southern Rivers CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the Virginia Southern Rivers CREP, producers receive higher incentive payments 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 Virginia Southern Rivers CREP.