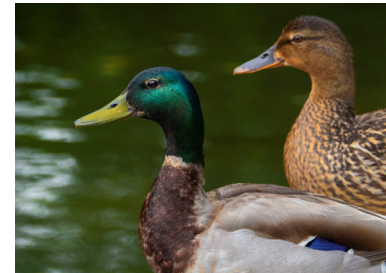


South Dakota Big Sioux River Watershed

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of South Dakota are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance wildlife habitat, and create public hunting and fishing access. This South Dakota Big Sioux River Watershed CREP is focusing on enrolling up to 25,000 acres of agricultural land in Brookings, Clark, Clay, Codington, Day, Deuel, Grant, Hamlin, Kingsbury, Lake, Lincoln, Marshall, McCook, Minnehaha, Moody, Roberts, Turner, and Union counties.

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 South Dakota Big Sioux River Watershed CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 10-year to 15-year contracts. Participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert

the land to native grasses, trees and other 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 South Dakota Big Sioux River Watershed CREP include:

- Establishment of 1,500 acres of permanent vegetative cover adjacent to rivers and streams;
- Reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients, and nitrogen entering waterbodies;
- Produce an additional 71,250 pheasants annually;
- Contribute an additional 15,000 ducks annually;
- Open 250 40-acre blocks to public hunting and fishing; and
- Create 25,000 acres of permanent vegetative cover by restoring wetlands and grasslands to store water and serve as breeding habitat for migratory and resident wildlife.

Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- CP21, Filter Strips
- CP23, Wetland Restoration
- CP23A, Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain
- CP25, Rare and Declining Habitat
- CP29, Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer

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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 on this project, contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: farmers.gov/service-locator.

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 South Dakota Big Sioux River Watershed CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the South Dakota Big Sioux River Watershed CREP, producers receive higher incentive payments that increase the total amount of rental payments received and all land enrolled is open to public hunting and fishing access.



Eligible Conservation Practices continued

- CP30, Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer
- CP37, Duck Nesting Habitat
- CP43, Prairie Strips

Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the South Dakota Big Sioux River Watershed CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in the project area and be either cropland or marginal pastureland. Cropland must meet cropping history criteria and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Marginal pastureland is also eligible for enrollment provided it is suitable for use as an eligible wildlife habitat or wetland buffer.

Payments

Under the South Dakota Big Sioux River Watershed CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- A one-time signing incentive

payment (SIP) for enrolling practice CP21, CP23, CP23A, CP29, CP30, CP37, and CP43, in an amount equal to 32.5 percent of the first annual rental payment for such practice.

- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) for installing practice CP21, CP23, CP23A, CP29, CP30, and CP37. The PIP is equal to up to 50 percent of eligible reimbursable costs incurred for installation of the approved practice and is considered a cost-share payment subject to limitations.
- A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible cost to install the approved practice.
- 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, of 20 percent for all practices except CP4D; and

- ◇ A maintenance payment, determined by the practice offered.

In addition, the State of South Dakota will provide an annual payment in an amount equal to 34 percent of the base soil rental rate.

Haying and Grazing

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