

**Conservation Reserve Program
Illinois State Enhancement Program**

The Illinois State Enhancement Program is the result of an agreement between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Illinois. Both entities will cooperate in implementing the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to protect water quality in the Illinois River and some of its tributaries.

What is CREP?

CREP is a revolutionary new program that addresses important local conservation concerns by combining an existing federal environmental improvement effort, USDA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), with state technical and funding assistance. CRP is administered by the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

USDA and Illinois will carry out the program in cooperation with other Federal, State, and local authorities. Its purpose is to reduce sedimentation and runoff and encourage the growth of local wildlife.

The Illinois program will establish CRP contracts with owners and operators of farm properties to plant specific kinds of vegetation near streams and rivers, in return for rental payments and other incentives. The length of the contracts will be 15 years.

Location of the Project

The project area consists of the subwatersheds along the Middle Illinois and Peoria Lake sections of the Illinois River and the watersheds of the following Illinois River tributaries: Vermillion, Mackinaw, Spoon, Lower Fox, Lower Sangamon, and Kankakee.

Project Goals

Goals of the Illinois State Enhancement Program include:

- Reducing total sediment loading of the Illinois River by 20 percent;
- Reducing phosphorus and nitrogen loading in the Illinois River by 10 percent;
- Increasing populations of waterfowl, shorebirds and State and Federally listed species by 15 percent within the project area; and
- Increasing native fish and mussel stocks by 10 percent in lower reaches of the Illinois River.

Program Details

The Illinois CREP can have up to 232,000 acres continuously enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) through the year 2002. Enrollment of land in excess of 100,000 acres is subject to further review and approval by USDA. 85,000 acres of riparian buffers and 15,000 acres of property immediately adjacent to the buffers classified as Highly Erodible Lands are initially approved.

Participating farmers may voluntarily extend their contracts for an additional 15 or 35 years with the State of Illinois or enter into permanent easements with the State. Illinois will prepare a conservation plan for each farm entering the program.

A CREP Advisory Committee consisting of State, Federal and non-governmental partners will be formed to provide guidance on program implementation. Illinois will complete an annual report summarizing the status and results of the project.

Fact Sheet

Conservation Reserve Program Illinois State Enhancement Program

Funding

Program cost is estimated at \$250 million for the first 100,000 acres. This cost will be split 80-20 between Federal funds and State of Illinois or other non-Federal funds.

A special incentive payment will be made by USDA in an amount up to:

- 30 percent for all riparian buffers

- 20 percent bonus for all Highly Erodible Lands

- 50 percent of the cost of installing conservation practices and an annual maintenance fee.

The State of Illinois will make a bonus payment for all contract extensions beyond 15 years, up to 50 percent of the cost of installing conservation practices, the annual monitoring program, and stream-bank stabilization.

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