



United States
Department of
Agriculture

The Conservation Reserve Program: 43rd Signup Results



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REPORT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INFORMATION

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July 2012

PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover Photos: Upper left, *Riparian forest buffer by Bear Creek, Central Iowa*, photo by Roger Hill, USDA; Upper right, *Restored wetland in Van Buren County, IA*, photo by Lynn Bretts, USDA; Center, *Early use of contour farming during the Dust Bowl in District of Columbia*, photographer unknown, USDA; Lower left, *Fox pups explore Beltsville, MD*, photo by Stephen Ausmus, USDA; and Lower right, *Mountain Stream in Western Maryland*, photo by Tim McCabe, USDA.

Photos made available by Janet Connelly and Julie Polt.



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JUN 12 2012

Dear Conservation Supporters:

We are happy to report that the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continues to thrive, providing 26 years of environmental and economic benefits through partnerships with our Nation's farmers and ranchers. In March 1986, the first CRP contract was signed, igniting a movement that has helped reduce soil erosion by 8 billion tons, provided natural habitats for wildlife, restored more than 2 million acres of wetlands, and removed hundreds of millions of tons of carbon dioxide from the air. CRP continues to evolve with new initiatives that target our Nation's most sensitive lands.

Since 1986, CRP has restored grasses, trees, and wetlands on over 32 million acres. As a result, measureable environmental impacts on both a local and national scale were made. These lands provide water quality protection, enhance wildlife habitat, and maintain soil productivity. CRP not only benefits farmers and ranchers and their local communities, but it also benefits suburban and urban residents by protecting the water supply and air quality of many major cities. CRP provides numerous recreation benefits to Americans in the form of wildlife hunting and viewing.

CRP continues to promote partnerships with local and State conservation authorities through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Currently, there are 45 CREP agreements in 33 states that will improve water quality by filtering agricultural runoff, reducing soil erosion, aiding in flood control, enhancing wildlife habitat, and providing additional protection for watersheds.

The 2012 announcement of the 43rd CRP Signup builds on the 26-year legacy of cooperative conservation and continues to help our Nation's farmers and ranchers maintain a healthy environment and a sound agricultural economy. I hope you will come away from this report with informed perspectives about how farmers and ranchers make conservation programs an investment to conserve and protect America's greatest treasure, our natural resources.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas J. Vilsack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Thomas" and last name "Vilsack" clearly legible.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

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CRP Overview

Background

The United States Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary conservation program available to agricultural producers to help assist them to enhance environmentally sensitive lands. Producers enrolled in the CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers such as introduced or native grasses or trees to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat.

In return, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance for 10 to 15 years.

CRP has a quarter-century legacy of successfully protecting the Nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States. In 2011, as a result of CRP, nitrogen and phosphorous losses from farm fields were reduced by 623 million pounds and 124 million pounds, respectively. CRP has restored more than 2 million acres of wetlands and associated buffers and reduces soil erosion by more than 300 million tons per year.

CRP also provides \$1.8 billion annually to landowners—dollars that make their way into local economies, supporting small businesses and creating jobs. In addition, CRP is the largest private lands carbon sequestration program in the country. By placing vulnerable cropland into conservation, CRP sequesters carbon in plants and soil, and reduces both fuel and fertilizer usage. In 2010, CRP resulted in carbon sequestration equal to taking almost 10 million cars off the road.

The 43rd CRP Signup

On February 1, 2012, USDA Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services Michael Scuse announced that a CRP general signup would begin on March 12, 2012, and continue through April 6. The signup was extended through April 13 to accommodate all applicants.

Eligibility Criteria

For land to be eligible for general signup, it must be:

- Cropland that has been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity 4 of the 6 years between 2002 and 2007; and
- Physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

Note: Alfalfa or other multiyear grasses and legumes grown in a rotation not to exceed 12 years also may be eligible.

Also, cropland must meet one of the following criteria:

- Have a weighted average Erodibility Index of eight or greater;
- Be expiring CRP; or
- Be located in a national or State conservation priority area.



CEPD, USDA.

CRP Overview

Rental and Cost Share Payments

CRP rental rates are based on local dryland cash rental rates. Producers may offer land at these rates or may offer a lower rental rate to increase the likelihood that their offer will be acceptable.

CRP cost share assistance is available to eligible participants in an amount not to exceed 50 percent of the eligible costs of establishing the approved practice.

General Signup

Offers are evaluated and ranked using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) based on the environmental benefits expected to accrue if the land is enrolled in the CRP.

Use of the EBI ensures that the most environmentally sensitive lands relative to cost are selected and that all offers are considered fairly.

The six EBI factors are:

- N1, Wildlife Habitat Cover Benefits;
- N2, Water Quality Benefits From Reduced Erosion, Runoff and Leaching;
- N3, On-Farm Benefits of Reduced Erosion;
- N4, Enduring Benefits;
- N5, Air Quality Benefits; and
- N6, Cost.

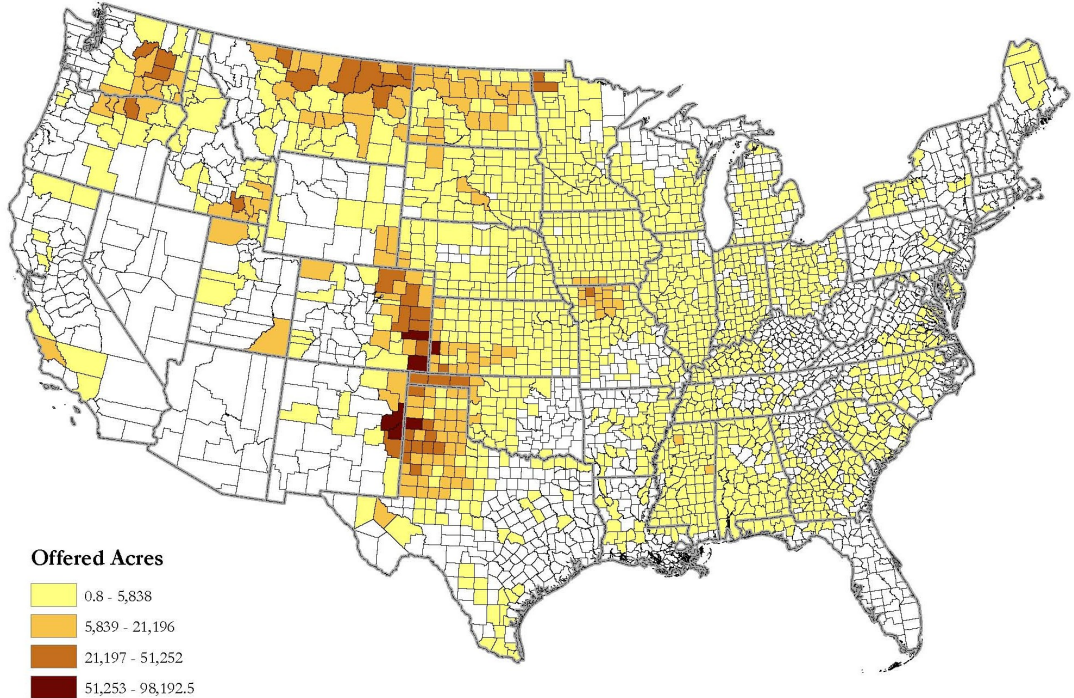


USDA

The 43rd CRP Signup Results

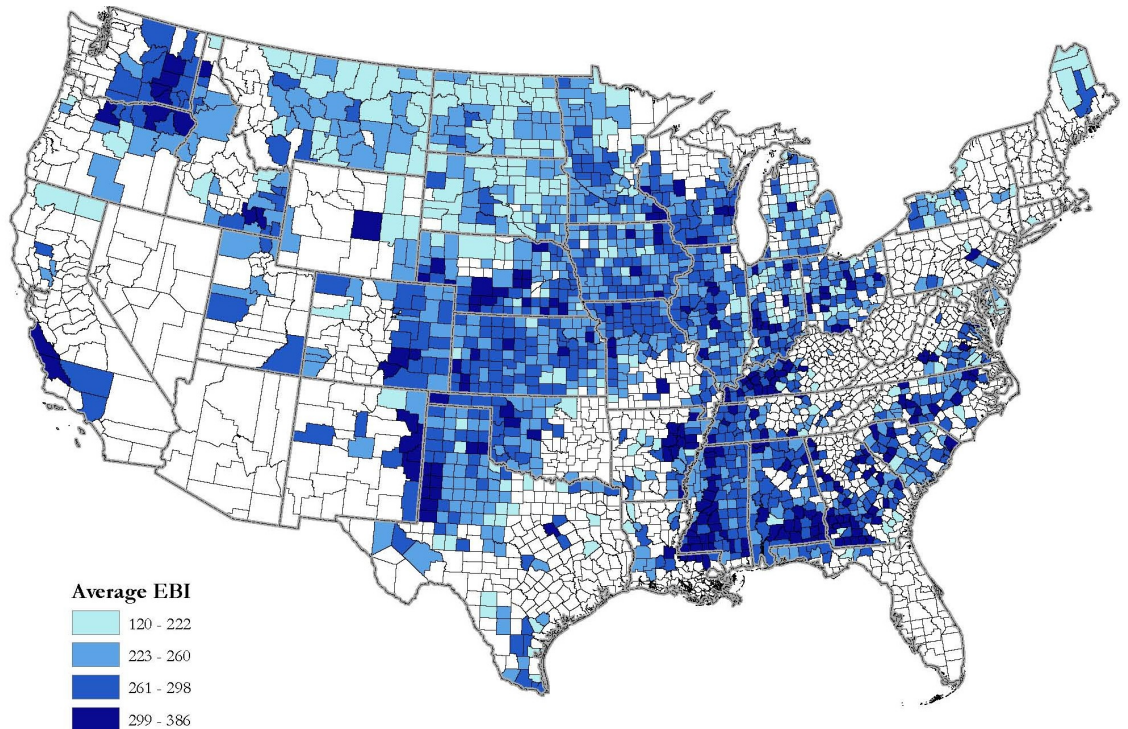
Offered Acres

FSA received 47,934 offers to enroll about 4.5 million acres



Map created by DAFP/CBPD/CAB June 14, 2012

Average EBI Score

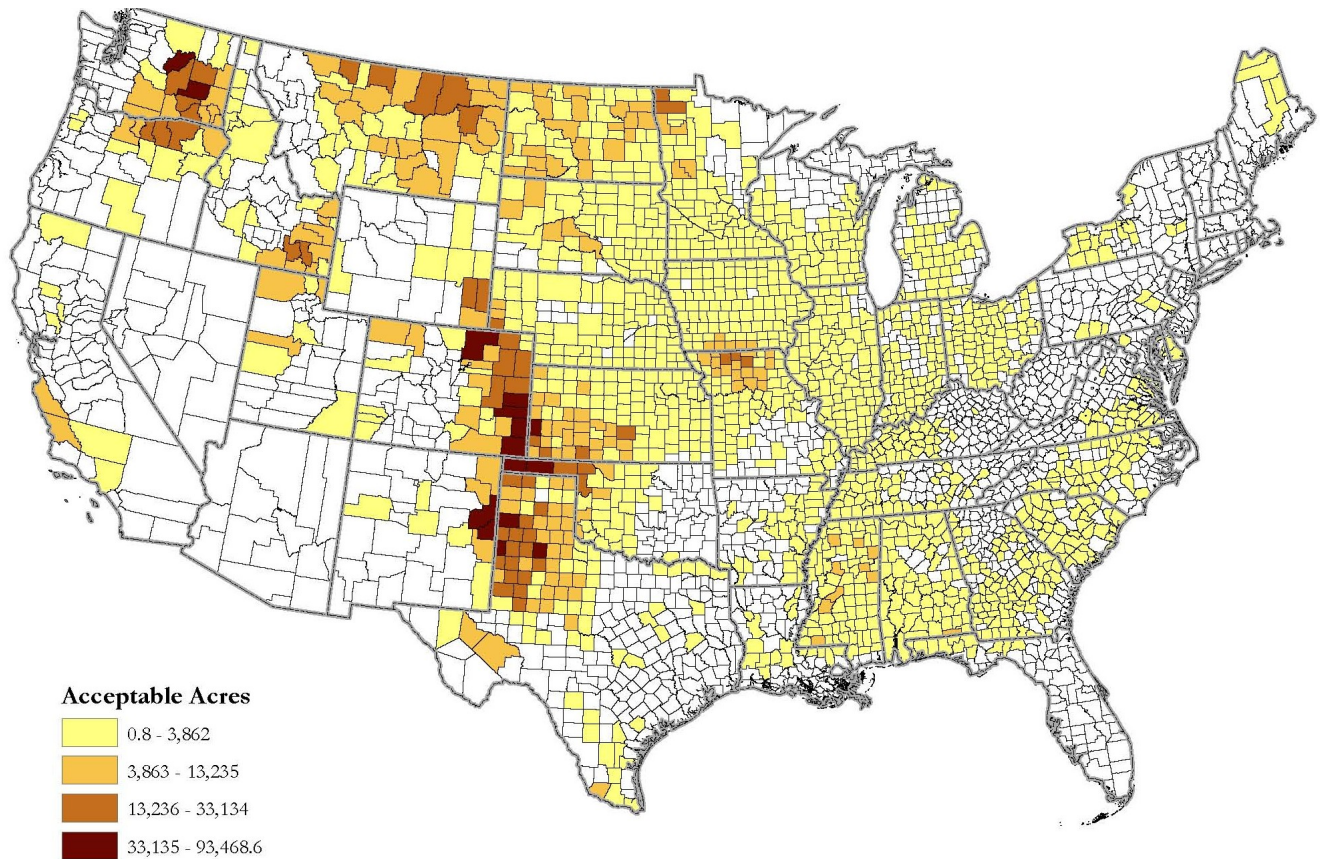


Map created by DAFP/CBPD/CAB June 14, 2012

The 43rd CRP Signup Results

Acceptable Acres

About 3.9 million acres on 42,010 offers were acceptable.



Map created by DAFP/CPD/CAB June 14, 2012

The 43rd CRP Signup Results

Table 1 - Offers Received, Acceptable Offers, and CRP Acreage

STATE	Offers Received	Acceptable Offers	Offered Acres	Acceptable Acres	Enrollment April 2012	Expiring 9/30/2012	Oct. 2012 Enrollment before Continuous 1/
US	47,934	42,010	4,541,955	3,875,848	29,630,509	6,521,909	26,984,447
ALABAMA	1,142	1096	52,952	49,312	360,489	78,533	331,268
ALASKA	0	0	0	0	19007	990	18017
ARKANSAS	267	246	16060	15067	251536	33642	232960
CALIFORNIA	66	60	18,944	16,963	104,303	23,891	97,374
COLORADO	2467	2334	510,315	483,197	2,181,540	572,061	2,092,676
CONNECTICUT	1	0	8	0	151	72	79
DELAWARE	5	3	57	16	6740	299	6456
FLORIDA	178	175	8062	7950	51966	11661	48255
GEORGIA	681	664	25,812	25,433	317,213	33,640	309,006
HAWAII	0	0	0	0	492	0	492
IDAHO	771	736	123535	116434	654545	166344	604635
ILLINOIS	2,564	2,276	58,194	52,201	1,031,143	111,024	972,321
INDIANA	688	598	14,006	11,730	281,395	36,152	256,973
IOWA	3,389	3,174	104,868	99,684	1,652,373	230,466	1,521,591
KANSAS	4,311	4,125	389,519	376,913	2,532,020	518,479	2,390,454
KENTUCKY	589	567	18,407	18,039	333,936	46,217	305,758
LOUISIANA	166	146	14,043	12,942	325,174	37,959	300,157
MAINE	100	39	3,174	1,075	13,542	5,255	9,362
MARYLAND	18	10	273	181	78,828	8,689	70,320
MASSACHUSETTS	0	0	0	0	10	0	10
MICHIGAN	345	295	8894	7424	222112	18556	210980
MINNESOTA	2,904	2,479	119,870	99,565	1,562,841	289,796	1,372,611
MISSISSIPPI	2,212	2076	116,067	109,997	829,056	165,265	773,788
MISSOURI	4,266	4,194	234,259	231,557	1,289,101	377,168	1,143,490
MONTANA	2,225	1,331	438,095	258,386	2,497,594	693,721	2,062,259
NEBRASKA	1,385	1,249	113,911	104,298	1,001,003	201,190	904,111
NEVADA	0	0	0	0	**	*	*
NEW HAMPSHIRE	0	0	0	0	13	0	13
NEW JERSEY	0	0	0	0	2452	171	2281
NEW MEXICO	969	549	228,462	126,579	419,899	120,462	426,016
NEW YORK	68	48	1,478	1,011	51,324	3,668	48,668
NORTH CAROLINA	365	328	7,279	6,579	111,677	10,729	107,526
NORTH DAKOTA	3528	2024	333,828	190,789	2,396,639	836,444	1,750,983
OHIO	417	364	9,033	7,972	337,704	26,486	319,189
OKLAHOMA	1396	1353	176,963	173,614	826,992	191,100	809,505
OREGON	425	417	93,327	91,770	546,955	90,118	548,608
PENNSYLVANIA	22	19	600	523	205,835	27,170	179,188
PUERTO RICO	0	0	0	0	1,199	150	1,049
RHODE ISLAND	0	0	0	0	**	0	*
SOUTH CAROLINA	416	349	15,249	13,241	143,654	35,158	121,737
SOUTH DAKOTA	1002	626	89,104	55,201	1,111,101	224,485	941,818
TENNESSEE	557	530	17,700	17,108	190,531	28,737	178,901
TEXAS	4717	4439	826,978	767,242	3,360,127	827,438	3,299,931
UTAH	172	148	33,938	28,048	178,507	27,803	178,752
VERMONT	0	0	0	0	2,843	16	2,827
VIRGINIA	136	120	2,882	2,639	61,563	5,179	59,023
WASHINGTON	1462	1437	228,751	225,037	1,490,719	275,069	1,440,687
WEST VIRGINIA	1	0	17	0	6,177	103	6,074
WISCONSIN	1325	1229	26095	24000	370642	69169	325472
WYOMING	216	157	60,945	46,129	215,674	61,181	200,622

1/ Not including continuous signup enrollment between May and September 2012.

* Data withheld to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

The 43rd CRP Signup Results

Table 2 - Description of Signup 43 Acceptable Acres

STATE NAME	Expiring Sept. 2012 (Acres)	New Lands (Acres) 1/	Average Rental Payment (\$/Acre)	Total Rental Payment (\$/Year)	Average EBI Score	
					without cost	with cost
NATIONAL	3,315,997	559,850	\$51.24	\$198,595,184	172	278
ALABAMA	47,606	1,706	\$44.62	\$2,200,240	191	297
ARKANSAS	13,586	1,481	\$66.69	\$1,004,757	207	305
CALIFORNIA	14,803	2,160	\$53.72	\$911,267	239	351
COLORADO	417,440	65,757	\$33.46	\$16,168,484	150	265
DELAWARE	14	2	\$83.46	\$1,302	150	237
FLORIDA	7,716	234	\$45.11	\$358,609	148	258
GEORGIA	24,897	536	\$56.99	\$1,449,427	212	309
IDAHO	91,881	24,553	\$52.66	\$6,131,467	177	282
ILLINOIS	43,948	8,254	\$126.96	\$6,627,566	202	265
INDIANA	10,644	1,087	\$121.45	\$1,424,613	206	272
IOWA	86,838	12,847	\$161.51	\$16,099,906	237	273
KANSAS	343,754	33,159	\$37.75	\$14,229,745	179	285
KENTUCKY	16,821	1,218	\$118.16	\$2,131,405	246	306
LOUISIANA	12,885	57	\$58.22	\$753,507	163	263
MAINE	875	200	\$33.53	\$36,054	127	246
MARYLAND	68	113	\$77.26	\$13,945	149	242
MICHIGAN	6,670	755	\$80.17	\$595,196	167	256
MINNESOTA	88,834	10,732	\$76.67	\$7,634,138	182	272
MISSISSIPPI	108,243	1,754	\$54.36	\$5,979,810	192	297
MISSOURI	222,321	9,236	\$110.92	\$25,684,241	210	274
MONTANA	203,320	55,066	\$29.62	\$7,652,747	123	242
NEBRASKA	89,129	15,169	\$62.99	\$6,569,477	194	285
NEW MEXICO	72,726	53,853	\$37.69	\$4,771,303	212	333
NEW YORK	849	163	\$59.82	\$60,503	169	265
NORTH CAROLINA	5,984	595	\$48.41	\$318,481	171	277
NORTH DAKOTA	166,248	24,541	\$39.42	\$7,520,388	134	244
OHIO	7,100	872	\$89.77	\$715,654	189	273
OKLAHOMA	147,144	26,470	\$34.28	\$5,950,645	162	279
OREGON	80,106	11,664	\$61.53	\$5,647,070	192	296
PENNSYLVANIA	288	234	\$38.57	\$20,160	166	269
SOUTH CAROLINA	13,149	92	\$31.47	\$416,734	141	263
SOUTH DAKOTA	43,815	11,387	\$49.62	\$2,739,104	152	254
TENNESSEE	16,083	1,025	\$84.25	\$1,441,378	186	272
TEXAS	634,732	132,510	\$37.58	\$28,832,402	164	283
UTAH	20,380	7,668	\$36.10	\$1,012,494	156	265
VIRGINIA	2,466	174	\$45.51	\$120,125	157	264
WASHINGTON	199,100	25,937	\$52.51	\$11,817,035	188	297
WISCONSIN	21,276	2,724	\$99.65	\$2,391,542	206	285
WYOMING	32,261	13,868	\$25.20	\$1,162,263	129	251

1/ Includes land that may have been in CRP in the past.

Note: Acceptable acres may be listed in multiple categories.

The 43rd CRP Signup Results

Table 3 - Description of Signup 43 Acceptable Acres

STATE NAME	Average Erodibility Index (EI)	Highly Erodible (Acres)	National Priority Area (Acres)	State Priority Area (Acres)	Rare and Declining Habitat (Acres)	Permanent Wildlife Habitat (Acres)	Pollinator Habitat Offers	Pollinator Habitat (Acres)
NATIONAL	17	3,312,788	541,207	2,327,285	204,094	358,211	3,010	38,029
ALABAMA	20	45,496	42,639	12,691	62	585	3	9
ARKANSAS	15	10,807	0	11,637	0	640	0	0
CALIFORNIA	29	14,514	0	16,371	0	9,992	7	1,821
COLORADO	14	476,570	0	307,630	312	54,631	366	6,939
DELAWARE	1	0	16	0	0	7	1	1
FLORIDA	12	6,301	7,950	0	0	107	0	0
GEORGIA	14	20,989	23,179	2,297	0	738	0	0
IDAHO	28	108,360	0	70,977	0	15,715	183	4,115
ILLINOIS	19	45,682	4	20,985	26	7,242	230	1,201
INDIANA	20	9,364	2,002	2,725	265	807	100	586
IOWA	27	97,001	4,236	39,959	31,055	4,483	169	653
KANSAS	13	331,254	18	232,871	79,058	70,504	100	799
KENTUCKY	41	17,813	0	16,534	6,638	16	13	79
LOUISIANA	12	9,277	7,571	4,263	0	92	6	29
MAINE	15	1,075	0	204	0	11	0	0
MARYLAND	6	77	181	9	0	57	1	2
MICHIGAN	6	2,272	7,424	10	0	1,066	3	23
MINNESOTA	8	43,711	92,818	5,305	34,279	6,338	123	405
MISSISSIPPI	32	88,847	38,713	54,702	0	642	0	0
MISSOURI	28	229,658	0	194,474	894	458	406	2,413
MONTANA	13	246,598	127,945	49,393	6,763	1,554	140	3,615
NEBRASKA	14	100,764	0	61,821	28,237	7,237	225	1,980
NEW MEXICO	22	126,579	0	124,191	0	0	4	329
NEW YORK	14	801	971	0	0	70	7	44
NORTH CAROLINA	17	5,826	2,675	2,651	0	69	0	0
NORTH DAKOTA	10	115,852	144,543	28,268	1,727	117,115	78	577
OHIO	15	5,059	2,876	2,041	70	818	121	890
OKLAHOMA	13	160,069	0	152,878	367	1	6	43
OREGON	21	90,724	0	82,355	13,136	4,053	8	150
PENNSYLVANIA	16	523	491	0	0	11	0	0
SOUTH CAROLINA	8	3,602	11,155	82	0	398	0	0
SOUTH DAKOTA	11	38,372	17,287	25,401	826	15,230	108	570
TENNESSEE	31	16,333	0	5,410	0	599	8	29
TEXAS	14	591,441	0	564,720	0	3,186	443	8,521
UTAH	10	13,173	0	27,706	0	0	8	223
VIRGINIA	15	2,440	2,242	357	0	57	8	13
WASHINGTON	16	169,331	0	150,196	0	32,346	110	1,888
WISCONSIN	27	20,107	4,271	12,903	380	434	24	68
WYOMING	16	46,129	0	43,272	0	903	1	15

Note: Acceptable acres may be listed in multiple categories.

The 43rd CRP Signup Results

Table 4 - Description of Signup 43 Acceptable Acres ^{1/}

STATE NAME	Introduced Grass	Native Grass	Total Grass	Hardwood Trees	Softwood Trees	Total Trees
NATIONAL	1,170,488	1,836,071	3,006,559	58,862	204,366	263,227
ALABAMA	7,835	871	8,706	2,317	37,384	39,701
ARKANSAS	1,696	1,316	3,012	1,775	9,594	11,369
CALIFORNIA	5,024	124	5,148	0	0	0
COLORADO	32,263	389,036	421,298	0	4	4
DELAWARE	8	0	8	0	0	0
FLORIDA	9	0	9	58	7,770	7,828
GEORGIA	393	109	503	360	23,830	24,190
IDAHO	83,769	11,824	95,593	33	978	1,011
ILLINOIS	29,937	5,565	35,502	7,333	450	7,783
INDIANA	4,718	1,920	6,638	3,323	70	3,393
IOWA	42,858	15,792	58,649	4,153	129	4,282
KANSAS	3,398	222,743	226,140	102	1	104
KENTUCKY	8,920	1,293	10,213	988	30	1,017
LOUISIANA	99	346	445	4,098	8,248	12,346
MAINE	1,052	0	1,052	0	12	12
MARYLAND	77	12	89	0	33	33
MICHIGAN	3,952	749	4,701	462	1,098	1,560
MINNESOTA	32,171	16,682	48,852	6,155	2,973	9,129
MISSISSIPPI	10,909	1,181	12,090	13,276	83,697	96,973
MISSOURI	196,054	26,129	222,183	4,850	60	4,911
MONTANA	180,234	66,155	246,389	0	10	10
NEBRASKA	9,140	57,575	66,715	74	27	101
NEW MEXICO	18,892	107,359	126,251	0	0	0
NEW YORK	738	62	799	12	84	95
NORTH CAROLINA	821	13	834	10	5,665	5,675
NORTH DAKOTA	66,059	4,755	70,813	111	26	137
OHIO	3,029	1,460	4,489	1,293	382	1,675
OKLAHOMA	57,647	115,398	173,045	0	0	0
OREGON	68,078	6,086	74,164	0	236	236
PENNSYLVANIA	395	113	508	2	0	2
SOUTH CAROLINA	516	240	756	58	11,903	11,961
SOUTH DAKOTA	21,312	16,815	38,126	0	4	4
TENNESSEE	9,509	1,817	11,326	1,295	3,836	5,130
TEXAS	100,706	653,475	754,181	10	577	587
UTAH	26,435	1,385	27,820	0	0	0
VIRGINIA	547	203	749	0	1,821	1,821
WASHINGTON	87,289	102,258	189,547	0	1,203	1,203
WISCONSIN	9,794	4,222	14,016	6,714	2,234	8,948
WYOMING	44,209	993	45,203	0	0	0

^{1/} Not including practices: permanent wildlife habitat, wildlife food plots, rare and declining habitat, and pollinator habitat.

Note: Acceptable acres may be listed in multiple categories.

Continuous CRP

Continuous CRP Signup

Continuous signup provides an effective, ongoing means to enroll certain practices such as filter strips, riparian buffers, grass waterways, shelterbelts, field windbreaks, wetlands restoration, and high-value wildlife habitat. As of April 30, 2012, there were cumulatively 5.3 million acres enrolled for all continuous sign up conservation practices.

With 1.75 million acres recently added by Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack to CRP continuous initiatives to help better target environmentally sensitive lands, nearly 4.4 million acres are now allocated in the following nine targeted continuous signup initiatives:

- The Upland Bird Habitat initiative helps producers plant ground covers, shrubs, and grass, to provide appropriate habitat conditions for common upland birds such as northern bobwhite quail. Studies show that these conservation practices have increased the upland bird species populations. Up to 500,000 acres can be enrolled in this initiative. As of April 30, 2012, there were 239,387 acres enrolled.
- The Duck Habitat initiative helps increase duck populations by an estimated 60,000 birds annually and will restore 300,000 wetland acres. As of April 30, 2012, there were 143,365 acres enrolled.
- The Bottomland Hardwood initiative works to improve air quality and water quality on up to 250,000 acres as well as increase wildlife habitat along wetland areas. As of April 30, 2012, there were 67,745 acres enrolled.
- Since 2005, the Non-Floodplain Wetland Restoration initiative has provided an opportunity to enroll up to 350,000 acres of wetlands and playa lakes located outside of the 100-year floodplain. As of April 30, 2012, there were 153,830 acres enrolled.
- Available since 2004, the Floodplain Wetlands Restoration initiative has provided an opportunity to enroll up to 600,000 acres of wetlands located in the 100-year floodplain. As of April 30, 2012, a total of 213,139 acres were enrolled.
- State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) provides States and regions the opportunity to conserve 1,250,000 acres for high-priority wildlife such as sage grouse, lesser prairie chicken, and ring-necked pheasant. As of April 30, 2012, there were 91 projects in 35 States, and 630,820 acres were enrolled.
- The Longleaf Pine initiative's goal is to repopulate the natural longleaf pine forest ranges by enrolling up to 250,000 acres throughout nine Southern States. Re-establishing some of the original range of 60 million acres will improve water quality, provide critical habitat for wildlife, and help sequester greenhouse gases. As of April 30, 2012, there were 111,385 acres enrolled.
- Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI) was announced February 2012 to protect up to 750,000 acres of the Nation's most highly erodible croplands. Eligibility is limited to land with an Erodibility Index of 20 or more.
- The goal of the Continuous Pollinator Practice initiative is to permit producers to develop pollinator habitat for many pollinator species by enrolling up to 100,000 acres.

The Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) is allowed to restore up to 1 million acres of farmable wetland and associated buffers by improving the land's hydrology and vegetation through CRP. Eligible land types authorized include certain cropped wetlands, former commercial aquaculture, flooded land located in the prairie pothole region, and constructed wetlands to receive flows from row crop drainage systems. As of April 30, 2012, there were 314,117 acres enrolled.

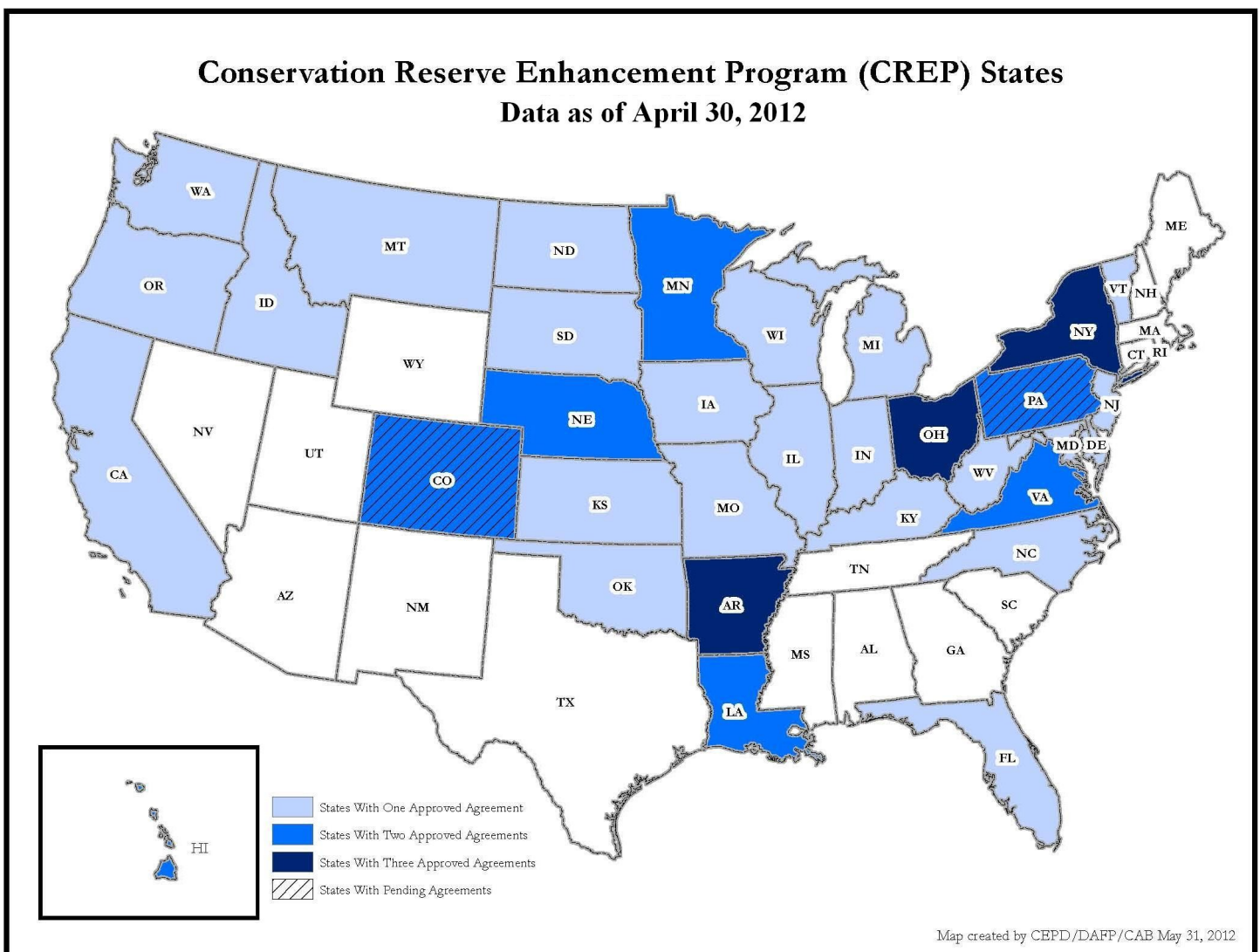
Other CRP Initiatives

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a continuous CRP signup program. It is voluntary and helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. The program is a partnership among producers; tribal, State, and Federal governments; and, in some cases, private groups.

CREP includes targeted conservation practices such as filter strips and riparian buffers. These conservation practices help protect streams, lakes, and rivers from sedimentation and agricultural runoff.

As of April 30, 2012, there were 1.27 million acres enrolled in 45 CREP projects in 33 States.



About the Farm Service Agency's Conservation and Environmental Programs Division (CEPD):

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency's Conservation and Environmental Programs Division serves the Nation's agricultural producers, providing assistance and opportunities for producers to voluntarily invest in safeguarding environmentally sensitive lands.

CEPD implements multiple diverse programs that help accomplish these goals, including the following programs:

- Biomass Crop Assistance Program
- Conservation Reserve Program
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- Emergency Forest Restoration Program
- Emergency Conservation Program
- Farmable Wetlands Program
- Grassland Reserve Program
- Source Water Protection Program
- Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program

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