



Continuous CRP Sign-Up

An important voluntary opportunity to help establish conservation buffers on a farm or ranch is the continuous Conservation Reserve Program sign-up. This program allows landowners to establish certain conservation buffer practices on cropland and marginal pasture and enroll the land in the CRP at any time *without having to go through the process of submitting a competitive offer*. Landowners who have land covered by an expiring CRP contract, don't have to make an "all-or-nothing" choice about bringing the land out of CRP. *The landowner decides what land to enroll in the program.*

Working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service or conservation district office staff, landowners identify those buffer practices available under the continuous CRP sign-up that are most suitable for their land and meet their needs. Landowners then submit an offer to their Farm Service Agency office. The offer will be automatically accepted if all eligibility requirements are met.

To be eligible, landowners must have owned the land for the previous year. Cropland is eligible if it was planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity in two of the last five crop years and is physically and legally capable of being cropped. The land does not have to be highly erodible.

Marginal pasture that is suitable for use as a riparian buffer is also eligible. Marginal pasture includes any land along streams or rivers available for grazing, whether previously seeded to grass or not. Most land covered by expiring CRP contracts that is determined suitable for a CRP buffer practice is likewise eligible.

It's that simple. The USDA Service Center staff will know specifically what technical and financial help is available to help design and establish buffers, including assistance from state and local programs.

To learn more
about buffers visit
www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov

Other Funding

Other federal, state and local government programs also can help with the cost of implementing buffer practices.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) - This voluntary program provides technical, financial and educational assistance for livestock-related natural resource concerns and other significant conservation priorities.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) - This is a voluntary program for landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat on private land. It provides both technical assistance and cost sharing to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) - This voluntary program helps landowners restore and protect wetlands on private property. It provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal agricultural land.

Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) - Teamed with the Forest Stewardship Program, SIP provides cost sharing for improved management of private forest land through multiple practices, including planning, tree planting, wildlife and fish habitat, recreation, riparian restoration, soil erosion control and forest improvements.

Some state and private organizations are making financial assistance available as well, particularly for wildlife habitat enhancements.

The USDA Service Center or conservation district office can provide more details regarding rental payments, cost-sharing options and other buffer assistance programs.

Contact:

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BUFFERS

... *in Arkansas*

COMMON SENSE CONSERVATION

BUFFERS



FILTER STRIP -- Strips of grass used to intercept or trap field sediment, organics, pesticides and other potential pollutants before they reach a body of water.



STREAMBANK PLANTING -- Plants, grasses, shrubs and/or trees placed to protect streambanks from erosion.



WILDLIFE CORRIDOR -- Plantings of trees, shrubs and grasses that provide connecting corridors that enable wildlife to move from one habitat to another.

There are many different types of buffers. Buffers improve and protect ground water and surface water quality; reduce erosion on cropland and streambanks; and provide protection and cover for livestock, wildlife and fish. Other types of buffers include:

Contour Grass Strips -- Narrow bands of vegetation across the slope of a crop field and alternated down the slope with strips of crops. Properly designed and maintained contour grass strips can reduce soil erosion, minimize transport of sediment and other water-borne contaminants, and provide wildlife habitat.

Grassed Waterways -- Strips of grass in areas of cropland where water concentrates or flows off a field. While they are primarily used to prevent gully erosion, waterways can be combined with filter strips to trap contaminants or field sediment.

Wellhead Protection Areas -- Land within a maximum 2,000-foot radius from a public well, as designated by the Environmental Protection Agency or a state-designated agency, can be enrolled in the continuous CRP sign-up. Circular-shaped areas can be "squared off" to eliminate odd-shaped corners to a maximum of 367 acres.

Alley Cropping - Crops planted between rows of larger mature trees.

Herbaceous Wind Barriers - Perennial vegetation established in rows across the prevailing wind direction.

Vegetative Barriers - Narrow strips of vegetation established parallel and perpendicular to the dominant slope of the field.

Common Sense Conservation



FIELD BORDER FOR WILDLIFE -- Plantings of trees and shrubs that are a source of food, nesting cover and shelter for many wildlife species.



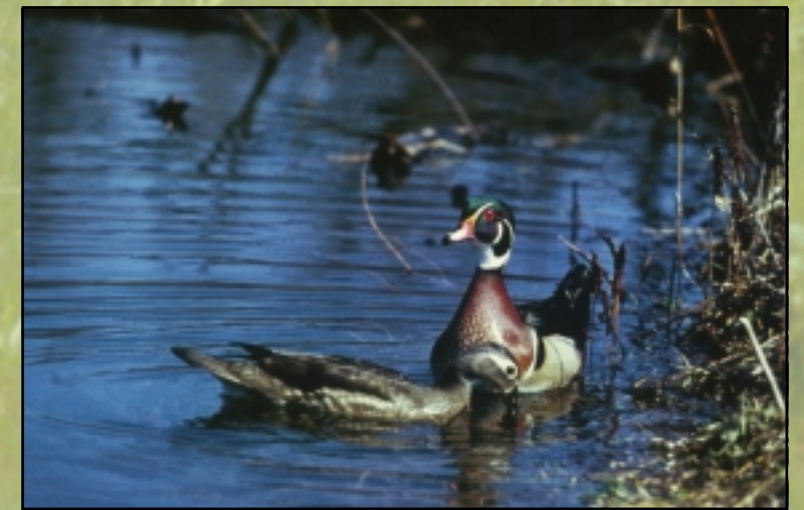
RIPARIAN BUFFER -- Streamside plantings of trees, shrubs and grasses that can intercept contaminants before they reach the water.



BUFFER STRIP FOR ANIMAL WASTE -- Strips of grass used to intercept or trap animal waste and other potential pollutants before they reach a body of water.



FIELD BORDER -- Grass areas along the edges or ends of cropland.



WETLANDS PROTECTED BY BUFFERS -- Areas of shallow water, within or near cropland, that are protected by shrubs, trees and grassed areas. These areas are vital to enhancing wildlife habitat.