

Improving Wisconsin Grasslands

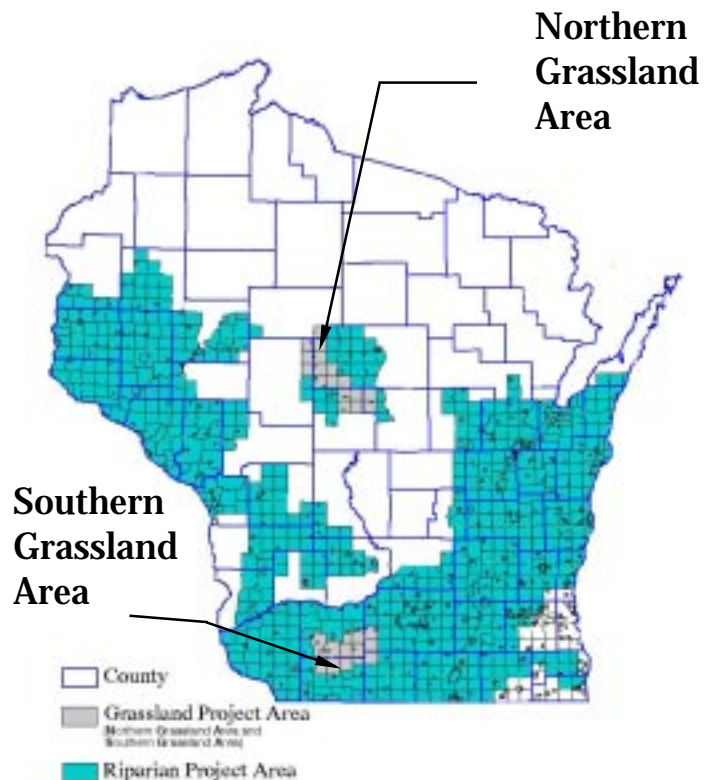


The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) provides a unique opportunity to dedicate grassland habitat for native grassland birds for feeding, breeding and shelter. With modern agricultural practices, cropland and hayland do not provide secure nesting habitat.

Grasslands have experienced decades of decline and this is reflected in the sharp reduction in the number of grassland birds in Wisconsin. All that remains of the tallgrass prairies are small fragments which now provide the only habitat for these birds. Increasing grassland acres will help the grassland species as well as providing habitat for many other species including songbirds, upland game birds, pheasants, reptiles and insects.

CREP Grassland Areas

The two Grassland areas in CREP are areas where the landscape is still relatively open and where habitat has the greatest potential for recovery. The Northern Grassland area, in parts of Wood, Portage, Clark and Marathon counties, is the home range for the threatened Greater Prairie Chicken. The Southern Grassland area in the Blue Mounds area in parts of Iowa, Lafayette, Dane and Green counties has been targeted for improving and restoring pheasant habitat. These areas represent valuable habitat that is also beneficial to other grassland species.



CREP in Wisconsin

Conservation practices for establishing and maintaining grasslands

CP1-Establishment of Permanent

Introduced Grasses and Legumes

Establishes perennial vegetative cover of legumes and introduced cool season grasses primarily Timothy, Smooth Bromegrass and Alfalfa.

CP2-Establishment of Permanent

Native Grasses

Establishes cover of native grasses that will enhance environmental benefits. These prairie seedings include grasses such as switchgrass, big bluestem, or indiagrass, legumes, and prairie flowers.

CP10-Vegetative Cover-Grass

Already Established

Maintains vegetative cover that is already established. This includes perennial grasses, legumes and forbs that protect the land. This cover maintains environmental benefits and prevents degradation of the site.

CP25- Rare and Declining Habitat

Restores the function and value of critically endangered and threatened habitats. The goal is to establish seedings that are most similar to native prairies.



This remnant prairie in Rock County is a beautiful example of what Wisconsin's original prairies were like. These remnant prairies have an incredible biodiversity with over 80 different species attracted to these types of areas. CP25 plantings most resemble these original prairies.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a strong Federal-State-Local partnership for conservation. It is a voluntary program offering financial incentives to help farmers protect and improve water quality. The Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection administers the state portion of the program and provides funds for incentive and easement payments. The USDA Farm Service Agency administers the federal part of the program and makes cost-share, incentive and rental payments to farmers. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical assistance to plan and install the conservation practices and certifies the practices are complete. County Land Conservation Departments may provide conservation planning, certification and monitoring the contracts or easements.

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County Land Conservation
Committees and Departments

August 2001

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