

## Farm Service Agency

# Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – Colorado Republican River

**FACT SHEET**  
June 2019

### Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Colorado are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 60,000 acres of cropland within the Republican River Basin in Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma, counties. The Colorado Republican River CREP is intended to reduce irrigation water consumption by removing irrigated cropland from agricultural production and converting the land to permanent vegetative cover, including native grasses, forbs and legumes. In addition, the conversion of irrigated cropland to permanent vegetative cover will reduce the amount of fertilizer and pesticide application, reduce soil erosion, enhance water quality and wildlife habitat, and reduce the amount of energy used through reduced groundwater pumping.



### 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, 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. CRP is authorized by the Food and Security Act of 1985, as amended.

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 Colorado Republican River CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 14-year to 15-year contracts. Participants remove irrigated cropland from agricultural production and convert the land to permanent grasses, forbs, legumes, and shrubs. This will reduce irrigation water consumption, improve water quality by reducing sediment, nutrients, pesticides and other pollutants being applied to the land and entering streams and rivers, and will enhance wildlife habitat in the area.

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### Goals

The goals of the Colorado Republican River CREP are to:

- Reduce irrigation water use from the Ogallala Aquifer;
- Reduce soil erosion;
- Reduce the amount of fertilizer and pesticide application;
- Improve water quality through wetland restoration and reduction in sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants entering waterbodies;
- Reduce the amount of energy used through reduction in groundwater pumping;
- Reduce depletions in stream flow; and
- Enhance wildlife habitat.

### Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

CP2	Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses;
CP4D	Permanent Wildlife habitat, Noneasement;
CP22	Riparian Buffer;
CP23	Wetland Restoration; and
CP23A	Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain

### Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment under the Colorado Republican River CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located within the project area and be irrigated cropland or non-irrigated cropland that is a center-pivot corner immediately adjacent to the center-pivot irrigated cropland being enrolled. Both irrigated and non-irrigated cropland must meet cropping history criteria and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Irrigated cropland must meet

irrigation history criteria and be physically and legally capable of being irrigated in a normal manner. The irrigation water rights associated with the cropland enrolled must be permanently retired; however, the State of Colorado may allow a new permit on certain wells for watering of livestock or for single family dwellings.

### Payments

Under the Colorado Republican River CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- An annual rental payment consisting of:
  - A base soil rental rate, determined by (1) when only irrigated acres are enrolled, the irrigated rental rate for the county where the land is physically located; or (2) when a combination of irrigated and non-irrigated acres are enrolled, the weighted average rental of two predominant non-irrigated soils and the irrigated rental rate for the irrigated acres; and
  - A maintenance payment, determined by the practice offered.
- A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre for installing practice CP22; or \$150 per acre for installing practices CP23 and CP23A. Example: 10 acres enrolled to be devoted to practice CP22 result in a \$1,000 (10 acres x \$100) SIP. This payment is made soon after the contract has been signed and approved.
- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) for installing practices CP2 (only if located in an approved public wellhead area), CP22, CP23, and CP23A. The PIP is equal to 40 percent of eligible cost of installing the practice. Example: Producer’s total eligible cost of installing the practice is \$2,000. The PIP would be \$800 (\$2,000 x .40).

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- A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to install the approved practice.

In addition, the State of Colorado provides an annual payment to eligible participants based on the irrigated acres enrolled and the location of the well or point of diversion of surface water. The State of Colorado’s annual payment will be:

- \$300 per acre for cropland irrigated only with surface water from the Arikaree River or the South Fork or North Fork of the Republican River;
- \$55 per acre for cropland irrigated with groundwater from a well that is located within 0 to 1 mile from a certain portion of the South Fork Republican River;
- \$35 per acre for cropland irrigated with groundwater from a well that is located within certain portions of the South Fork Republican River Sub Basin;
- \$20 per acre for cropland irrigated with groundwater from a well that is located:
  - Within 0 to 1 mile from a certain portion of the North Fork Republican River; or
  - Within “0 to 1 mile from a certain portion of the Arikaree River; and
- \$6 per acre for cropland irrigated with groundwater from a well that is located within the project area but not within one of the areas identified above.

### Examples

A Yuma County producer elects to enroll 120 acres of irrigated center-pivot cropland to be devoted to CRP practice CP4D in a 15-year contract. The well from which the land is irrigated is located within 1 mile of the South Fork of the Republican River. The base soil rental rate for the land is the per-acre irrigated rental rate of \$212. The annual rental payment will be \$25,440 (\$212 x 120 acres). The producer will receive \$381,600 in annual rental payments from USDA over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. In addition, the producer will receive an annual payment of \$55 per acre from the State of Colorado. The producer will receive \$99,000 in annual rental payments from the State of Colorado over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. Cost-share payment equal to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to install the practice will also be provided by USDA.

A Kit Carson County producer elects to enroll 120 acres of irrigated center-pivot cropland and 20 acres of non-irrigated cropland that are the corners to the center-pivot irrigated cropland. All acres will be devoted to CRP practice CP4D in a 15-year contract. The well from which the land is irrigated is located within the South Fork Republican River Sub Basin, but not within 1 mile of the South Fork of the Republican River. The base soil rental rate is \$166, which is the weighted average of the irrigated rental rate and the non-irrigated rental rate. The annual rental payment will be \$23,240 (\$166 x 140 acres). The producer will receive \$348,600 in annual rental payments from USDA over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. In addition, the producer will receive an annual payment of \$35 per acre from the State of Colorado. The producer will receive \$63,000 in annual rental payments from the State of Colorado over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. Cost-share payment equal to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to install the practice will also be provided by USDA.

**Note:** The preceding are examples only.



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### Enrollment Options

CREP is another option under CRP that farmers may select to enhance their land. Eligible producers may still enroll eligible land in CRP through general or continuous signup. Under the Colorado Republican River CREP, producers receive a higher rental rate. In addition, the State of Colorado provides additional payments to eligible participants.

### Haying and Grazing

Haying and grazing are not allowed during the CRP contract period unless authorized by USDA. Contact your local FSA office for more information about authorized haying and grazing activities.

### For More Information

For more information on CREP, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, visit [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov). To learn more about FSA conservation programs, visit [fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://fsa.usda.gov/conservation).

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only; other eligibility requirements or restrictions may apply.

