



Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – Kansas Upper Arkansas River

OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Kansas are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 28,950 acres of agricultural land in Barton, Edwards, Finney, Ford, Gray, Hamilton, Kearny, Pawnee, Rice and Stafford counties to conserve and improve water resources and wildlife habitat through establishment of riparian buffers, native grasses, shallow water areas for wildlife and the restoration of wetlands.

BACKGROUND

CREP is a 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 or ranched, 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 Security Act of 1985 and was reauthorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014.

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 Kansas Upper Arkansas 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 cropland from agricultural production, permanently retire the associated state water rights and convert the land to native grasses, trees and other vegetation. This will conserve water resources, reduce agricultural chemicals and

sediment entering Kansas Rivers and aquifers, reduce the use of irrigation water, reduce erosion, boost water supplies in the Arkansas River and enhance habitat for a variety of land and water species.

GOALS

The goals of the Kansas Upper Arkansas River CREP are to:

- Reduce the amount of ground water used for irrigation;
- Increase stream flow in the Arkansas River;
- Improve ground water levels in the alluvial and High Plains aquifer;
- Reduce the amount of sediment, nitrogen, phosphorous and other pollutants entering streams and other waterbodies; and
- Reduce energy consumption.

ELIGIBLE CONSERVATION PRACTICES

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- CP2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses;
- CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-Easement;
- CP9, Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife;
- CP21, Filter Strips;
- CP22, Riparian Buffer;
- CP23, Wetland Restoration; and
- CP23A, Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain.

ENROLLMENT AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Enrollment for the Kansas Upper Arkansas River CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, cropland must be located in the project area, meet cropping history criteria and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Dryland

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must be either dryland center pivot corners or other dryland areas within or adjacent to eligible irrigated fields. Irrigated cropland must meet minimum irrigation requirements and be physically and legally capable of being planted and irrigated in a normal manner when offered for enrollment. Landowners must own the water rights associated with all the irrigated cropland to be enrolled, and such water rights must be legally dismissible by the state.

PAYMENTS

Under the Kansas Upper Arkansas River CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible cost to install the approved practice.
- An annual rental payment consisting of:
 - o A base soil rental rate, determined by (1) for dryland cropland, the three predominant soils of the land offered; or (2) for irrigated cropland, the weighted average of the posted irrigated rental rate for land offered; and
 - o A maintenance incentive payment, determined by the practice offered.
- A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre for installing practices CP21 and CP22; and \$150 per acre for practices CP23 and CP23A. Example: 20 acres enrolled to be devoted to CP23 result in a \$3,000 (\$150 x 20 acres) SIP. This payment is made after the contract has been signed and approved.
- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) for installing practices CP9, CP21, CP22, CP23 and CP23A. The PIP is equal to 40 percent of the total 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).

In addition, the State of Kansas provides the following payments:

- A one-time state upfront payment (SUP) of either \$97 per irrigated acre or \$55 per irrigated acre based on the type and location of the soils offered.

- A one-time state wetland bonus of \$350 per acre for acreage enrolled in practice CP9, CP23 or CP23A, if the land is located in an area eligible to receive Western Water Conservation Project funds.
- Up to \$1,000 cost-share assistance for optional plugging and proper abandonment of a well where the water right has been permanently retired under the Kansas Upper Arkansas River CREP.

EXAMPLES

A Barton County producer elects to enroll 15 acres of eligible irrigated cropland to be a restored wetland (practice CP23) in a 15-year contract. The base soil rental rate for the land is \$183. The acreage consists of soil types eligible for a \$97 SUP and is located in an area eligible for a state wetland bonus payment. The producer's total annual payment will be \$2,745 (\$183 x 15 acres). The producer will receive \$41,175 in annual rental payments over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. In addition, the producer will receive a one-time SIP of \$2,250 (15 acres x \$150). The producer will receive cost-share payments equal to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to restore the wetland, plus a one-time PIP equal to 40 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to restore the wetland. The producer will also receive \$6,705 from the State of Kansas.

A Ford County producer elects to enroll 80 acres of eligible irrigated land to be devoted to a native grasses (practice CP2) in a 15-year contract. The per-acre irrigated rental rate for the county is \$176. The acreage consists of soil types eligible for a \$97 SUP. The producer's total annual payment will be \$14,080 (\$176 x 80 acres). The producer will receive \$211,200 in annual rental payments over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. The producer will receive cost-share payments equal to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the practice. The producer will also receive \$7,760 from the State of Kansas.

Note: The preceding are examples only.

ENROLLMENT OPTIONS

CREP is another option under CRP that farmers and ranchers may select to enhance their land. Eligible producers may still enroll eligible land in CRP through general or continuous signup; however, the Kansas Upper Arkansas River CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the Kansas Upper Arkansas River CREP, producers receive higher rental payments and have longer contract lengths that increase the total amount of rental payments received.

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

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. For more information on CREP, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about FSA conservation programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

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