

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

A unique opportunity offering financial benefits to landowners and a healthy environment for Michigan.

What is CREP?

Michigan's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) was created to help protect our environment and wildlife. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) is partnering with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement conservation practices of great significance to the state, and valuable to the nation, in matters of soil erosion, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

CREP is part of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and offers enhanced financial incentives for participants. In Michigan's CREP, farmers and other landowners in priority watershed areas agree to enroll eligible parcels of land in the program for 14 to 15 years and establish prescribed conservation practices.

In return, landowners receive cost-share assistance in establishing conservation practices. Eligible practices include:

- Introduced grass planting
- Native grass planting
- Field windbreak
- Filter strips
- Riparian forest buffer
- Wetland restoration
- Sediment retention-controlled structure

Do I Qualify?

CREP priority watersheds include the Lake Macatawa, Western Lake Erie Basin, and Saginaw Bay watersheds. Eligible land must be planted with an agricultural commodity (any crop planted and produced by annual soil tilling) four of the six years from 2012 to 2017 and is physically and legally capable of being planted to an agricultural commodity in a normal manner.

Selected land within Michigan's CREP priority watersheds is eligible for the program. Property owners in these priority watersheds are strongly encouraged to take part. The local USDA Farm Service Agency can help landowners identify suitable parcels of land.

Contact Us:

Financial Benefits

Example:

“Jim” heard about Michigan’s CREP and stopped in at his local Farm Service Agency for a no-obligation assessment¹ of 10 acres of land he believed to be suitable for the program. CREP representatives determined that the land was eligible, and Jim enrolled in the program. Jim decided to put in a filter strip² and purchased seed, fertilizer, equipment and labor. He spent \$70 per acre for the following return on his investment:

One-time Investment & Payments: Establishment & Signing	Landowner Investment	One-time Payments	Annual Payments
Landowner (seed, fertilizer, equipment & labor per acre)	\$70	-	
Michigan (50% of establishment cost per acre)	-	\$35	
Federal (50% of establishment cost per acre)	-	\$35	
Federal Practice Incentive (10% of establishment cost per acre)	-	\$7	
Water Quality Incentive (WLEB only \$50)	-	\$50	
State Signing Bonus (\$150 per acre, none for CP1 & CP2)	-	\$150	
Total per acre	\$70	\$277	
Total for 10 acres	\$700	\$2,770	
Annual Investment & Payments: Rental and Maintenance	Landowner Investment	One-time Payments	Annual Payments
Landowner (equipment & labor per acre to maintain site ³)	\$14	-	-
State maintenance allowance	-	\$100	-
Federal soil rental (Based on 140% of \$100 SSR ⁴)	-	-	-
Climate Smart Incentive (varies 0-10%, included in the rental payment)	-	-	\$140
Federal signing incentive (Based on 32.5% annual rental payment)	-	\$464	\$3
Total per acre	\$14	\$146	\$143
Total for 10 acres	\$140	\$1,460	\$1,430
Total for 10 acres over 15 years	\$2,100	\$1,460	\$21,450
Project Return (Payments - Investments) = \$21,450 + \$2,770 + \$1,460 - \$700 - \$2,100 = \$22,800			

¹prospective enrollees. ²Areas of grasses, legumes or other vegetation that filter runoff or waste water by trapping sediment, pesticides, organic matter or other pollutants. Filter strips are established on cropland at the lower edge of a field or adjacent to a body of water. ³Estimate for annual mowing. Based on 2019 Custom Machine and Work Rates Estimates, Michigan State University Extension, http://www.canr.msu.edu/farm_management/uploads/files/MSU%20Custom%20Work%20Rates%202019.pdf ⁴Payments will be based upon the soil rental rate (SRR) in the area. Jim’s rate is \$100 per acre.

Environmental Benefits

Michigan’s CREP focuses on land in Lake Macatawa, Western Lake Erie Basin and Saginaw Bay Watersheds, and is dedicated to conservation practices that improve water quality and benefit wildlife. CREP will be key in reducing non-point source pollution in rural areas. The program will:

- Protect Michigan’s lakes, rivers, ponds and streams.
- Filter runoff water of silt, pesticides, and other pollutants.
- Replenish water tables.
- Protect topsoil from erosion.

- Enhance wildlife habitat.
- Encourage wildlife diversity.
- Reduce flooding.
- Increase oxygen levels.
- Sequester carbon and improve soil health.

The benefits of Michigan’s CREP go beyond the state’s borders by helping to maintain the health of the Great Lakes, which make up 20 percent of the world’s surface freshwater. The Great Lakes aesthetic, environmental and commercial value are vitally important to the entire region and the nation.