

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

SUMMARY OF THE WISCONSIN'S PROJECT

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
USDA Farm Service Agency
JANUARY 2003

Governor McCallum signed an agreement with USDA Secretary Veneman for CREP in October 2001 and an agreement amendment in December 2002. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is implementing the state's portion of the program with the assistance of DNR. The state's portion of the program is being implemented locally by county land conservation committees and their staffs. The USDA Farm Service Agency implements the USDA portion of the program with the assistance of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

PROJECT AREA:

The CREP riparian and grassland project areas is shown on the attached map. The criteria used to select the project areas were:

- the **major agricultural sources of sediment and nutrients to the Mississippi River, Gulf Hypoxia, and Great Lakes;**
- **impaired waters on the 303(d) list.** (the project area includes over 90% of the waters on the 303(d) list);
- **Outstanding and Exceptional Resources waters** in agricultural areas;
- Watersheds contributing to **surface drinking water supplies** for 16 cities.

Two additional **grassland project areas** located in north central and south central Wisconsin were selected to enhance and provide additional habitat for endangered

grassland birds and other wildlife, as well as to improve water quality

The total project area of approximately 15.3 million acres (including 690,000 acres in the two grassland project areas), includes about 10.9 million acres of farmland, of which 7.6 million acres are cropland and pastureland. It is estimated that about 300,000 acres are eligible within the riparian project area. The plan is to enroll 85,000 acres in the riparian project areas and up to 15,000 acres in the grassland project areas.

PROJECT GOALS

The state's goal is to enroll 100,000 acres into CREP, including an estimated 25% (25,000 acres) into permanent conservation easements and 75% (75,000 acres) into 15-year contracts, in order to protect and improve water quality and enhance habitat for threatened grassland birds and other wildlife.

Specifically, the project goals are to:

- Reduce nutrient runoff of phosphorus and nitrogen by 10% and sediment in runoff by 15% from cropland and pastureland in the project areas.



- Establish riparian buffers and filter strips on 50% of the stream miles in the project area that currently are without buffers.
- Establish an additional 10% of grassland acreage within the grassland project areas to increase populations of endangered grassland birds.

County Land Conservation

ELIGIBLE PRACTICES:

- **Filter Strips** (CP21)
- **Riparian Buffers** (CP22),
- **Grassed Waterways** (CP8a),
- **Wetland Restorations** (CP 23) in conjunction with an enrolled riparian buffer, filter strip, or established upland grassland habitat.
- **Prairie Ecosystem Restoration and Tall Grass Prairie/Oak Savanna Ecosystem Restoration**(CP25) *,
- **Establish Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes and Grasses Already Established**(CP1& CP10)*,
- **Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses** (CP2)*,

* Practices only eligible within the grass-land project area, up to 15,000 acres.

INCENTIVES

RENTAL PAYMENTS – USDA will make payments equal to the annual rental rate for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) plus an additional annual incentive payment of 35% or 60%, depending on the practices, plus a \$5 to \$10 per acre per year maintenance payment. These payments would be made annually for 14 or 15 years. In addition the federal government would pay an additional \$140 to \$150 per acre payment, up front, as a signing incentive payment for lands enrolled in certain practices. The average total payment from USDA would be about \$1,800 per acre.

The State of Wisconsin offers an additional up front incentive payment for the 15-year contracts of 1.5 times the federal annual rental rate, not including the other incentives, or an average of \$120 per acre.

The State of Wisconsin also offers an additional 12 times the federal annual rental rate as incentive for a perpetual conservation easement. The average state incentive for conservation easements will be about \$960 per acre as an up front payment.

The proposed total state and federal payment for the 15-year contract averages about \$1,900 per acre and for the conservation easement about \$2,800/ acre. The CREP project is estimated to cost about \$240 million to enroll the 100,000 acres. The estimate includes \$200 million from USDA and about \$40 million from the State of Wisconsin. The payments to landowners is estimated to cost about \$33 million in state incentive payments and \$180 million in federal contract payments.

PRACTICE PAYMENTS – Combined state and federal funding for some of the eligible practices of up to 110% (includes a federal practice incentive payment) of the cost to install or construct certain practices. Other practices, will receive 50% federal cost share payments and an additional 20% state practice payment. It is anticipated that the program will pay out about \$18 million federal and state funds to install practices.

PARTICIPATION

The project started at the end of October 2001. FSA reports that about 33% of the 100,000 acre goal has been offered for enrollment, including about 70% of the grassland project goal, 20% of the riparian project goal, and 45% of the wetland restoration goal, all within the first 13 months of the program. The State of Wisconsin has already paid about 600 landowners the state's incentive payment totaling about \$2 million.

MORE INFORMATION

You may obtain additional information from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) web sites or from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection web site at <http://datcp.state.wi.us/crep>.

CONTACTS

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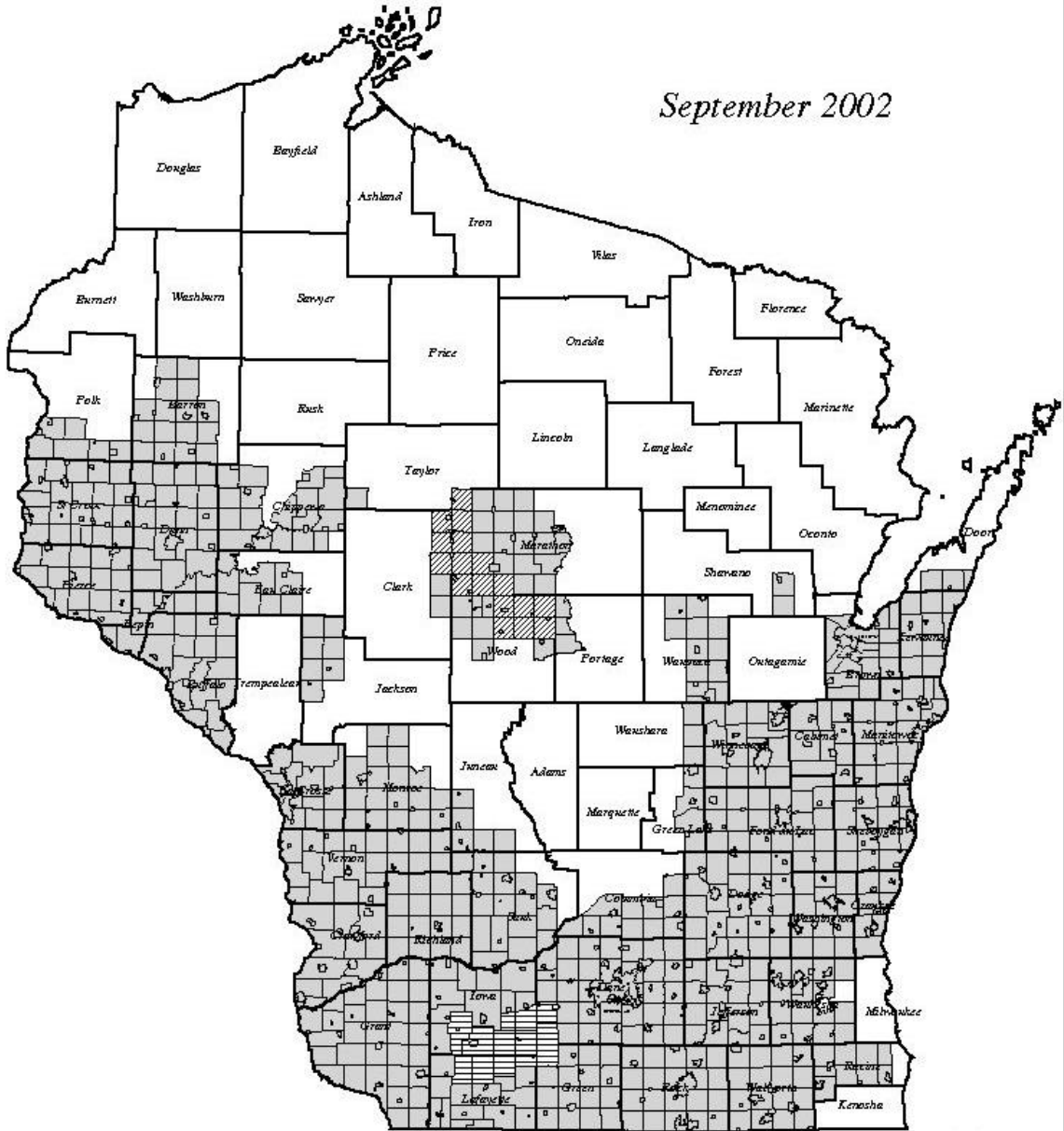
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
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Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Project Area

September 2002



-  Southern Grassland Project Areas
-  Northern Grassland Project Areas
-  Riparian Project Areas

