



## Washington State Conservation Commission

<b>Policy #</b>	17-02 – CREP Maintenance Policy
<b>Applies to:</b>	All Conservation Districts
<b>Effective Date:</b>	July 20, 2017

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to set a uniform Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Maintenance Funding Policy for all CREP projects located in the State of Washington. The Conservation Commission is responsible for funding maintenance activities for projects implemented by the Farm Services Agency (FSA) under the CREP. For these reasons the Conservation Commission has determined it advisable to have a policy setting limits and conditions for the appropriate use of maintenance funds.

### **BACKGROUND**

It is the intent of the Conservation Commission to ensure that investments made in CREP planting projects are secured with adequate maintenance to ensure plant survival and successful buffer establishment. Maintenance is required for the life of the CREP contract. Under agreement with FSA, Washington State provides funding for maintenance activities for a period of no more than five years. Maintenance activities are necessary for riparian enhancement, which includes establishment of new plantings of native trees and shrubs, control of competing weeds, livestock management and control of wildlife predation.

### **POLICY**

It will be the policy of the Conservation Commission to authorize maintenance funding for CREP projects in accordance with the following criteria:

- 1) Eligible maintenance activities will be limited to the practices listed in Table 1.
- 2) Maintenance funding will be provided for five years following the date of first planting for the FSA contract.
  - a) The cost per acre allowed for the five-year maintenance period will be \$2,700/acre.
- 3) Procurement for individual actions in Table 1 shall be consistent with local Conservation District purchasing policy for obtaining products, goods, and services.
- 4) Contract holders (landowners) may perform their own maintenance consistent with FSA established rates for equipment time and operator cost.
- 5) Maintenance funding will also be applied to re-plants approved by FSA, and shall be funded for five years from date of first re-planting in accordance with this policy. When re-plants are distributed throughout the CREP site, 300 stems will be equivalent to one

acre. When a re-plant occurs in distinct areas of a CREP site, the sum of the area shall be used to determine the allowed maintenance amount.

- 6) The maintenance plan and associated costs will be developed by a CREP technician reflective of the conservation plan in accordance with this policy. The plan will ensure the survival and establishment of seedlings by addressing the invasion of competing vegetation, watering requirements, pest damage, tree release and livestock management.
- 7) Beaver management funding is not included as part of the maintenance funding and may be applied for throughout the life of the contract. In project areas that are prone to beaver activity, the CREP resource specialist shall develop a beaver control plan for the life of the project. The plan will: identify control measures; include a budget for installation and maintenance; and discuss how and why the recommendation was formulated. The plan will be signed by the landowner, the conservation technician, WDFW (if WDFW permits will be required) and submitted to the Commission CREP project manager for concurrence. Preventative beaver management practices (e.g. exclusion fence) may be installed before the CREP plantings are installed.
- 8) The CREP Program Manager will hold contingency funds for use in special or unique circumstances such as: flood repair, fire, non-livestock animal damage, plant performance, invasive species pressure, and other circumstances beyond the control of the landowner and not anticipated by the technician. Contingency funding may be applied beyond the five year maintenance limit. The CREP Program Manager will have final approval of any allocation for special or unique circumstances.
- 9) Ineligible costs are those practice components that are not identified in the maintenance plan or within this policy. i.e., equipment purchase, livestock purchase, equipment repair.
- 10) Maintenance funding must be requested and approved by the CREP Program Manager in advance of the maintenance activity occurring.

**Table 1. Eligible Maintenance Activities**

Component	Narrative
Backpack spraying	Eligible for first five years. Subject to overall per acre limit.
Beaver (trapping)	Only after annual APHIS beaver removal contract is expended.
Beaver Management	Includes deterrents, fencing, beaver deceiver devices and tubes
Conservation Cover	Not to exceed one reseeding. Subject to overall per acre limit.
Fence Maintenance/Repair	Only under special circumstances not related to landowner/contractor fault (e.g. windstorm).
Livestock Crossings	Not to exceed 1 repair. Eligible for first five years. Subject to overall per acre limit.
Mechanical (hand clearing) weed control	Eligible for first five years. Subject to overall per acre limit.
Mowing	Eligible for first five years. Subject to overall per acre limit.
Spraying (tractor-strip spraying)	Eligible for first five years. Subject to overall per acre limit.
Tractor mowing	Eligible for first five years. Subject to overall per acre limit.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Narrative</b>
Tree planting	Upon approval and cost-share by FSA, 50% of trees planted eligible for replant. Eligible expenses include plant materials, planting, deer guards, sleeves
Tree release	Eligible for first five years. Tarp repair, tube removal, thinning and other activities associated with tree release. Subject to overall per acre limit.
Tree Watering, Irrigation	Eligible for first five years. Subject to overall per acre limit.
Tube Maintenance & Removal	Eligible for first five years. This activity covers general weeding, maintenance and removal of tubes and is not intended to cover the cost of flood repair which can be billed under unique circumstances. Subject to overall per acre limit. Should additional protection be needed beyond 5 years, tubes may be removed under contingency funding. See criteria #8.
Water Developments	Eligible for first five years. Subject to overall per acre limit.