

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Washington's CREP is a voluntary program designed to benefit both farms and fish. The program compensates farmers for growing a different crop in streamside areas of their property — that crop is salmon habitat.

Eligible CREP activities:

- ▶ **Forest Buffers:** Native trees and vegetation planted along a river or stream.
- ▶ **Hedgerows:** Narrow strips of native shrubs planted on streams and drainage channels.
- ▶ **Grass Filter Strips:** Strips of grassy vegetation planted along stream segments that are upstream of salmon habitat.
- ▶ **Wetland Restoration:** Planting native wetland vegetation, including establishing upland buffers. Criteria for eligible restoration practices varies depending on whether the site is within or outside of the 100-year floodplain area. This practice is eligible on cropland.
- ▶ **Pastureland Wetland Buffers:** Bands of vegetation planted on marginal pastureland that is adjacent to wetlands.

How it works

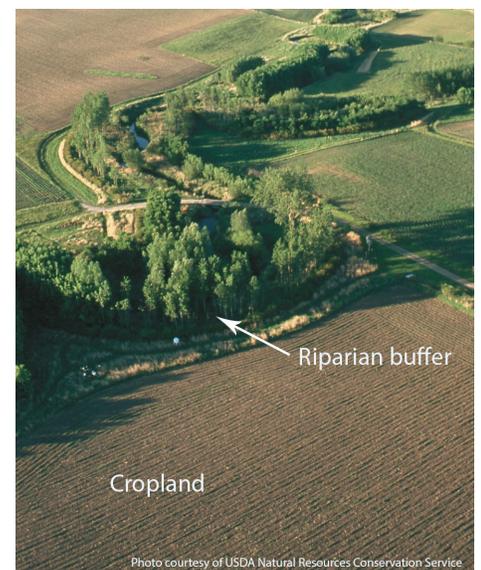
- ▶ Landowners voluntarily enroll in CREP and agree to plant native vegetation to form a “buffer” between farmland and eligible, salmon-bearing waterways.
- ▶ A local CREP technician will work with you to design the buffer and plant the vegetation.
- ▶ You'll receive annual rental payments for the acreage you plant for the duration of your CREP contract (10-15 years).
- ▶ After five years, most projects are well-established, and further maintenance is minimal.

Benefits for fish

- ▶ Buffers function as a “water treatment plant,” absorbing nutrients and pollutants before they reach streams.
- ▶ Trees and plants shade the stream, cooling water for salmon.
- ▶ Trees fall into streams providing habitat and rearing pools.
- ▶ Vegetation stabilizes stream banks and reduces erosion.

Benefits for farmers

- ▶ Steady rental income for 10-15 years. The amount is determined by your soil type and enrolled activities.
- ▶ One-time signing bonus.
- ▶ Entire cost of project installation is covered.
- ▶ Project maintenance cost is reimbursed for the first five years.
- ▶ Livestock operators are reimbursed for fencing that excludes cattle from the buffer and for new water facilities.
- ▶ Option to re-enroll.



Eligibility

A local CREP technician will help you determine if your property meets eligibility criteria. General requirements include:

- ▶ You must have owned and/or operated your land for at least 12 months before enrollment.
- ▶ Land must be either cropland or marginal pastureland; be able to support the required vegetation; and have required cropping history.
- ▶ Property must border eligible stream segments. A map of eligible segments is available from the Washington State Conservation Commission CREP web page (www.scc.wa.gov/crep). Generally, stream segments must have at least one species of Pacific salmon or steelhead present.



Program flexibility

No two properties are alike — CREP is designed to be site-specific.

A CREP technician will work with you to develop a project plan that meets eligibility requirements and your goals for your property. The boundary of streamside buffers can be moved toward or away from streams based on site conditions, structures, and your needs. You may enroll all or a portion of your eligible streamside property.



Participating partners:

- ▶ CREP is a federal program authorized by the USDA Farm Bill and administered by the Farm Service Agency.
- ▶ State funding and coordination is provided by the Washington State Conservation Commission.
- ▶ Conservation district and NRCS staff provide local technical assistance, working one-on-one with landowners throughout project planning, installation, and maintenance.

How to enroll

Enrollment is open until salmon habitat goals for Washington are met and as long as program funding is available. Your local conservation district and FSA office will help you through the enrollment process. Visit the Washington State Conservation Commission website (scc.wa.gov/conservation-district-map) for a conservation district directory.



Program partners:



Updated: April 2019

SCC-CREP-04-19

Please call our office (360-407-6200) to request content in an alternate format.