

Choosing Your

CRP Journey



What is CRP?

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides landowners with a way to earn a guaranteed income in exchange for protecting environmentally sensitive land with long-term land cover.

CRP CATEGORIES

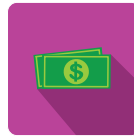
General

Enroll entire fields or farms at a time. General CRP sign up dates are specific but infrequent, and involve a competitive bidding process.

Continuous

Enroll smaller portions of land aimed at improving specific conservation issues. Sign up for continuous CRP can be initiated at any time, and landowners can enroll in multiple programs simultaneously.

BENEFITS OF CRP



Money

1. Provides steady income
2. Less productive land becomes valuable
3. Between 50-90% cost share available



Wildlife

1. Improves wildlife habitat
2. Attracts wildlife species
3. Increases pollinator habitat



Resources

1. Reduces soil erosion
2. Increases soil health
3. Protects air and water quality

How is CRP a journey?

Experiences with CRP are as unique as the land they protect. Landowners select different programs, requirements and options to create a CRP plan that fits both their land and their goals.

It can be a complicated journey, so this booklet aims to help you on your way.

*Start your
CRP journey*

Meet Your

Travel Guides

**Two landowners share
their own CRP journeys**



Ruth Harvey

After retiring from her career as a middle school teacher, Ruth Harvey became more involved with running the Harvey century family farm. She and her husband enrolled in CRP in 2010.

“CRP is truly taking care of the land. It’s doing what is right so that we have this land for years.”

-Ruth

Kate Giannini

Kate Giannini studied conservation management in school and got involved in CRP as both a landowner and a tenant for a family farm. Kate has renewed her tenant’s CRP contract three times and her own CRP land’s contract twice.

“We like providing habitat and having the ground seeded to native grass. As for the family we tenant for, they are supportive of CRP, but it has to work for them economically as well.”

-Kate

Looking Down

the Path

Is CRP right for me?



IS MY LAND ELIGIBLE?

CRP Eligibility

- You must have owned your land for at least one year. If not, ask the Farm Service Agency (FSA) if a waiver is an option.
- Land in an expiring CRP contract can often be renewed.
- Land must meet specific conservation needs.
- It must have been planted to an agricultural commodity. Forage rotations may still be eligible.

WHAT ARE MY

RESPONSIBILITIES?

Good question!

- CRP is not just free money from the government.
- CRP plans have specific rules and deadlines that must be met in order for payment to be received.
- You will need to cover some of the initial cost of preparation.
- Most programs require some type of management activities during the contract period.

CRP prices often lag behind commodity prices



HOW MUCH WILL I EARN?

It depends. Contract prices are determined based on soil type and what you want to do. They also change in response to commodity prices and even on how many landowners are enrolled. CRP aims to protect the natural environment. The more valuable the protection your land can offer, the more money you can earn. Rental payments can range from \$20-\$300 an acre.

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) maintain a list of many of these options on their website. You can explore planting, cost-share, and program options. You can also stop by or give them a call. The staff is here to help.

Many items available for cost-share.

Land-preparation, seeding, herbicides and more.

Some major programs target.



Wetlands



Pollinator habitat



Highly erodible land



Wildlife habitat

Kate's Advice

"As you get into more diverse seed mix species or add in more trees or more habitat, you're going to get ranked higher and have a better chance of getting into the CRP program."

COMMON CRP MYTHS

Myth: Enrolling my land into CRP means that hunters can come hunt on my land whenever they like.

False: You don't have to open your land for public hunting when you enroll. This is an option for some plans but is not required.

Myth: I have no choice in what I'm supposed to plant in my CRP plan.

False: There is flexibility within the CRP plan guidelines. Just check with the FSA office prior to planting.

TALKING TO TENANTS

If you have a tenant, do you want to share part of the payment? Will more work be asked of them?

Now is the time to start talking to them about your CRP ideas.



Ruth's Advice

"We in the past had trouble with flooding and just didn't want to have to worry about that. If you have a good stand of growth and trees from CRP, you're going to have a lot less erosion down there."

Form is available electronically

SA-948A
19-27-101

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

COST-SHARE AGREEMENT

See Page 2 for Privacy Act and Burden Statements)

Form Approved - OMB No. 1

1. ST. & CO. Code: 19-123

2. County Office Name, Address and Telephone Number
MAHASKA COUNTY FARM SERVICE AGENCY
2503 TODD ST
OSKAHOUSA, IA 52537-1714
(841) 673-3476

3. Application Number 4. Agreee
19-123-2013_0078 19-123

5. Program Year 6. F
7. Program Code
CRP

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
Form No.	Track No.	Field No.	Practice Control No.	Component No.	Field Code	Practice Units	Practice Acres Approved	Practice Expiration Date	
0004827	0002094		19-123-2013-0078-01-CP4D		3308		Acres	1.30	CR

A	B	C	D	E
Form No.	Track No.	Field No.	Practice Control No.	Component No.
0004827	0002094		19-123-2013-0078-01-CP4D	

First Steps

Signing Up

HOW TO SIGN UP FOR CRP

Visit your local FSA office

They can help determine your site-specific incentive rates, discuss your goals for CRP and identify which plans best suit your land.

Bring your land title

It will help FSA verify whether or not your land is eligible. Plus, they will need to make copies.

Determine CRP Rental Rate

Your rental rate will be determined after completing the official CRP-1 and CRP-2 forms. The FSA may also request other forms, depending on your sign-up date.

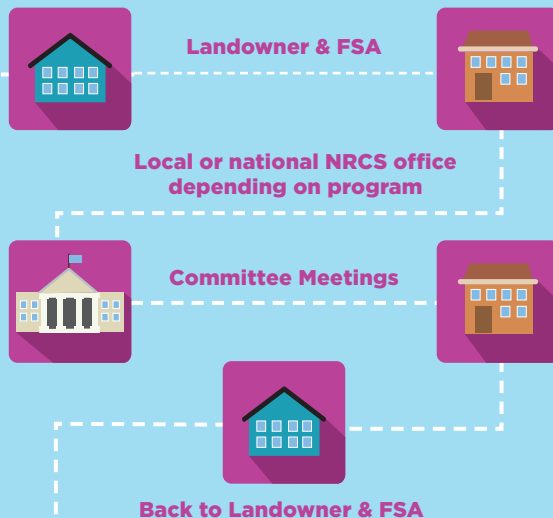
Decide on a plan

The USDA and NRCS staff can help landowners decide on a conservation plan, what seed mixes to choose for given areas, and other decisions.

THE WINDING PATH

Because every CRP journey is different, the sign-up process takes time to complete.

- Landowners typically go back and forth to the office 4 to 5 times before CRP processing is finished.
- Out-of-town landowners can complete forms via phone, fax, email, or mail.
- FSA may request other forms, depending on the program or sign-up date.
- Some programs have limits on how many acres can be enrolled nationally.
- Expect at least 3 months for final approval.



“It can be very time consuming. The USDA staff are there as a resource for landowners. It can be kind of overwhelming or intimidating to go through that process if you’ve never done it before.”

-Kate

“We’ve never had any reservations about enrolling in CRP. The conversation I have every year with my husband is not whether to do CRP but rather how much land to enroll.”

-Ruth

On the Journey

Landowner Responsibilities



PUT THE PLAN INTO ACTION

🌿 Congratulations on being enrolled into CRP!



Labor and equipment

Prepare the ground, buy the seed and get it planted. Or hire someone else to do it.



Meet Deadlines

Each program has its own requirements. If you miss a deadline, you won't get paid.



Reimbursement

Receiving cost-share doesn't mean you will be paid quickly. Be ready to cover the bills yourself and be paid back in one lump sum.

MID-CONTRACT

MANAGEMENT

🌿 What is Mid-Contract Management?

- Mid-contract management are activities that landowners must do to their CRP land to ensure the environmental benefits are present for the life of the contract.
- These activities are required for payment and differ based on the type of CRP. Cost-share is usually available to help with costs.
- Some examples of mid-contract management include disking, interseeding or burning.



ENJOY THE JOURNEY

Yes, you have responsibilities with CRP, but don't forget to also enjoy the perks. Many of the benefits are visible within a few years. Make sure to get out and appreciate the changes you have made to your land.



Myth: Mid-contract management is just busy work. I like the way my CRP land looks without it.

The benefits of mid-contract management may not be apparent to landowners, but they are important. For example, CRP programs that include grasses and wildflowers benefit nesting pheasants.

But without mid-contract management, these areas become choked with thick grasses that baby pheasants cannot walk through. Landowners may not see the difference, but mother pheasants appreciate it!

Kate's Experience

"You have to do a lot of the project management yourself, such as hiring contractors, getting estimates, purchasing seed and deciding what seed dealers to work with. There is a lot of project management that goes on when you're going to be enrolling into CRP."



Ruth's Experience

"I've seen less erosion for sure while participating in CRP, and I see a lot more wildlife. We've got turkey, deer, pheasants, bald eagles and birds galore. I love the birds."

End of the Road

Looking Back & Looking Forward

EXPIRING CRP CONTRACTS

You still have choices when your CRP contract ends

- The FSA office will give about a 6-month notice when your contract is coming to an end and what opportunities for re-enrollment are available.
- You can often re-enroll your land into the same CRP program with few changes required.
- If rental rates or commodity prices have changed enough, it might make sense to not continue CRP. The choice is yours.



RUTH'S JOURNEY

Ruth and her husband do not plan on withdrawing their farm land from CRP any time soon. She has no complaints about her journey with CRP.

"I'm just amazed, as I have become more involved, all that there is to learn and understand. You have to be invested in the land, and you have to be part of it. Be aware what's happening to your land."



KATE'S JOURNEY

It is essential to know more about the CRP process up front, so landowners can make a better plan for themselves. Knowing the types of resources and connections you need is very important.

"My advice is to be patient with it and ask questions. Find a local resource you really trust to get your information from."

Connections

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

📍 Locate your USDA Service Center

- www.fsa.usda.gov

📖 Learn more about CRP

- <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Wildlife-Landowner-Assistance/Conservation-Reserve-Program>

👥 Other groups can help you with CRP

- Your state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Pheasants Forever
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Some non-profit organizations



"If you're involved with CRP and are a part of it, it's just part of farming and it's a great life. It truly is.

-Ruth

CRP PROGRAM INDEX

- CP-1** - Introduced Grass and Legume Establishment
- CP-2** - Native Grass, Forb, and Legume Establishment
- CP-3** - Softwood tree planting (Does not include Longleaf Pine)
- CP-3A** - Hardwood Tree Planting
- CP-4B** - Wildlife Habitat Corridors
- CP-4D** - Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- CP-5** - Field Windbreak Establishment
- CP-6** - Diversion
- CP-8** - Grass Waterway
- CP-9** - Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife
- CP-12** - Wildlife Food Plot
- CP-15** - Grass Contour Strip
- CP-16** - Shelterbelt Establishment
- CP-17** - Living Snow Fence
- CP-18** - Salinity Reducing Vegetation Establishment
- CP-21** - Grass Filter Strips
- CP-22** - Riparian Buffers
- CP-23** - Wetland Restoration (Floodplain)
- CP-23A** - Non-Floodplain Wetland Restoration
- CP-24** - Cross Wind Trap Strip
- CP-25** - Rare and Declining Habitat
- CP-26** - Sediment Retention
- CP-27** - Farmable Wetland - Wetland
- CP-28** - Farmable Wetland - Buffer
- CP-29** - Wildlife Habitat Buffer (Marginal Pasture)
- CP-30** - Wetland Buffer (Marginal Pasture)
- CP-31** - Bottomland Hardwood Tree Establishment
- CP-32** - Hardwood Trees (Previously Expired)
- CP-33** - Upland Bird Habitat Buffer
- CP-34** - Flood Control Structure
- CP-36** - Longleaf Pine Establishment
- CP-37** - Duck Nesting Habitat
- CP-38** - State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement
- CP-39** - Farmable Wetland Program - Constructed Wetland
- CP-40** - Farmable Wetland Program - Aquaculture Wetland
- CP-41** - Farmable Wetland Program - Flooded Prairie Wetland
- CP-42** - Pollinator Habitat Establishment



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