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Conservations Practices and Programs for Your Farm

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PROGRAM	What land is eligible?	Length of Agreement	What USDA Offers <small>‡ indicates financial incentives</small>			Producer Obligations
			Rental Payments	Easements	Cost Share	
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) *see program notes	Highly erodible cropland that has been planted for 4 of the 6 years preceding enactment of the 2002 law. Marginal pastureland is also eligible.	10-15 years	\$ annual payment based on length of agreement		\$ up to 50%	Develop and follow a plan for the conversion of cropland to a less intensive use. Also, assist with the cost, establishment, and maintenance of conservation practices.
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)	Most private wetlands converted to agricultural use prior to 1985 are eligible. Wetland must be restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits.	10 or 30 years; permanent		\$ one-time, up-front payment	\$ up to 100%	Develop and follow a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland. If necessary, assist with the cost of restoration.
Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) *see program notes	Private grassland, shrubland and land containing forbs or land that historically contained those features is eligible.	10, 15, 20, or 30 years; permanent	\$ annual payment based on length of agreement	\$ one-time, up-front payment	\$ up to 90%	Develop and comply with a plan for the easement or restoration agreement; assist with the remaining installation costs.
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)	All private land is eligible, unless it is currently enrolled in CRP, WRP or a similar program.	5-15 years			\$ up to 75%	Prepare and follow a wildlife habitat development plan; assist with installation costs.
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	All private land in agricultural production is eligible; includes cropland, grassland, pastureland and non-industrial private forestland.	1-10 years			\$ up to 75%	Develop and follow an EQIP plan that describes the conservation and environmental purposes to be achieved; assist with installation costs.
Conservation Security Program (CSP)	All private agricultural land and forested land that is an incidental part of an agricultural operation is eligible.	5-10 years	\$ annual payment based on length of agreement		\$ up to 75%	A conservation security plan is required to install and/or maintain conservation practices on working lands.
Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) *see program notes	All non-industrial private forestlands are eligible for financial, technical, and educational assistance.	10 years or more			\$ up to 75%	Develop and implement a management plan; assist with the remaining installation costs.
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)	Private land that contains prime farmland or other unique resources and is subject to a pending easement from an eligible entity	Permanent		\$ one-time, up-front payment		Continue to use the land for agricultural purposes. Develop a conservation plan and comply with the terms of the easement.

PROGRAM NOTES: CRP—includes a general sign-up, continuous sign-up, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP). Incentive payments are available for certain practices. A maintenance fee of up to \$5/acre per year is also provided. To qualify for FWP, land must have been planted or considered planted in at least 3 of the past 10 years; must be cropped wetlands, farmed wetlands or prior converted cropland, 10 acres or less. GRP—A minimum of 40 contiguous acres is required for enrollment; less than 40 acres requires a waiver. FLEP—Each state will determine the minimum forest land ownership that is eligible, not to exceed 25 acres. Financial assistance is available on up to 1,000 acres per year, or up to 5,000 acres with a waiver. All programs are subject to final USDA regulations.

FAQ

frequently asked questions

How can I improve the chances of having my application to enroll in a conservation program accepted?
Applications offered under most programs are selected according to a state-specific ranking and selection process. Ask your local USDA representative for a list of the criteria that will help your application rank high in your area.

If I enroll my land in a conservation program, do I maintain ownership? Am I required to allow public access to my land?
If you enroll land under an easement or rental agreement, you retain ownership of the land. Although your participation in the program will limit certain economic uses of the land during the term of the agreement, you maintain control of public access. You also maintain the right to lease the land for hunting or other recreational purposes.

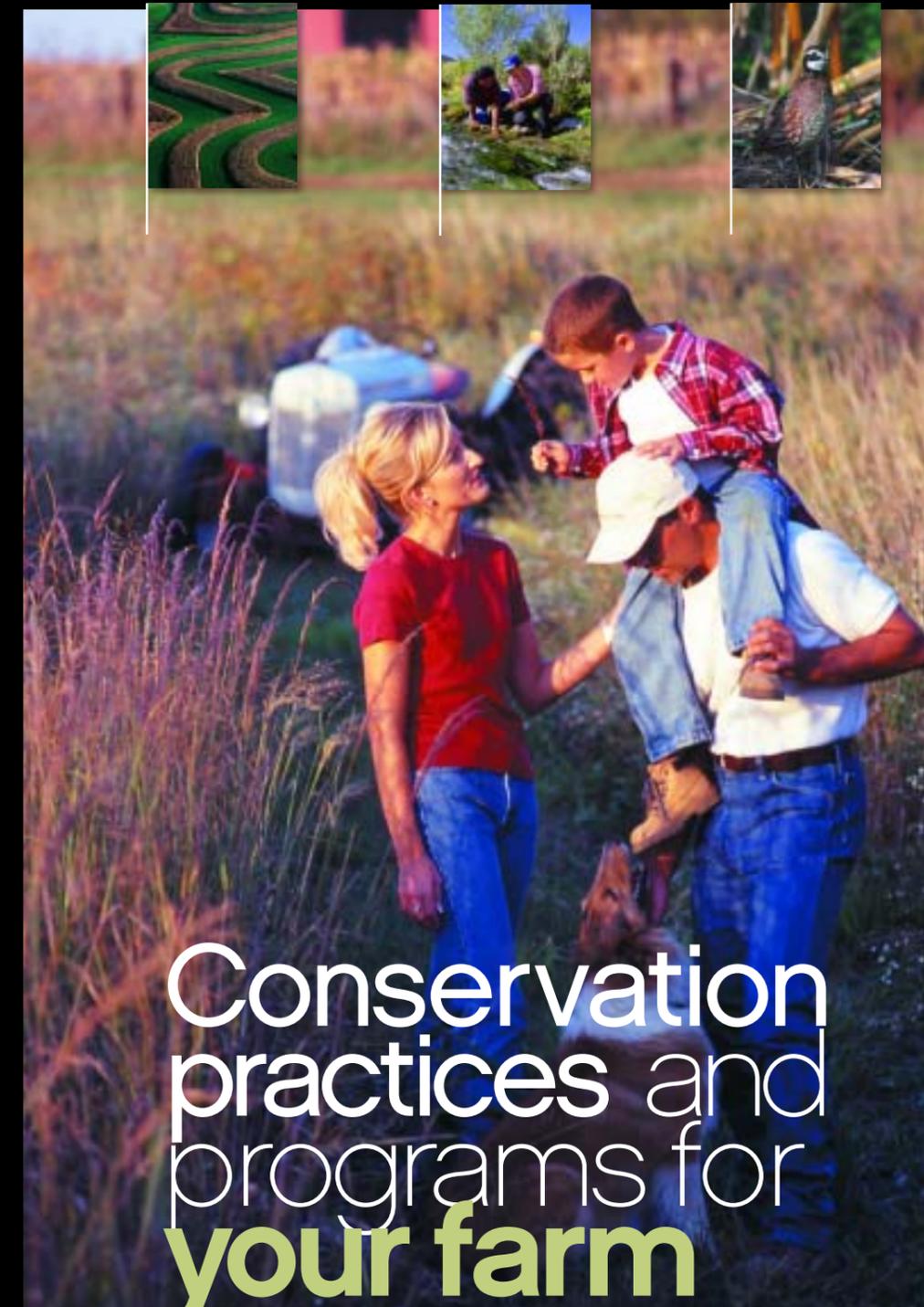
Will I be responsible for maintaining practices I install under a conservation program?
Most programs require you to maintain the practices. There are some differences in programs – check with your local USDA office.

What types of wildlife will I attract if I enroll in conservation programs?
The type of wildlife attracted to your land depends greatly on the practices you install and the plants that are established. Practices can be designed and managed to attract particular species, such as pheasants, quail, and other wild species.

Reprinted from a publication of the Wildlife Management Institute with technical help from the Wildlife Habitat Management Institute of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This reprint contains minor revisions from the original, which was printed with support from 37 conservation and farm organizations and agencies.

View this guide on the web at <http://www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov>
Reprinted 5/2003. For additional copies, call 1-888-LANDCARE

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Conservation practices and programs for your farm

Farm Bill 2002 What's in it for you?

The 2002 Farm Bill offers America's farmers and ranchers more incentives than ever before to voluntarily conserve natural resources on our nation's privately owned farmland. Its conservation provisions help reduce erosion, guard streams and rivers, restore and establish fish and wildlife habitat, and improve air quality. Government and non-government organizations stand ready to help – this guide introduces the assistance available.

What's New?

- **New programs include the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), Conservation Security Program (CSP) and the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP).**
- **More flexibility with new rules for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and other programs**

soil water wildlife

conserving croplands | improving water quality | managing for wildlife



Financial and Economic Incentives The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers a variety of financial incentives to producers and landowners interested in conservation programs. Some programs offer annual payments for a conservation use, others offer one-time up-front payments for long-term easements for a conservation use, and most include government funds to share in the costs of installing conservation measures. Local USDA offices have information on these payments.

Technical Help The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of USDA helps plan and use conservation practices on private lands. Technical assistance is provided on a day-to-day basis, and contributes to the value of the Farm Bill conservation programs. Technical help is also available through certified technical service providers. Local USDA offices can provide additional information.

Partnerships that add to USDA private lands programs USDA works with many partners to deliver conservation services and programs. Local conservation districts, Cooperative Extension, Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&Ds), state fish and wildlife agencies, state forestry agencies, and conservation organizations each play an important role. Experts in each organization can provide technical help and may offer educational and financial assistance on top of what USDA offers to establish conservation practices (see last page).

For More Information Contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS, Local conservation district, Extension Service, or the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for assistance, or find additional information on the web at <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

If you are specifically interested in forestry programs, contact the U.S. Forest Service or your state forestry agency. More information is provided at <http://www.stateforesters.org>

Curbing water erosion

To reduce soil movement and nutrient runoff, consider these or similar practices:

- Grassed waterways
- Terraces
- Grassed conservation buffers
- Field borders
- Contour buffer strips

Begin with a look at these USDA programs:
 ■ CRP, EQIP, CSP

Curbing wind damage

To mitigate the effects of wind on farmland, consider these or similar practices:

- Residue management
- Shelterbelts
- Windbreaks
- Field stripcropping

Begin with a look at these USDA programs:
 ■ CRP, EQIP, CSP

Conserving soil and water resources

To improve soil and water quality, consider these or similar practices:

- Nutrient management
- Pest management
- Cover crops
- Efficient water management
- Riparian buffers
- Conservation tillage

Begin with a look at these USDA programs:
 ■ CRP, EQIP, CSP

Stabilizing streams

To reduce runoff and stabilize areas adjacent to streams, consider these or similar practices:

- Forested riparian buffers
- Grass filterstrips
- Livestock exclusion
- Streambank protection
- Watering facilities

Begin with a look at these USDA programs:
 ■ CRP, WHIP, EQIP, CSP, FLEP

Managing manure

To prevent nutrient loss and protect air, soil, water, fish and wildlife resources, consider these or similar practices:

- Waste storage structures and lagoons
- Nutrient management
- Compost facilities
- Manure spreading

Begin with a look at these USDA programs:
 ■ EQIP, CSP

Managing grasslands

To improve forage quality, control invasive species and conserve fish and wildlife habitat, consider these or similar practices:

- Prescribed grazing
- Pest management
- Prescribed fire
- Fencing
- Brush management

Begin with a look at these USDA programs:
 ■ EQIP, WHIP, CRP, GRP

Establishing wildlife habitat

To enhance, restore and manage fish and wildlife populations on your land, consider these or similar practices:

- Rotational grazing
- Wetland restoration
- Grassland restoration
- Conservation buffers
- Stream habitat improvement

Begin with a look at these USDA programs:
 ■ WHIP, CRP, WRP, GRP, EQIP, CSP, FLEP

Managing forest lands

To restore and protect forest resources and improve fish and wildlife habitat, consider these or similar practices:

- Tree planting
- Forest stand improvement, thinning
- Prescribed burning
- Controlling invasive plants

Begin with a look at these USDA programs:
 ■ FLEP, WHIP, CRP, EQIP Forest Stewardship Program, Forest Legacy Program