

Conservation Has Its Rewards...

CREEP

MARYLAND'S CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

CREP Pays Landowners Attractive Land Rental Rates to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Since 1997, Maryland's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) has helped thousands of Maryland landowners plant streamside buffers, establish wetlands, protect highly erodible land, and create wildlife habitat while providing them with steady, dependable land rental income. CREP is a state-federal partnership that makes it easy for farmers to do their part to protect local waterways without hurting their bottom line. This completely voluntary program offers a one-time signing bonus, attractive annual rental and incentive payments, cost-share assistance for streamside buffers, wetlands, livestock fencing and more. Plus, CREP buffers meet all Maryland setback requirements and can help finance required stream protection practices for livestock operations.

If you are a landowner who is interested in CREP, there's good news. Local soil conservation districts are ready to answer your questions and walk you through the enrollment process. If you are a current CREP participant with a contract that is set to expire, CREP offers easy re-enrollment of existing practices at new incentive rates.

Benefits of MARYLAND CREP:

- Attractive, steady rental income
- One-time signing bonus of up to \$250 an acre
- Up to 87.5% cost-share for most practices
- One-time incentive payment worth 40% of the total cost of installing certain practices
- Maintenance payments
- Easy re-enrollment of expiring contracts
- Permanent easement option

Plus

- Cleaner, healthier waterways
- Erosion and flood control
- Healthier conditions for livestock
- Habitat for wildlife, fish and game



Put the Best Environmental Incentive Program to Work for You





Five Types of CREP Payments Available

Maryland CREP participants are eligible for five types of payments. Qualifying incentives are based on the type of practice installed.

1 Signing Bonus
A one-time bonus payment of up to \$250 per acre for land enrolled.

2 Annual Rental Payment
The local soil rental rate plus a per acre incentive valued at between 80% and 200% of the local soil rental rate. Actual amount depends on the type of practice installed.

3 Cost-Share Assistance
Landowners are reimbursed for up to 87.5% of the cost to install eligible best management practices (BMPs) on enrolled land.

4 Practice Incentive Payment
A one-time incentive payment worth 40% of the total cost of establishing qualifying BMPs. This payment is in addition to the 87.5% cost-share that is available for most practices.

5 Mid-Contract Management Payments
Cost-share is available to help farmers implement approved management activities to support plant diversity and wildlife habitat. Farmers can receive up to 50% cost-share (not to exceed \$100-\$125 per acre for the life of the contract).

Annual Land Rental Payment Determination

CREP participants receive attractive annual rental payments that are above rates offered by the traditional Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Landowners must agree to take streamside property, certain highly erodible land, or wetlands out of production for 10 to 15 years and maintain grass, shrubs, trees or wetlands for the life of the contract. Additional incentive payments offered through CREP add between 80% and 200% to the local soil rental rate. Here's how it works:

CREP Project	Annual Land Rental Payment
Forested Streamside Buffer A landowner who plants a forested streamside buffer receives the local soil rental rate for the enrolled acreage plus an additional incentive payment that is 200% of the local soil rental rate.	Soil Rental Rate + 200%
Grassed Streamside Buffer A landowner who plants a grassed streamside buffer receives the local soil rental rate for enrolled acreage plus an additional incentive payment that is 150% of the local soil rental rate.	Soil Rental Rate + 150%
Wetland A landowner who establishes a wetland receives the local soil rental rate for enrolled acreage plus an additional incentive payment ranging from 100% to 200% of the local soil rental rate. The percentage awarded depends on the type of wetland installed.	Soil Rental Rate + 100% to 200%
Habitat for Declining Species A landowner who creates habitat for declining species receives the local soil rental rate for enrolled acreage plus an additional incentive payment that is 150% of the local soil rental rate.	Soil Rental Rate + 150%
Highly Erodible Land A landowner who takes highly erodible land out of production receives the local soil rental rate plus an additional incentive payment that is 80% of the local soil rental rate.	Soil Rental Rate + 80%

Annual Rental Payment Formula

For Example: A landowner installs a forested streamside buffer on 10 acres of land with a local soil rental rate of \$80 per acre. The landowner's annual rental payment is:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \$80 \text{ per acre} \times 10 \text{ acres} = \$ 800 \\
 & + 200\% \text{ CREP incentive payment} \times \$800 = \$ 1,600 \\
 & \textbf{Total Annual Payment to Landowner: } \quad \textbf{\$ 2,400}
 \end{aligned}$$

Eligible Cost-Share Practices

Maryland's Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide landowners with financial assistance to install fences, watering troughs and other BMPs on enrolled lands. Soil conservation districts, in cooperation with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), provide free technical guidance.

Best Management Practice	Cost-Share Rate	Eligible for 40% Practice Incentive Payment
Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer	Up to 87.5%	Yes
Riparian Forest Buffer		
Herbaceous Buffer		
Wetlands Restoration		
Stream Crossing		
Stream Fencing		
Watering Trough		
Retirement of Highly Erodible Land Adjacent to Waterways	Up to 87.5%	No
Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer	Up to 50%	Yes
Shallow Water Area for Wildlife		
Habitat for Declining Species	Up to 50%	No



Landowner Responsibilities

Landowners and farmers retain their property rights, but agree to maintain grass, shrubs, trees or wetlands and BMPs installed for the life of the CREP contract, which is 10 to 15 years.

Eligible Land

Cropland next to a stream or highly erodible land within 1,000 feet of a stream that has been planted to an agricultural commodity, meets cropping history requirements and is still physically and legally capable of being planted may be eligible. Marginal pastureland next to a stream may also be eligible for certain practices. By targeting only the most environmentally sensitive lands, CREP aims to keep the best crop and pastureland productive.

Water Quality Benefits

Wetlands, streamside buffers and conservation cover on highly erodible land serve as natural filters. They also help control flooding and erosion, while creating habitat for wildlife. Mature forest buffers may remove up to 90% of the nutrients running off the land.



Enrollment Goals

When fully implemented at 100,000 acres, CREP will help Maryland to achieve its water quality goals by:

- Reducing an estimated 11.5 million pounds of nitrogen and 1.1 million pounds of phosphorus from entering Maryland waterways each year.
- Reducing the amount of sediment entering the Bay and its tributaries by approximately 200,000 tons annually.
- Establishing and enhancing 77,000 acres of riparian buffers, 5,000 acres of wetland habitat and 2,000 acres of habitat for declining, threatened or endangered species, including the bald eagle and Eastern bog turtle.
- Stabilizing and protecting up to 16,000 acres of highly erodible land.



Permanent Easement Option

Landowners have the option of selling a permanent easement on their land to the State of Maryland. This can be done directly or through cooperative contracts. Payments are based on the fair market value of foregone development and agricultural productivity. Easements may be administered by the local soil conservation district, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources or local land trusts.

How to Enroll

Sign-up for Maryland CREP is ongoing and continues until acreage goals are met. For more information, contact your local soil conservation district or Farm Service Agency.

Maryland's 24 Soil Conservation Districts

Allegany	301-777-1747, ext. 3
Anne Arundel	410-571-6757
Baltimore County	410-527-5920, ext. 3
Calvert	410-535-1521, ext. 3
Caroline	410-479-1202, ext. 3
Carroll	410-848-8200, ext. 3
Catoctin	301-695-2803, ext. 3
Cecil	410-398-4411, ext. 3
Charles	301-638-3028
Dorchester	410-228-5640, ext. 3
Frederick	301-695-2803, ext. 3
Garrett	301-334-6950, ext. 3
Harford	410-838-6181, ext. 3
Howard	410-313-0680
Kent	410-778-5150, ext. 3
Montgomery	301-590-2855
Prince George's	301-574-5162, ext. 3
Queen Anne's	410-758-3136, ext. 3
St. Mary's	301-475-8402, ext. 3
Somerset	410-621-9310
Talbot	410-822-1577, ext. 3
Washington County	301-797-6821, ext. 3
Wicomico	410-546-4777, ext. 3
Worcester	410-632-5439, ext. 3



**Maryland
Department of Agriculture**

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