

CREP Payment Example

Example calculation for a 15 year forested riparian buffer contract on one acre of cropland that meets the USDA cropland requirements and was planted to an annual crop for at least 3 of the past 6 years. A forested buffer must be a minimum of 35 feet wide. It would take 1,245 linear feet along the stream to equal one acre at 35 feet wide.

Practice costs (can be 100% covered; includes trees, fence, watering tubs, pipeline, etc):

- A basic cost-share payment equal to **50%** of the total practice cost is guaranteed.
- A practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to **40%** of the total practice cost is guaranteed.
- On projects where a forested riparian buffer is installed that also meets the US Fish and Wildlife's Partners program objectives, the remaining **10%** may be covered.

Upfront incentive payments paid in full after signing contracts (total: \$2,005/acre):

One-time federal upfront signing incentive payment (CRP-SIP) of \$100 per acre for the land under contract

One-time upfront state signing incentive payment (CREP-SIP) of \$1,905 per acre for cropland under contract

Annual rental payments (\$188/acre/year):

Maintenance payment; \$0 to \$5 per acre depending on practice. Maintenance for the riparian buffer only, no permanent fencing or water facility development is \$2 per acre.

Rental payment for land taken out of production: \$186/acre is the *average statewide rental rate* but it varies depending on the agricultural value of the soils in the buffer. Check with your local FSA office or Ben Gabos (below) for more information.

Total of annual rental payments: $(\$2 + 186) \times 15 \text{ yrs} = \$2,820/\text{acre}$ over 15 years

Total funds over the 15 year contract period: $\$2,005 + \$2,820 = \$4825/\text{acre}$ or $\$321.67/\text{acre/yr}$

For more information contact your local Farm Service Agency office: www.fsa.usda.gov/vt or your local NRCS office: www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-program/index>

For more information, contact:

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The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Working Together to Protect and Improve Water Quality in Vermont



CREP Objectives

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) aims to improve water quality in streams and lakes by helping agricultural landowners to voluntarily establish vegetative buffers which filter runoff by trapping sediment, fertilizers, and pesticides.

Landowners are compensated for the loss of productive agricultural land through upfront incentive payments and annual rental payments based on the total acreage dedicated to forested buffers (35 feet minimum width) or vegetated filter strips (25 feet minimum width). Contracts can either be 15 or 30 years, during which time the buffers must be maintained by the contracted individual.

Federal cost-share and incentive payments are available to cover 90% of the implementation costs associated with permanent fencing, alternative water systems, stream crossings, and vegetative buffer establishment. In some instances the costs may be 100% covered.



At least 90% of the costs for animal crossings and fencing are covered

Buffer Benefits



Riparian buffers are a low cost and effective method to significantly improve water quality. In addition to filtering agricultural field runoff of sediment, pesticides, and fertilizers, CREP buffers can:

- Keep livestock out of streams, which reduces the energy livestock use getting water, reduces their risk of contact with harmful bacteria and pathogens, and minimizes their risk of leg injuries and foot problems;
- Moderate stream temperatures by providing a forested canopy, which improves habitat for fish and other aquatic species. By improving habitat, the ecosystem is better equipped to filter and/or process excessive nutrients;
- Serve as travel corridors, feeding areas, and nesting habitats for wildlife;
- Increase “roughness” alongside the watercourse, slowing flow and increasing streambank stability while reducing streambank erosion rates. Since phosphorus is attached to sediment, reducing erosion significantly helps water quality;
- Reduce nutrient and other chemical concentrations in shallow groundwater;
- Provide wind shelter for crop fields and improve the aesthetic appearance of the river banks, along with many other benefits!



At least 90% of the costs for buffer installation and watering tubs is covered



Eligibility

- Pasture, hay land, or cropland adjacent to streams* that lack adequate buffers to protect water quality are eligible.
- Eligible land must have been owned or rented for the past 12 months by the interested participant.
- To ensure that the acreage under enrollment is not substantially reduced by streambank erosion over a 15 or 30 year contract, streambanks must be relatively stable to be considered eligible *unless* the landowner can offer a considerably wider buffer to capture the gains and losses caused by erosion.

*Streams that flow only in response to rainfall or snowmelt events and wetlands not directly associated with a stream are not eligible for Vermont CREP.