

CENTRAL PLATTE / COOPERATOR CONTRACT

CENTRAL BASIN CREP PROGRAM

Description and Guidelines

Introduction

- The program encourages landowners to establish buffer strips, specifically filter strips and riparian buffers, along vulnerable surface water resources. Buffer strips are an effective means of reducing sediments and other pollutants in runoff.

Eligible Areas

- Land eligible for enrollment in this program is eligible cropland (according to 2-CRP paragraph 97) adjacent to perennial streams, seasonal streams, wetlands, or permanent bodies of water.
- Fields adjacent and parallel to the area to be buffered must be cropped.
- Perennial streams are any solid blue line on USGS quadrangle maps or other streams with perennial flow that are verified on-site.
- Seasonal streams are streams that have concentrated flow with a defined bed and bank that has either a scoured bottom (from normal flow) or hydrophytic vegetation as determined by NRCS.
- Permanent bodies of water are surface water bodies, such as lakes or ponds, that provide water cover throughout the year. To be eligible for CREP, permanent water bodies must provide at least a seasonal flow of surface water from the water body off the farm each year.

Payment Rates

- For cropland (irrigated or non-irrigated), the payment rate per acre shall equal 150% (maximum \$150 per acre) of the CRP weighted average soil rental rate plus addition of payments from any other source. (The CRP weighted average soil rental rate is the amount calculated before the incentive and maintenance rate are added.)

Deadlines

- Funding availability for new applications is reviewed annually near October 1st, however, applications may be submitted any time. First year payments will be adjusted according to sign-up and approval dates.

Process

1. The landowner works with Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on tentative buffer strip locations.
2. FSA and NRCS will process Form CRP-2C according to 2-CRP paragraph 138.
3. The landowner submits the completed application to the Natural Resources District (NRD).
4. The NRD considers the application.
5. If approved, the landowner enters into a formal agreement with the NRD.
6. NRCS will develop Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO) for signatures and approval.
7. FSA will develop CRP-1 according to 2-CRP paragraph 253 and Exhibit 16 for signature and approval.
8. The landowner establishes and maintains the buffer strip according to NRCS FOTG practice requirements.

General Terms

1. The contract length must be at least 10 years but no more than 15 years (at the option of the local NRD).
2. Eligible buffer strips must be enrolled as Filter Strips (CP21) or Riparian Buffers (CP22) in the Central Basins CREP.
3. The established vegetation must meet NRCS FOTG practice requirements.
4. Haying and grazing are not allowed on buffers unless previously approved by FSA.
5. Minimum width is 20 feet for filter strips unless 2-CRP practice requirements are greater.
6. Maximum width is 120 feet for buffer strips unless 2-CRP practice requirements are greater. For streams, the maximums apply to each side of the stream.
7. Maximum width for riparian forest buffers is 180 feet and the minimum width is 35 feet unless 2-CRP practice requirements are greater.
8. Minimum size per application is one acre.
9. Failure to maintain the buffer strip according to contract requirements may result in forfeiture of past and future payments.
10. Buffer strips will be subject to compliance checks by the NRD, FSA and/or NRCS.