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Farm Service Agency

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA and Minnesota Announce Expanded Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to Improve Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat

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Saint Paul, Minn., Jan. 14, 2025 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Minnesota are expanding their partnership through the [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program \(CREP\)](#) to assist Minnesota farmers, and agricultural landowners in improving water quality and conserving other natural resources.

The [Minnesota Water Quality and Habitat CREP](#), offered by USDA, and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), has expanded the voluntary, incentive-based conservation program to include an additional 12 counties and increased the enrollment goal to 75,000 acres for Minnesota agricultural producers.

“This expanded partnership with the state of Minnesota is a testament to the power of collaboration and allows us to leverage both federal and state dollars to address locally driven natural resource concerns,” said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. “By including additional counties in the existing agreement, we can now offer the benefits of CREP participation to more Minnesota landowners, building on the program’s already proven conservation successes across the state.”

The agreement makes federal and state resources available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in 14-to 15-year contracts and a permanent conservation easement with the State of Minnesota. Participants remove cropland from agricultural production and establish practices dedicated to native grasses and forbs, filter strips and wetlands. This improves water quality by reducing sediment, nutrients, nitrogen and other pollutants that enter streams and rivers, and enhances wildlife habitat in the project area. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance.

“Expanding this program will benefit Minnesota’s farmers, environment, and economy,” said Governor Tim Walz. “By helping landowners conserve our most vulnerable ecosystems, we are making Minnesota more resilient to climate change, improving access to clean water, and supporting our farmers. I’m grateful for the federal government’s support of this important program.”

Eligible farmers and landowners can qualify for annual rental payments, up to 50% cost-share for installing the approved conservation practices, and incentive payments for certain practices. Additionally, the State of Minnesota will provide eligible participants with cost-share assistance and a one-time payment for all land entered into an easement.

The Minnesota Water Quality and Habitat CREP will now include the following 66 counties: Becker, Benton, Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Carver, Chippewa, Clay, Cottonwood, Dakota, Dodge, Douglas, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Grant, Hennepin, Houston, Isanti, Jackson,

Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac Qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Mahnomen, Marshall, Martin, Meeker, Morrison, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Norman, Olmsted, Otter Trail, Pennington, Pipestone, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Rock, Roseau, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Stearns, Steele, Stevens, Swift, Todd, Traverse, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, Wilkin, Winona, Wright and Yellow Medicine.

Currently, CREP has 39 projects in 25 states with more than 768,000 acres enrolled in the program. The Minnesota Water Quality and Habitat CREP is part of USDA's broader effort to leverage CREP as an important tool to address climate change and other natural resource challenges while expanding opportunities for producers and communities, especially those historically underserved by USDA.

More Information

Interested farmers, ranchers and agricultural landowners are encouraged to contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or participant.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.

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