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Farm Service Agency

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA and State of Michigan Announce Opening of the Michigan Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

News Release | Michigan | April 05, 2022

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EAST LANSING, April 5, 2022— The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Michigan are resuming a partnership through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to assist Michigan farmers, ranchers and agricultural landowners in improving water quality and conserving other natural resources. The Michigan CREP, offered by USDA and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), expands the voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs available to Michigan agricultural producers and focuses on the Lake Macatawa, Saginaw Bay, and Western Lake Erie Basin watersheds. Enrollment for the Michigan CREP opens today.

“CREP is one of our most flexible tools when it comes to voluntary, locally-led, partner-driven conservation efforts, and we’re so glad that we’re able to put it to work again in Michigan,” said Robert Bonnie, USDA’s Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. “This initiative previously had a positive impact in Michigan, and we look forward to broadening the reach of the program to new agricultural producers and landscapes. We are so grateful to have support from Michigan leaders to make this program possible.”

“Our Michigan farmers play a key role in tackling the climate crisis,” said Senator Stabenow. “The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program gives them the tools they need to continue to lead on climate and improve water quality across our state. I applaud USDA and MDARD’s decision to continue this critical program.”

Through the Michigan CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 14-to-15-year contracts. Participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses, trees, or other approved vegetation. This will improve water quality by reducing sediment, nutrients, nitrogen and other pollutants from entering streams and rivers, and enhance wildlife habitat in the project area. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance.

Practices include of permanent introduced grasses and legumes, establishment of native grasses, field windbreak establishment, filter strips, riparian buffer, wetland restoration, non-floodplain wetland restoration, and sediment retention control structure.

“We are excited to work with MDARD and offer this great watershed conservation incentive for Michigan farmers,” said Tim Boring, USDA Farm Service Agency State Director in Michigan. “Working together, we can lead the way through climate-smart solutions that will maintain critical environmental benefits through voluntary conservation efforts, increase climate resilience, sequester more carbon, enhance agricultural productivity, and protect the Great Lakes.”

Eligible farmers and growers can qualify for annual rental payments, a 50 percent cost share for installing the approved conservation practices, and incentive payments for certain practices. In addition, MDARD will provide eligible participants with 50 percent cost-share payment for practice installation cost and offer payments to participants for the enrollment and maintenance and management of land enrolled in CRP through the Michigan CREP.

Interested farmers, ranchers and agricultural landowners are encouraged to contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at their local USDA Service Center to learn more or to participate. Find contact information at farmers.gov/service-locator.

Currently, CREP has 35 projects in 27 states. In total, more than 860,000 acres are enrolled in CREP. The Michigan CREP is part of USDA’s broader effort to leverage CREP as an important tool to address climate change and other natural resources challenges while expanding opportunities for producers and communities, especially those historically underserved by USDA. Last December, [USDA announced improvements](#) to the program as well as additional staff to support the program.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, 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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