



Farm Service Agency  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## USDA and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Enters Historic Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Agreement to Support Working Lands Conservation

News Release | South Dakota | April 14, 2023

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### ***CREP Provides Critical Support to Landowners for Sound Conservation Practices***

**HURON, S.D., April 14, 2023**— The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe is partnering with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help conserve, maintain and improve grassland productivity, reduce soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat through the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP). It is one of three Tribal Nations in the Great Plains to enter CREP agreements with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) to enroll eligible grassland, pastureland, and other agricultural lands within the boundaries of their reservations in this conservation program. The Oglala and Rosebud Sioux Tribes finalized their CREP agreements last November.

"We are proud to have the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe as part of this historic milestone for USDA, helping us to deploy climate-smart agriculture and conservation in the Great Plains," said Steve Dick, FSA State Executive Director in South Dakota. "This agreement highlights the vital contribution Native communities make to our country's agriculture and conservation efforts."

This partnership with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, along with those with the Oglala and Rosebud Sioux Tribes, are the first-ever CREP agreements in partnership with Tribal Nations—reflecting priorities and goals of USDA to broaden the scope and reach of its voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs to engage underserved communities.

CREP is a part of the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP), the country's largest private-land conservation program. CREP leverages federal and non-federal funds to target specific Tribal land, State, regional or nationally significant conservation concerns. This particular CREP agreement authorizes the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe to enroll up to 1.5 million acres.

### **How to Participate**

Through this Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe CREP, farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers voluntarily enter into contracts with the federal government for 10-to-15-years, agreeing to maintain an existing vegetative cover of permanent grasses and legumes (Conservation Practice 88), while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices and operations related to the production of forage and seeding. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance for establishing permanent fencing and livestock watering facilities needed to support livestock grazing.

Only Tribal land, either land owned by the Tribe or a member of the Tribe, are eligible for these projects. **Enrollment opens April 17, 2023.** To learn more and determine eligibility, farmers, ranchers, and producers should contact FSA at their [local USDA Service Center](#).

### **More Information**

Currently, CREP has 38 projects in 27 states with more than 784,000 acres enrolled nationally. In December 2021, [USDA announced improvements](#) to the program to expand opportunities for agricultural producers and landowners, as well as additional staffing to work closely with existing and potential partners and expand the program's availability.

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](https://usda.gov).

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### **Farm Service Agency:**

1400 Independence Ave.  
SW Washington, DC 20250

### **Contact:**

FPAC Press Desk  
[FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov](mailto:FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov)