



Farm Service Agency
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

[stnr_sd_20240221_rel_01](#)

News Release | South Dakota | February 21, 2024

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Tribal Support of Working Lands Conservation Now Goes Beyond Reservation Borders

HURON, S.D., February 20, 2024 –The Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota has been partnering with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) since November 2022 to help conserve, maintain and improve grassland productivity, reduce soil erosion and enhance wildlife habitat through the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP). The partnership was originally contained within the boundaries of the Reservation, however, USDA and the Oglala Sioux Tribe worked together to significantly expand the conservation partnership beyond those boundaries to now include eligible land owned by the Tribe or tribal members. This increased the CREP project area to include eligible acres in Oglala Lakota, Jackson and Bennett counties.

“We are excited and proud to expand this Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program project with the Oglala Sioux Tribe, furthering our conservation and climate-smart agriculture impact here in South Dakota,” said Steve Dick, FSA’s South Dakota State Executive Director. “This agreement’s success is reflected in this expansion, and it highlights the vital contribution Native communities make to our country’s agriculture and conservation efforts.”

CREP is a part of the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP), the country’s largest private lands conservation program. CREP leverages federal and non-federal resources to target specific Tribal, state, regional or nationally significant conservation concerns. This agreement supports the enrollment of 1 million acres of eligible grassland pastureland, and other agricultural lands owned by the Oglala Sioux Tribe and tribal members in CRP. The expansion of the Oglala Sioux CREP extends the project outside the reservation boundaries to include tribally owned land in Jackson and Bennett counties.

In addition to the Oglala Sioux Tribe, USDA has partnered with the Cheyenne River and Rosebud Sioux Tribes to enroll up to 1.5 million and 900,000 acres respectively. These are the first-ever CREP agreements in partnership with Tribal Nations— reflecting USDA priorities and goals to broaden the scope and reach of its voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs to engage underserved communities.

How to Participate???

Through the Oglala 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, while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices and operations related to forage and seed production. In return, FSA provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish permanent fencing and livestock watering facilities necessary to support livestock grazing.??

Only Tribal land, either land owned by the Tribe or owned by a member of the Tribe, is eligible for this CREP projects. Land enrolled in CRP through this CREP is eligible for USDA disaster programs such as the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP), if applicable disaster program requirements are met. The grass cover on the land enrolled is eligible for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) as well as Rainfall Index and PRF crop insurance policies applicable to grazing lands. Land associated with an expired EQIP or CSP contract may be eligible to participate in this CREP.

To learn more and determine eligibility, farmers, ranchers, and producers should contact FSA at their [local USDA Service Center](#).??

More Information??

Currently, CREP has 39 projects in 26 states with more than 670,000 acres enrolled nationally.? FSA continues to explore partnership opportunities with States, Tribes and non-governmental organizations. By engaging more partners, FSA can expand the reach of CREP and co-invest in conservation-focused efforts with groups that provide a direct link to underserved producers and landowners.

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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