



## Illinois Department of **Natural Resources**

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Pat Quinn, Governor  
Marc Miller, Director

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### **FSA/IDNR Announce Expansion of Illinois Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

*CREP will now include Illinois and Kaskaskia River basins*

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Director Marc Miller today joined United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Scherrie Giamanco to announce an expansion of the successful Illinois Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to include both the Illinois River and Kaskaskia River basins in Illinois. CREP is a voluntary, incentive-based federal, state, and local conservation program that works with private landowners to establish conservation practices on erodible lands that help reduce runoff and sedimentation of waterways and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

“Since 1998, the USDA, through the Illinois Farm Service Agency, has partnered with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Department of Agriculture and many other federal, state, local and non-governmental agencies and groups to promote water quality and wildlife habitat enhancements in the Illinois River Watershed,” said Giamanco.

“Most importantly, we have achieved great success in the Illinois CREP by working at the county level one on one with agricultural producers in this voluntary program. Through their efforts, the public as a whole has seen great benefits,” Giamanco continued. “I am ecstatic to be the SED at a time where we can expand this program to agricultural producers in the Kaskaskia River Watershed. I look forward to continued success for the Illinois CREP by working in the combined watersheds.”

The Illinois CREP program works with landowners to provide both federal and state incentive payments and technical assistance in retiring flood-prone or environmentally-sensitive land through conservation practices that reduce sediment and nutrient runoff, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat.

“The CREP program in Illinois has a proud and successful history and the expansion of the program to the Kaskaskia watershed will pay big dividends for the environment in

Illinois. This expansion would not be possible without the dedication and leadership provided by Governor Pat Quinn, who has worked for years to enhance conservation efforts in our state,” Miller said.

Since 1998, landowners in Illinois have voluntarily enrolled 126,500 acres in CREP in the Illinois River basin. The original goal was to enroll 232,000 acres in the program, and the expansion of the Illinois CREP to the Kaskaskia River basin will allow enrollment of the remaining 105,500 acres in both watersheds.

The Kaskaskia River watershed is the second largest river system in Illinois, flowing for 292 miles from east-central Illinois where it flows into the Mississippi River. Diverse habitats in the Kaskaskia River watershed include the largest contiguous hardwood bottomland forest in the state, two of the most significant grasslands in the state, and habitat that is a key part of the Mississippi River flyway.

With the expansion of the program announced today, CREP will now be available to landowners in 68 counties within the two watersheds. The Illinois CREP is administered by the USDA FSA, IDNR, Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) and 66 Soil and Water Conservation Districts. In addition, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service plays a key technical assistance role and has established a CREP Advisory Committee under the State Technical Committee comprised of government agencies, agricultural, environmental and conservation organizations that provide policy guidance for the program.

The counties that are now part of the Illinois CREP are listed below:

|           |           |            |            |           |            |
|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Adams     | DeWitt    | Iroquois   | McDonough  | Morgan    | Shelby     |
| Bond      | Douglas   | Jefferson  | McHenry    | Moultrie  | Stark      |
| Brown     | DuPage    | Jersey     | McLean     | Peoria    | Tazewell   |
| Bureau    | Effingham | Kane       | Macon      | Perry     | Vermilion  |
| Calhoun   | Fayette   | Kankakee   | Macoupin   | Piatt     | Warren     |
| Cass      | Ford      | Kendall    | Madison    | Pike      | Washington |
| Champaign | Fulton    | Knox       | Marion     | Putnam    | Will       |
| Christian | Greene    | Lake       | Marshall   | Randolph  | Woodford   |
| Clinton   | Grundy    | LaSalle    | Mason      | St. Clair |            |
| Coles     | Hancock   | Lee        | Menard     | Sangamon  |            |
| Cook      | Henderson | Livingston | Monroe     | Schuyler  |            |
| DeKalb    | Henry     | Logan      | Montgomery | Scott     |            |

Conservation practices that are available under CREP include:

- Permanent native grasses
- Tree planting
- Hardwood tree planting

- Permanent wildlife habitat, non-easement
- Filter strips
- Riparian buffer
- Wetland restoration
- Rare and declining habitat
- Wildlife food plots

CREP participants receive incentive payments, annual rental payments and cost-share assistance from FSA, and participants who choose one of the State Conservation Easement options receive additional cost-share assistance and a one-time lump sum payment based on soil rental rates and the duration of the easement.

The CREP expansion does not increase the total CREP cost estimated at \$700 million, with USDA contributing \$580 million and Illinois contributing \$120 million. Sign-up for enrollment under the expanded CREP agreement will begin later this year, and is scheduled to continue until the goal of 232,000 acres is complete. Enrolled lands remain under a CREP contract for up to 15 years.