



**What is CREP?**

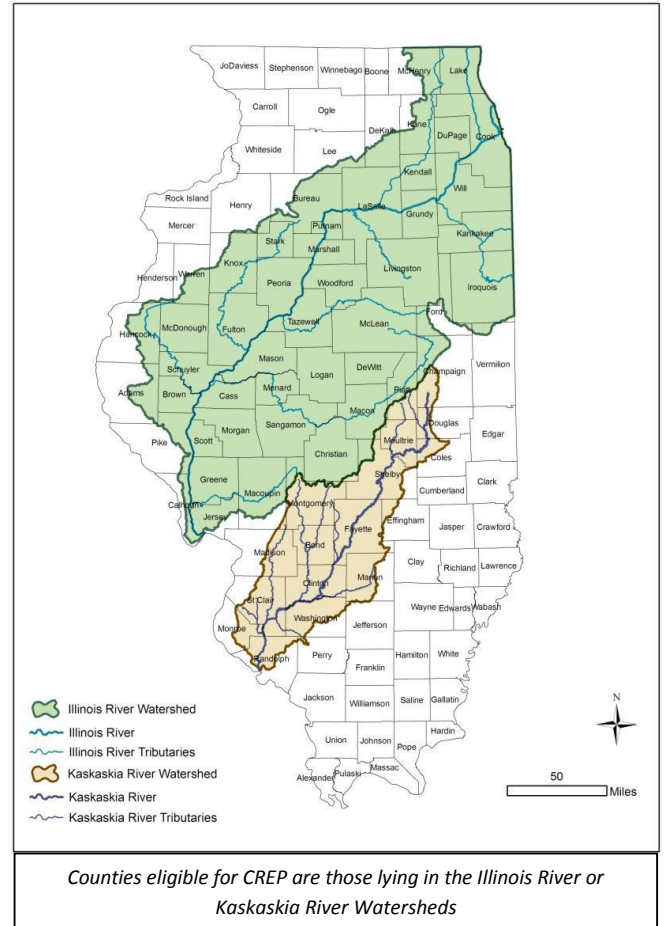
CREP is a conservation program designed to retire frequently flooded cropland which is located in environmentally sensitive areas. The goal of the program is to achieve restoration and long-term protection of those areas. In exchange for voluntarily removing land from production, landowners implement conservation practices to reduce sediment and nutrient runoff, improve water quality, and to create and enhance critical habitat for fish and wildlife populations.

**Who administers CREP?**

Being a Federal, State, and local partnership, CREP achieves success through the coordination of many partners. The local USDA Service Centers house the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). These agencies work together to administer the Federal and State components of the program. They determine eligibility for enrollment and provide technical assistance for approved conservation practices. FSA administers the Federal component of CREP as they do for CRP. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) along with the local SWCD administers the State component and also provides technical assistance. Many other agencies, including the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), provide support with marketing, monitoring, and program policy.

**How does CREP differ from CRP?**

CREP is an enhanced version of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the country's largest private-land conservation program. The Federal component of the program differs very little from CRP. Many of the same rules and policy apply. However, there are higher rental rates and incentive payments associated with Federal CREP and they are typically 15-year contracts. CREP also has a State component of the program. Once the Federal contract has expired, the State component of CREP extends the benefits of the established conservation practices through 15 or 35-year extensions, or in perpetuity with a permanent easement. If a landowner chooses to enroll in a permanent easement, they have the option of enrolling and receiving payment on adjacent additional acres, which would not otherwise be eligible for CRP or CREP, due to a lack of cropping history.



## Who is Eligible?

Producers and private landowners, who have owned or have had an interest in cropland for a minimum of one year in either the Illinois River or Kaskaskia River Watersheds.

- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Easements should show up in a title search
- The Local County Soil and Water Conservation District is the Grantee of the Easements

## What restrictions are on land encumbered by a State Grant of Conservation Right and Easement?

- CREP Easements are a legal recorded documents and stay with the land for the term of the Easement (i.e., one CANNOT buy out of an IDNR CREP Grant of Conservation Right and Easement)
- The land may not go back into row crop production or agricultural uses for the life of the conservation easement
- Land cannot be re-enrolled in Federal CRP/CREP
- The land may not be developed and no permanent structures or roads may be built on enrolled property
- Existing structures may be maintained, but may not be replaced or used for living quarters
- There shall be no building of new roads or widening or improving of existing roads

## What activities are allowed on land encumbered by a State Grant of Conservation Right and Easement?

- The right to use enrolled property for recreational purposes, including hunting, fishing, primitive camping, and wildlife watching
- May be eligible for reduced property taxes
- Manage the property for wildlife habitat with an approved Wildlife Management Plan
- Harvest timber with an approved Forest Management Plan
- Receive future benefits derived from restoration activities such as carbon sequestration
- The right to maintain waterways and drainage ditches per agreements with any Drainage or Levee District and to allow pumping through these waterways into shallow water areas.

## Does a State Grant of Conservation Right and Easement grant access to the public?

- NO; Enrolling a property into CREP does NOT grant access to the public
- **State agency personnel and SWCD staff are granted the authority by the landowner to access lands enrolled in CREP to perform periodic program-related monitoring duties**

For more information, go online at <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/CREP>