



Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Washington's CREP is a voluntary program designed to benefit both farms and fish. The program compensates farmers for growing a different crop in streamside areas of their property — that crop is salmon habitat. On the Palouse that means protecting and improving waters that flow into the Snake River. We have CREP eligible acres along the South Fork Palouse River, and portions of North Fork Palouse River and Union Flat Creek within the District. CREP is a joint program administered by the Farm Service Agency, with technical assistance from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and additional funding through the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Benefits for Farmers and Landowners

- Steady rental income for 10-15 years. The amount is determined by your soil type and enrolled activities.
- One-time signing bonus.
- Entire cost of project installation is covered.
- Project maintenance cost is reimbursed for the first five years.
- Livestock operators are reimbursed for fencing that excludes cattle from the buffer and for new water facilities.
- Option to re-enroll.



Image: Washington Dept. Fish & Wildlife

Benefits for Fish

- Streamside buffers function as a “water treatment plant,” absorbing nutrients and other pollutants before they reach streams.
- Trees and plants shade the stream, cooling water temperatures for salmon.
- Trees fall into streams providing habitat and rearing pools.
- Vegetation stabilizes stream banks and reduces erosion.



How it Works

- Landowners voluntarily sign up with the USDA Farm Service Agency to plant native trees and shrubs that form a “buffer” between farmland and eligible waterways.
- A local CREP technician will work with you to design a plan for the buffer and plant the vegetation. Once the planting is complete, landowners receive annual rental payments for the acreage they restore for the duration of their CREP contract (10-15 years). After five years, most projects are well-established and further maintenance is usually minimal.

Eligible CREP Practices:

- Forest Buffers: 50-180 foot wide plantings of native trees and vegetation bordering a river or stream

- Hedgerows: 15 foot wide strips of native shrubs planted on eligible streams and drainages with a channel less than 15 feet wide. These are also available on streams and drainages connected to eligible streams up to 10 miles upstream.

- Grass Filter Strips: 20-120 foot wide strips of grassy vegetation planted along stream segments that are upstream of salmon habitat.

- Wetland Restoration: Planting native wetland vegetation, including establishment of an upland buffer. Criteria for eligible restoration practices varies depending on whether the site is within or outside of the 100-year floodplain area. This practice is eligible on cropland.

- Pastureland Wetland Buffers: 20-120 foot wide band of vegetation planted on marginal pastureland that is adjacent to wetlands.



If you are interested in enrolling in **CREP** or would like more information please contact **Randy Stevens** at the Palouse Conservation District.

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CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
OF WASHINGTON STATE

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