

CREP FAQs

What is CREP?

CREP is the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. Part of the Federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

What is CREP's Purpose?

To reduce groundwater consumption from irrigated cropland, in turn reducing the demand for water from the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) in southern Idaho.

What are the benefits of enrolling in CREP?

Reduce irrigation groundwater consumption; establish permanent vegetative cover on fields to improve wildlife habitat; help conserve energy; reduce the amount of agricultural chemicals and sediment entering the waterways; reduced soil erosion into the waterways can help the fishery; permanent vegetative cover reduces soil loss from wind erosion; raise the local water table and improves spring flows; voluntarily curtail water rights during the contract period in exchange for the annual rental payment.

How much is the annual rental payment?

Federal Rental Rates vary by county. Compensation for enrollment includes a one-time Federal Signup Incentive Payment (SIP) of up to 32.5% of your total annual federal rental payment. An Annual Federal Rental Payment based on your acreage and the county rental rate at the time of signing up for the duration of the contract. Annual State Matching Payment of up to 13% of the Federal Annual Rental Payment. Federal Cost-Share for conservation planting of the contract with an approved seed plan.

Who is eligible for a CREP contract?

To be eligible, land must be irrigated cropland located in the project area. Cropland must be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity and have been irrigated at a rate of at least one-half acre-foot per acre per year for four of the last six years.

How long is the CREP contract?

10 years

What happens to my Water Rights for lands irrigated with ground water enrolled in CREP?

Your Water Rights are held for the duration of the contract for the amount of irrigation water corresponding to your acreage enrolled.

What does it mean that my enrolled water right are held?

Your enrolled water right cannot be: Used, sold, transferred, traded, gifted, or banked for the duration of the contract.

What happens to my water rights enrolled with CREP if there is a call on water?

Water Rights for water enrolled in CREP are safe from a water call.

What effect does the '24 Ground Water Districts-Surface Water Coalition Mitigation Plan have on a CREP enrollment?

The Mitigation Plan does not affect the CREP participants' contractual responsibilities.

What is the seed plan for?

Contracts enrolled in CREP are planted in a conservation cover for the benefit of wildlife and for erosion control.

Can I water my planted conservation cover to get it established?

Yes. Participants may apply not more than 1/2 acre foot of irrigation water to enrolled irrigated cropland during the first 12 months after the effective date of the CRP contract, but only when determined necessary by FSA and specified in the participant's approved conservation plan to establish the approved vegetative cover.

Where can I get more information about CREP?

The Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission has more information about CREP on their webpage.

<https://swc.idaho.gov/home/what-we-do/conservation-programs-2/conservation-reserve-enhancement-program/>

Where can I go and sign up for CREP?

Your local FSA office in the CREP ESPA area. To find your FSA office location

<https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator>

Where can I get help with developing a seed plan for my contract or help with management of fields?

The Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission provides technical assistance for CREP participants.

The ISWCC staff can help answer any questions you may have about CREP.

Rob Sharpnack

State CREP Manager

Shoshone 1-208-810-0768

rob.sharpnack@swc.idaho.gov

Carolyn Firth

Water Quality Coordinator

Burley 1-208-572-3379

carolyn.firth@swc.idaho.gov

Brian Reed

Natural Resource Conservationist

Idaho Falls 1-208-715-3110

brian.reed@swc.idaho.gov