



A Voluntary Program with Benefits for Landowners and the Environment

Overview

The **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** is a voluntary program available to landowners along salmon streams in Jefferson County. **CREP** will compensate landowners by paying rent for land planted with a buffer of native trees and shrubs. **CREP** will pay for all restoration costs, maintenance and livestock exclusion fences, and development of alternative livestock watering facilities when needed. Landowners will receive a signing bonus, an annual rental payment and can choose a 10 or 15 year rental contract.

The minimum buffer width is 35 feet and the maximum buffer width is 180 feet. The amount of rent you receive is determined by the soils present on your site and the acreage of land you enroll in the program.

WHY PLANT TREE AND SHRUB BUFFERS?

- *Traps eroded soils.*
- *Protects water quality by filtering pollutants.*
- *Reduces flood damage.*
- *Increases stream flows in summer.*
- *Provides food for the fish large and small.*
- *Creates habitat for wildlife.*
- *Shades the stream and improves water quality.*
- *Controls invasive species such as Reed Canarygrass.*



Program Flexibility

CREP recognizes site variability. The buffer boundary can be moved toward or away from the stream at different locations to meet landowner needs, as long as the average meets the buffer standard. Producers can enroll all or a portion of the eligible streams on their land. They can enroll one or both sides of the stream. There is no minimum or maximum acreage to enroll.

Signups and Eligibility

CREP is administrated by the USDA Farm Service Agency. Signups are accepted year round. Eligible land must be able to support trees and shrubs, and be parallel and adjacent to a sea-run fish bearing stream.

Riparian Buffers

Technical assistance to design, install and maintain the buffer is provided by Jefferson County Conservation District. The buffers must be designed according to Natural Resource Conservation Service (**NRCS**) standards and specifications, which include planting with native trees and shrubs suitable to the site. Minimum buffer widths are from 35 to 100 feet based on 30% of the active flood plain width. However, landowner can enroll up to a 180 foot average buffer width if they choose.

Annual Rental Payments

Annual rental payments are based on the FSA established rental rate for the soils in the offered acreage, which varies on a per acre basis. Annual rental payments are issued shortly after October 1 each year.

Contract and Signing Bonus

The applicant can choose a 10 to 15 year contract. A signing bonus is paid shortly after the CREP agreement is approved. The bonus is equal to \$100/acre.

Maintenance Payments

After the riparian buffer is planted, Washington State will cover 100% of the eligible costs of maintaining the cover to specifications. A maintenance prescription will be written by the Jefferson County Conservation District technician, which will identify activities and their costs that will ensure the successful establishment of the planted stock.

The maintenance prescription will usually cover the first 4 years after planting. Most projects will be well established by then. Jefferson County Conservation District will, however, continue to

monitor the project through the fifth year to ensure that this is the case. Where continued action is needed to maintain the buffer to specification, additional maintenance prescriptions will be developed. These maintenance costs will be reimbursed by the State.

Current **CREP** Project Totals for

Jefferson County: **21** projects,

153 Acres

For more information about **CREP** or specific questions about your land, contact:

Jerry Clarke

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Conservation Planner/Resource Specialist

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After an application is submitted, a no-obligation eligibility review will be conducted, and you will be provided a final opportunity to decide if you want to enroll the land.