

Forested Buffers through United States Department of Agriculture's

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM



*Restoring streams, creating wildlife habitat,
and improving water quality*



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure



WHAT IS CREP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) offers generous funding and professional help for various conservation practices. These practices range from grassland cover on highly erodible lands to wildlife habitat areas to forested buffers. Riparian buffers—trees and shrubs planted along streams—are a popular option among landowners.

CREP is administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency. USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service is responsible for technical assistance. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) also assists with technical assistance in many counties.

CREP is designed to improve water quality, benefit wildlife, and reward participants for planting trees along streams. If you have an unforested stream on your property, even a small one, CREP can help you protect and enhance stream habitat and water quality.

Streamside forested buffers done through CREP provide key conservation benefits at a profit. This guide describes those benefits, important program information, and next steps to help interested landowners put forested buffers to work for them.

Read more to learn about how CREP can help you!

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN CREP?

Most rural, unforested areas within 180-feet of streams, ponds, lakes, and wetlands with open water are eligible.

Even very small and seasonal streams qualify!

Forested buffers must be at least 35-feet wide, and buffers over 50-feet wide earn substantially more.

You do not need to be a farmer to participate!

Areas with more than one-third coverage by existing trees and shrubs are not eligible.



STREAMSIDE TREES HELP FARMERS

You do not need to be a farmer to participate in CREP. However, farmers receive additional benefits from CREP

CREP pays for:

- High-tensile electric fences
- Stabilized stream crossings and laneways
- Livestock watering facilities (lines, troughs, wells, as needed)

Farmers benefit from CREP through:

- Reduction in soil loss from streambank erosion
- Improvements in livestock health by getting animals out of the stream
- Reliable income on marginal agricultural land
- Expanded options for pasture management via high-tensile fences
- Good public relations through profitable, voluntary conservation
- Fewer worries about regulations



IMPROVEMENTS FOR WATER QUALITY, WILDLIFE, & FISH HABITAT

Forested buffers provide clean water by:

- Reducing pollutants reaching streams
- Multiplying a stream’s own ability to remove pollutants that do reach it
- Helping to prevent bank erosion and improve stability
- Soaking up rainwater and reducing flooding

Wildlife benefits from forested buffers because they:

- Create cooler water temperatures critical for native brook trout and animals that live in the stream.
- Reduce sediment running into the stream to ensure clear spawning beds for fish.
- Provide food and shelter for small game such as wild turkey and pheasants.
- Develop habitat for songbirds and a variety of mammals.



HOW CAN CREP BENEFIT YOU?

- Earn \$40 to \$350 per acre per year in rental payment.
- Reduce streambank erosion and protect your property from soil loss.
- Improve habitat for fish, songbirds, and other wildlife.
- Demonstrate good stewardship in a highly visible manner.
- Receive reimbursement for costs of installation up to 90 percent for buffers 35 feet wide and up to 140 percent for buffers 50 feet or wider.
- Get free professional design and construction management.
- Secure reimbursements for paid professional help for key parts of post-planting tree care.

LANDOWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

Landowners that participate in CREP are responsible for ensuring that their forested buffers are successfully established. Success is measured as 70 percent tree survival after three years. Contracts are 10 or 15 years in length.

Steps for planting and maintaining a forested buffer:

1. Receive free professional design and construction management for your project.
2. Plant trees and install tree shelters with professional assistance.
3. Arrange for a professional to apply herbicide around trees for three years (cost reimbursed).
4. Maintain tree shelters and control invasive plants (ongoing).

HOW TO GET STARTED

Call your local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) or Natural Resource Conservation Service office. Local phone numbers are available by calling 800/941-CREP.

Tell them you are interested in CREP's "CP 22"—forested riparian buffers. This will start the process with no obligation to you. You will be provided then with additional information about how CREP may be of help to your income and land management goals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Call **800/941-CREP** for basic information and county contact numbers. Visit **www.creppa.org** or **cbf.org/CREP** for more detailed information.

CREP partners include: USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Center for Rural Pennsylvania, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Partners for Wildlife, Pheasants Forever, State Conservation Commission, and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

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Saving a National Treasure

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CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED



The Chesapeake Bay's 64,000-square-mile watershed covers parts of six states and is home to more than 17 million people.

