



Minnesota CREP officially underway

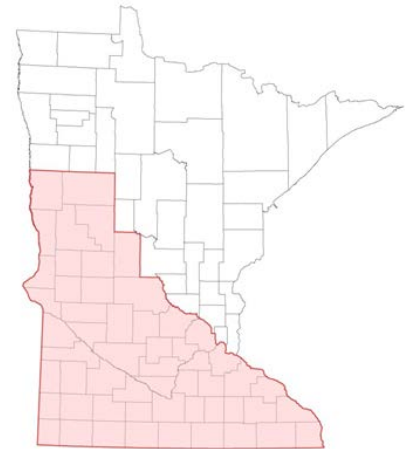
September Snapshots 2017

After more than two years of laying the foundation for Minnesota CREP, the program officially launched and began taking applications early summer 2017. The program is a partnership between the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the United States Department of Agriculture – Farm Service Agency (FSA). MN CREP uses a science-based approach to target environmentally sensitive land across 54 counties in southern and western Minnesota.

The goal of the MN CREP program is to protect, enhance and/or restore 60,000 acres of land. To participate, landowners voluntarily apply to implement perpetual conservation easements on their environmentally sensitive land. Landowners will enter into a 14-15 year Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract, administered by FSA, concurrent with a Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) reserve program perpetual conservation easement, administered by BWSR.

To maximize the environmental benefit to the landscape, CREP focuses on four conservation practice areas:

- *Wellhead Protection (CP2)*
- *Filter Strips (CP21)*
- *Wetlands Within the 100 year Floodplain (CP23)*
- *Wetlands Outside the 100 year Floodplain (CP23a)*



54 County CREP Area



Example of a CREP Filter Strip

Status

Since the official rollout of MN CREP, over 60 landowners have submitted applications which could result in permanent protection of more than 1,500 acres of environmentally sensitive land. These applications amount to a total estimated state and federal cost of \$15 million.

Applications are accepted by SWCDs on a continuous basis and batched into scoring periods by the State.

Minimum size waivers are available

Applications for CREP must be at least 8 acres, unless certain criteria are met. Some examples include areas adjacent to public waters, areas adjacent to land that is already protected, or where a wide buffer is needed to address soluble nutrients. Additionally, waivers can be obtained by socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or beginning farmers or ranchers, as determined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

To date the average size of filter strip buffer application is 6 acres. Over half of the filter strip buffer applications submitted to date use the Eight-Acre Minimum Size Waivers.



Example of a CREP Wetland Restoration

A potential solution for buffer compliance

The new Minnesota Buffer Law requires landowners to install buffers or implement alternative practices on Public Waters by November 1, 2017 (unless an implementation waiver is issued), and on Public Ditches by November 1, 2018. MN CREP is one option available to landowners for compliance with the Buffer Law. To ensure consideration for MN CREP, BWSR encourages landowners to go visit their local SWCD office to begin the sign up process as soon as they are able.