

# WATER AND SOIL CONSERVATION IN THE UPPER ARKANSAS RIVER CORRIDOR

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program affords potential benefits for both farmers, land and water resources in 10 counties along the Upper Arkansas River. Landowners who enroll in CREP will receive up to 15 years of rental payments, a state sign-up bonus, as well as state and federal dollars to put irrigated acres into a conservation planting. The water rights associated with the enrolled land will be permanently retired. Enrollment is on a first-come, first served basis - individual county caps apply. Enrollment availability is only assured through June 2016, at this time.

## What is CREP?

CREP is a targeted, enhanced Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a federal program administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). CRP was designed to prevent soil erosion, but also has provided water quality and wildlife habitat benefits. CREP allows the focus to be on a state resource concern; in this case, water conservation.

## What are the water and soil benefits?

Reducing irrigation demands on the stream-aquifer system will reduce aquifer declines. It will also reduce the spread of saline river water into the aquifer and help restore stream and riparian health. Most acres enrolled have highly erodible, sandy soils. Multi-year transition with limited irrigation allows establishment of cover vegetation.

This program provides cash payments for land transition, while irrigation is still possible. Irrigation is permitted to establish a suitable land cover.

Among the approved practices eligible for cost share money are native grass seeding, wildlife habitat establishment, shallow water area construction, wetland restoration and filter strip and riparian buffer installation.

## Are there targeted areas?

The program places priority on acreage where the retirement of the land and attendant water rights would have the greatest water conservation benefit and protect highly erodible soils.

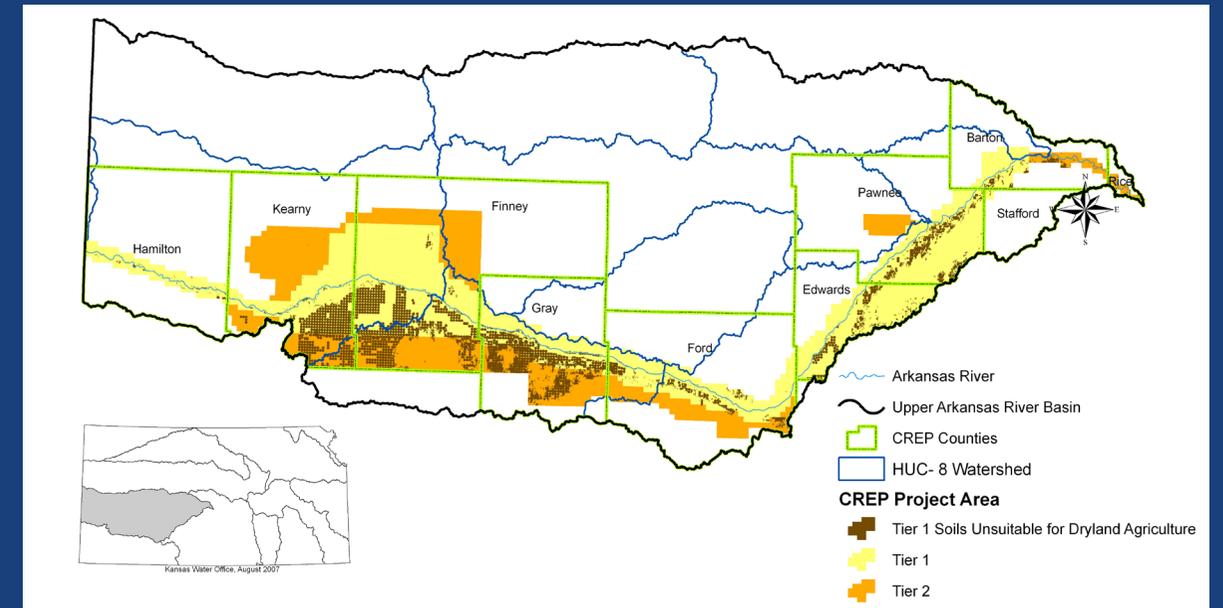
## Are there wildlife benefits?

The conservation practices to be implemented open a host of opportunities for wildlife and landowner revenue related to hunting, recreation and other forms of agritourism.



Landowner visits with FSA, NRCS and KDA officials about CREP grass covers.

# NEW IN 2016 INCREASED FEDERAL RENTAL PAYMENTS AND STATE INCENTIVES



8-Digit HUC	DAFP Approved Irrigated Rental Rates (\$/AC)
11030001 - Pivot	160
11030001 - Gravity	153
11030003 - Pivot	161
11030003 - Gravity	154
11030004 - Pivot	183
11030004 - Gravity	176
11030005 - Pivot	166
11030005 - Gravity	159
11030006 - Pivot	161
11030006 - Gravity	154
11030008 - Pivot	193
11030008 - Gravity	186

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Federal and state eligibility criteria must be met to enroll your land in CREP. The partial list of the criteria will help to screen your eligibility in advance. Your local FSA office has a database to screen your application on these criteria.

1. At least one-half acre foot of water per acre was applied four out of six years (2008-2013).
2. At least 50 percent of the maximum annual quantity authorized to be diverted under the water right has been used in any three years within the most recent five years preceding offer submission for which DWR reports are available.
3. At least 51 percent of the offered land must be located within the CREP boundary.

**BENEFITS TO FARMERS**

- Federal annual irrigated rental and maintenance payments for 14 to 15 years.
- Rental payment on dryland cropland (i.e. center pivot corners) that's part of a whole field enrollment. State upfront payment of either \$97 or \$55 per irrigated acre.
- Up to 50 percent cost share on seeding.
- Well plugging cost share of \$1,000 per well.
- Bonus payment of \$350 per acre for shallow water area development in Kearny or Finney counties.
- Land can be leased for hunting.



*A pheasant calls this CREP area his home*

As you decide whether CREP enrollment fits your business plan, you'll be working with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA).

**1.** First stop is your local FSA office. FSA personnel will use a CREP database to determine whether at least half of the irrigated land offered for enrollment lies within the CREP boundaries and if minimum water use criterion have been met. They also will be able to provide eligible producers with a preliminary estimate of rental and upfront payments.

**2.** Any questions on water rights will be referred to the KDA Division of Water Resources or Groundwater Management District No. 3 or 5. Producers whose land is accepted into the voluntary program are expected to permanently retire the associated water right(s).

**3.** KDA will make the state's upfront payments and practice cost-share payments on approved CREP contracts.

**ARKANSAS RIVER CREP PARTNERS**

Working partners include FSA, KDA, NRCS Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3, Big Bend GMD No. 5, Pheasants Forever, KGS, KDHE, KWO and Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams



**CONTACT**

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**APPLICANTS WATER RIGHT QUESTIONS:**

DWR, Garden City	(620) 276-2901
DWR, Stafford	(620) 234-5311
GMD No. 3, Garden City	(620) 275-7147
GMD No. 5, Stafford	(620) 234-5352

**FARM SERVICE AGENCIES (FSA)**

Barton	(620) 792-5329
Edwards	(620) 659-3142
Finney	(620) 275-0211
Ford	(620) 227-3731
Gray	(620) 855-3515
Hamilton	(620) 384-6955
Kearny	(620) 355-7911
Pawnee	(620) 285-2821
Stafford	(620) 549-3321
Rice	(620) 257-5184

**UPPER ARKANSAS RIVER CREP**

CONSERVATION RESERVE  
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

WATER AND SOIL  
CONSERVATION IN THE UPPER  
ARKANSAS RIVER CORRIDOR



**SIGN UP TODAY**  
*At Your Local USDA Farm  
Service Agency Office*

