

# Conservation Reserve Program

## Protecting Water Quality



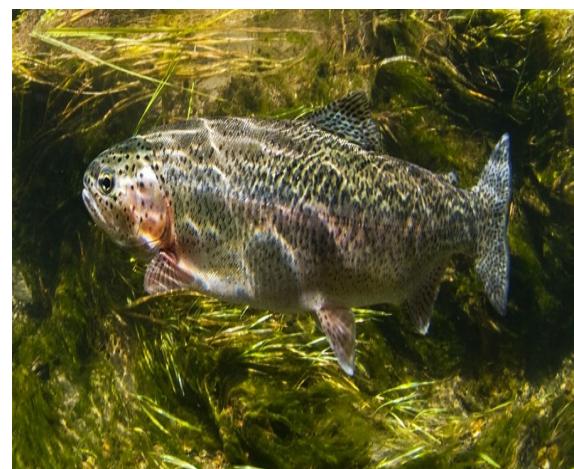
### Why Choose CRP? You Benefit Land, Water, and Wildlife.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a proven land performance and management solution. Whatever the challenge—soil conservation, water quality protection, or wildlife habitat enhancement—CRP provides a range of opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and landowners.

Administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency, CRP provides financial and technical assistance to remove environmentally sensitive farmland from production and convert it to conservation cover for a 10- to 15-year contract period.

### Why Protect Water Quality?

Water quantity and quality are important measures of ecosystem health. As human population grows and industrial and agricultural activities expand, declining water quantity and quality has become an important concern. When harmful substances such as chemicals and micro-organisms contaminate streams, lakes, rivers, aquifers, and other bodies of water, the impacts of pollution can be significant. Through CRP, farmers and landowners can do their part to help protect water quality.



Photos Courtesy of MO Dept. of Conservation and Peter Berthelsen respectively



## Protecting Water Quality

There is a wide range of conservation practices available through CRP that farmers and landowners can use to protect water in their area. Removing low-yield cropland from production and converting it to perennial vegetative cover can help to prevent erosion and the runoff of nutrients and chemicals that would enter waterways. Establishing buffer strips of grasses, trees, and other native plants can filter out pollutants before they reach the water. And retaining or restoring natural wetlands such as prairie potholes and playa lakes helps water cycle cleanly through the ecosystem.

Because of the environmental importance of water, farmers interested in participating in CRP can submit offers for water conservation practice contracts at any time through CRP continuous sign-up. These practices are the pillars of the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers (CLEAR) initiative, which aims to improve agriculture's relationship with water while also benefitting farmers.

## Water Quality Practices

- Grassed Waterways (CP8A)
- Filter Strips (CP21)
- Riparian Forest Buffers (CP22)
- Floodplain Wetland Restoration (CP23)
- Non-Floodplain Wetland Restoration (CP23A)
- Farmable Wetland (CP27)
- Farmable Wetland Buffer (CP28)
- Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer (CP30)
- Constructed Wetland (CP39)
- Aquaculture Wetland (CP40)
- Prairie Wetland (CP41)

*For more information about FSA and its programs, visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov) or contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](http://farmers.gov/service-locator).*

Photo Courtesy of Lynn Betts, NRCS