

Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 29, 2012
NRCS State Office - Madison

Meeting called to order at 8:15 am by Jonathan Pyatskowit.

Jonathan announced that he will be leaving his position with Menominee at the end of March and will therefore be resigning as WTCAC President. He has accepted the position of Treaty Fisheries Biologist with the DNR.

1. Roll Call

Present: FCPC (Nate Guldán), Ho-Chunk (Sara Hatleli), LCO (Brett McConnell), Menominee (Jonathan Pyatskowit), Mole Lake (Tina Van Zile), Oneida (Pat Pelky), St. Croix (Tony Havranek). Quorum Present.

Others Present: Jerry Thompson (WTCAC), Michael Stinebrink (NRCS), Dan Cornelius (IAC), Tom Melnarik (NRCS), Keith Sengbusch (WTCAC), Greg Yakle (NRCS), JoAnn Cruse (APHIS), Cindy Adamson (NASS), Renae Anderson (NRCS), Bob Battaglia (NASS), Matt Otto (NRCS), Susan Hunter (FSA), Cally Ehle (FSA), Chris Borden (NRCS), Samantha Lawien (NRCS)

2. Approval of Agenda

EPA is not able to attend and IAC needs to be added.

MOTION: Motion to approve agenda with changes. Motion by Oneida, seconded by Ho-Chunk. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes

In Item #7 – change were to where, no to not, DATCP with trap in most of the area not USDA.

MOTION: Motion to approve February 1, 2012 minutes with modifications. Motion by Oneida, seconded by St. Croix. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

4. NRCS Update

Matt Otto – There is one Tribal CSP application from FCPC (this application was withdrawn after the meeting). As for WHIP, not much has changed; there is a national call today to discuss how the small amount of WHIP funds will be used nationally. It will likely be used for some targeted species. EQIP funds went out in their software this week; the DCs are beginning the obligation process. By next week, we should know if additional funds are available for the applications not approved by WTCAC. As for payment schedules for 2013, the process

nationally is a little behind schedule, once they are done the state teams starts theirs. This meeting is very timely so they can have this information to take to other states. Question - Is it possible to have a 3 state tribal docket? There have not been any discussions on it but it doesn't mean there shouldn't be. Regional TCAC may be a good forum for moving this idea through the system. He thinks they are loosening up on limiting the number of practices.

Rena Anderson – Update on TSP Training through Menominee College – Agreement is proceeding according to schedule. Last week there was a training attended by 8 people, they learned they could do the training in two days, not two and a half. There is a 2nd training session at the end of March. It is going very nicely and they are pleased with the progress. Brian will add Jerry to the email list so he is kept in the loop.

Ron Howard wanted to talk to us briefly about the easement programs. National office is looking into increasing participation in the easement programs.

Samantha Lawien – She is the AIANEA representative for the Midwest region. She has been in conference with national office about the new soil health initiative, they are all on board with that and they want to help. She wanted to come to the meeting and say that they are here and want to help and would be happy to go onto Reservations and help with this initiative.

5. IAC Update

Dan Cornelius – They met last week in Denver and went through the Farm Bill section by section. They are working on pulling together input they have gotten from Tribes across the country. They are trying to break down the Farm Bill to make it easier for Tribal governments to comment on things. They are trying to get Tribal leaders to be more active in commenting on it. The super committee will come up with a draft in the fall. They likely are taking conservation programs down to 2 from the 16 – 18 there currently is. There is uncertainty as it is an election year. Indigenous Farming Conference at White Earth from March 7 – 9. Dan is also working on a producer summit in Oneida on April 23 and 24. The meeting is trying to focus on Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin Tribal producers to bring them together to establish a producer network. The producers aren't really aware of WTCAC and what we do. Indian Land Tenure is having a conference in Las Vegas at the beginning of April. Politically the Indian Ag Act has no sponsor and it is going to be very hard to get it enacted. USDA usually drafts their own version of the Farm Bill but this year it is the House and Senate Ag Committees doing it. The State Conservationist from Louisiana is involved. It sounds like it will mostly be a Senate Bill and they hope to have something done by May. We should have something come from WTCAC commenting on the Farm Bill.

6. NRCS (continued)

Pat Leavenworth – In terms of budget, they still do not have the complete allocation and they are supposed to be getting a letter letting them know where they sit. They should be ok for this year, but everything after this year depends on the Farm Bill and how it favors conservation. She was in DC last week and presented to leadership in the USFS on a neat project that Paul Strong (USFS Chequamegon-Nicolet Supervisor) and her are working on with the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center. There already is a project under the USDA specialty crop program looking at hazelnut – agro forestry effort. Project to work with Northland College, GLIFWC, Bad River, and Red Cliff to expand on the hazelnut project but also to work on another grant funded project through the Center to interview Tribal elders and find out from them how they gathered native foods and to develop a cookbook of indigenous recipes that can be shared with a wider audience. They also have a concern with the sensitive soils in the area as well. Good support from USFS Leadership and USFWS is also getting involved because of the salmon fishery. She hasn't heard anything on the RTCAC.

Ron Howard – Assistant State Conservationist for easement programs. He works with the Easement Programs through the Farm Bill. They have several – 4 in WI – Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Grassland Reserve Program (restore native grassland), Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, and the Emergency Watershed Protection and Floodplain Program (restores native floodplains). There is also the Healthy Forest Reserve Protection Program however Wisconsin does not have this yet and it had language that basically excluded any tribal land. In WRP there are provisions for NRCS to work with Tribes to restore wetlands whether through easements or cost share programs. Through easements they would enter into a contract with the Tribe and they will pay 75% of the easement value determined through an assessment. Through the cost share restoration program they would assist with planning, design, and restoration and would cover 75% of it. No easement with this! Easement programs can only be on fee land, not on trust land. There is a sign up period, they usually try to start it at the beginning of the fiscal year, this year it was first in December.

Pat handed out an award for one of her employees who the Civil Rights Committee has chosen that has accomplished the most for civil rights and outreach in Wisconsin. Michael Stinebrink was chosen as the recipient.

7. Rural Development Update

Donna could not make it due to the weather, but she sent an email update (See attachments).

8. APHIS Update

JoAnn Cruse – strike the last 2 sentences on the program from the last meeting, the Ag Discovery Program is still located throughout the country. There is a request for comment out on hemlock pest control. Please send comments in if you have them. She met with Red Cliff

Tribal Council last week, already met with Ho-Chunk and Bad River, and they will move forward with adding Ashland, Bayfield, and Clark Counties to the gypsy moth quarantine. If other tribes have interest, let her now (handouts, newspaper articles, etc). They got the go ahead to hold the full scale exercise at Menominee, they went before the Tribal Council and MTE and they got the go ahead. They start with the table top the first week of May, half day. Then the full-scale exercise in September. Not sure what pest they are going to select but they will be having conference calls to finalize some things next week. Potentially have 1 – 2 Tribal representatives from each tribe to just observe and then they could have a tabletop exercise with other Tribes.

9. NASS

Bob Battaglia – Anyone that is working on the Farm Bill has the census summary of Tribal agriculture. They want to make sure they get the Tribal farms counted. The Senate has everything at their fingertips they need on Tribal agriculture and will base the allocations off the census. If fish are raised and cared for and released into a lake that is agriculture. They want to get census forms from all the Tribes. They will be getting in touch with the Tribes. Aquaculture is included in this.

10. FSA Update

Susan Hunter – She passed out a report. They would like to meet individually with all Tribes to give them and other USDA agencies what they need. They are looking at having webinars when the new Farm Bill comes out to explain FSA programs that are in it.

11. Technical Recommendations

Keith handed out copies. Keith and Tom met with the State Engineer and he is good to go with everything they recommended. They are still waiting on a bid for two underground outlets; they will be meeting to get the bids tomorrow. They are also working on costs for two lane roads. With the 3 state process, from the technical point of view, the engineering staff from the different states will be putting together work groups to work on different classes of scenarios. We will need to coordinate with those individual teams to get our practices through the system. Pre-engineered bridge – steel girder bridge built off site and delivered, 10 foot wide one-lane bridge. Also includes the crane to place the bridge.

12. INCA

Jonathan will be going to Denver in mid March and then he needs to figure out if they want someone else on the board from WTCAC to replace him.

13. Next Meeting

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 3 and 4 in St. Croix @ Danbury. The afternoon of April 3 would be a WTCAC strategic planning session with the regular WTCAC meeting on the 4th.

14. Interns

There were nine applications and we only have funding for 7. They are looking into options to have the Great Lakes Visitor Center and their grant fund a position or two. Jerry handed out financial information. We will interview and then move forward in an attempt to fill all 9 positions.

15. Program Manager Report

Upcoming trips – Does anyone from WTCAC want to go to Arizona? Alaska is August 24 and 25 which is a Friday and Saturday. California wants us to do 3 sessions. They are in the budget extension requests.

VHS – we put in an extension request as St. Croix got all their sampling done and had money left so they are going to sample 7 more lakes this spring. They got approval for the extension.

There is a non-profit organization meeting at UW Madison tonight and Jerry is going to. He came up with a donation form and passed it out; he wants our comments on it. Jerry gave the first donation. He will be updating the form with address information and sending it out to us.

Travel Policy - Need to update the rates on the travel policy. He will just reference the GSA website for the per diem information. Get rid of \$500 stipend for meeting expense. There is an issue with #8 dealing with the need to approve travel. We need to change the policy on approval of travel. Jerry will update the travel policy for approval at the next meeting.

Motion to approve Randy and Jerry for New Mexico and Nevada by FCPC, 2nd Mole Lake. All in favor, motions carries.

MOTION: Motion to approve Randy, Jerry, and Keith's travel for Arizona. Motion by FCPC, seconded by Ho-Chunk. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: Motion to adjourn. Motion by Oneida, seconded by Ho-Chunk. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:08 pm.

Technical Recommendation Meeting with the State Conservationist

Keith Sengbusch - all the new scenarios fall under Wisconsin standards that are in the docket. Tom Melnarik and Keith worked on going through the resource concerns and some options. There are 7 options proposed for stream crossing. We propose to split the liner cost out of the aquaculture pond practice. The aquaculture recommendations are to better reflect what is actually being built out there. They are going to track pond construction costs very closely to try and break it down. Two lane roads could be for the entire length of the road. Greg Fisher is the Director of the UWSP hatchery demonstration site at Red Cliff. Keith has been using Greg as a resource. Greg suggested that someone that works in aquaculture be able to review the plans before construction begins.

John Ramsden – they will have various engineering teams for erosion control, irrigation, etc from the 3 states.

NRCS will go over them in the next month and will be getting back to us at another meeting.

Docket issue with the 3 Tribes - we have a concern about losing potential scenarios that we have fought to get included in the docket. Based on their experience last fall it went really well working with the other states. Once they have information from national teams on costs and scenarios they will have to work with national teams to get us what we need. As long as we are not limited to 8 scenarios we should be alright. What about a 3 state Tribal docket? It would be a great way to address this issue. They will talk to Chris Tippi and see what his thoughts are. Pat Leavenworth said it is something they need to engage in on a national level so that the right components are put in the spreadsheet for the states to pick from. NRCS will definitely follow up.

Is there anything coming down on scenarios for renewable energy? They can't just install wind or solar to create reusable energy, it needs to be used to address a resource concern such as air pollution from the current energy source. They will probably learn more from the payment schedule information when it comes down.

Pat Leavenworth presented an NRCS blanket to Jonathan and thanked him for all he has done.

ATTACHMENTS

Good morning,

Due to the inclement weather, I will not be traveling to Madison today.

Could you please share the points below with members.

- 1) Community Facility Program – Our loan funding allocation for this program tripled this year. Wisconsin received \$27,000,000 in loan funds and approximately \$183,000 in grant funds. We are looking for sound loan projects to spend our allocation. This program allows Tribes to apply for needed community facilities such as clinics, dental clinics, police stations, fire trucks, day care or headstart buildings or equipment, updated computer equipment for tribal offices, etc. Please contact me if your Tribe is working on a project that may qualify. I can visit with them and give them details of the program.
- 2) Jerry had asked if I could provide details by Tribe of the funding that has been provided. I have checked with our Freedom of Information Coordinator and been informed this is acceptable. In the numbers that I had provided earlier, I had used some assumptions for the housing data as up to this point, those numbers were not tracked. I am working on getting accurate numbers for those programs and will provide a series of graphs and information as soon as I have that data. My intention was to provide past 10 years, 5 years, and 3 years with graphs showing the difference. I have not put all the information together but I believe it will show that there has been a decline the last several years due to some funding (EC/EZ) being discontinued. Please let me know if there is specific data sets that you would like.
- 3) I understand there were no applicants for the RD intern positions this year. This may not be a bad thing with some of the internal changes we are facing this year. I would ask that you keep our agency in mind for next year as we should be better positioned to hire interns.

If anyone has questions, they can contact me at the contact information below.

I look forward to seeing you at your next meeting.

Thank you.

Donna J. Huebner | Rural Development Coordinator



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FSA REPORT TO WTCAC – FEBRUARY 29, 2012

By Susan Hunter, FSA Tribal Liaison (715) 362-5941 ext 104, susan.hunter@wi.usda.gov

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Signup – Local county FSA offices will be holding a General CRP signup starting March 12 through April 6, 2012. Producers can offer bids on eligible cropland to put in conserving covers for annual payments. For more information on the eligibility and evaluation/ranking of offers, visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>

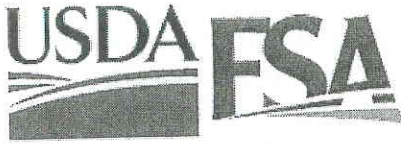
March 15th deadline - Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) Policies on Spring Seeded Crops – Individuals who have spring seeded crops that are grown for sale have an opportunity to insure those crops that cannot be insured by a local crop insurance agent. The deadline to obtain a NAP loss policy on spring seeded crops is March 15th. The cost is \$250 per crop, not to exceed \$750 per county.

County Committee Minority Advisors – Elected FSA county committee members help deliver FSA farm programs at the local levels by helping with decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. FSA offices throughout the state are looking for tribal members who are actively involved in some sort of farming to serve as minority advisors to the local County Committee. Advisors are appointed to county committee in counties that have a significant number of minority and women producers and lack such members on the Committee. Advisors play an important role by providing diverse viewpoints and by representing the interest of minorities and women in decisions made by county committees.

Farm and Youth Loans – FSA has targeted funds available for minority, women and beginning farmers/individuals looking to start or supplement a farm operation. There are also funds available for youth ages 10-20 to start an agricultural related money making business. For more details contact the local FSA farm loan official.

Indian Tribal Land Acquisition Program – This program extends credit to Indian Tribes that do not qualify for standard commercial loans to purchase land within their reservation. There has not been much activity in this loan program due to the following:

- Tribes must show they cannot get funding elsewhere by providing at least three letters from outside lenders, one of which must be from the BIA stating funding has been denied to the tribe
- Tribes must provide complete financial statement on all holdings: current financial statements, projected cash flow statements and past 3 years of financial statements and cash flow statements.



Conservation Reserve Program General Sign-up 43

Wisconsin Farm Service Agency



USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will hold a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up from March 12 through April 6, 2012.

CRP is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers use environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to control soil erosion, improve water and air quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 to 15 years. Accepted contracts for sign-up 43 will begin on October 1, 2012.

FSA administers CRP, while other USDA agencies and partners provide technical support. More detailed information on CRP is available in the FSA fact sheet "Conservation Reserve Program".

Submitting CRP Offers

Land that is not currently enrolled in CRP may be offered for enrollment during CRP sign-up 43. In addition, CRP participants with contracts expiring on September 30, 2012, may submit offers.

To submit CRP offers, producers must visit their local FSA office. FSA will accept offers only during the sign-up period (March 12 through April 6, 2012). To find your local FSA office, visit the USDA's website at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

Eligible Producers

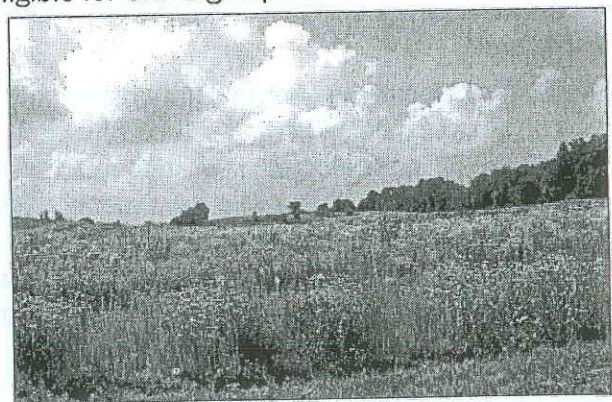
To be eligible for CRP enrollment, a producer must

have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the end of the CRP sign-up period, unless:

- the new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- the ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right of redemption in accordance with state law or;
- the circumstance of the acquisition presents adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

Eligible Land

To be eligible for placement in general sign-up CRP, land must be cropland (including field margins) that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2002 to 2007, and be physically and legally capable of being planted (no planting restrictions due to an easement or other legally binding instrument) in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Alfalfa or other multiyear grasses and legumes growing in a rotation not to exceed 12 years may be eligible for CRP sign-up 43.



Additional Cropland Requirements

In addition to the eligible land requirements, for general sign-up, cropland must meet one of the following criteria:

- have a weighted average erosion index of eight or higher;
- be expiring CRP acreage or;

- be located in a national or state CRP conservation priority area

CRP Payments

FSA provides CRP sign-up 43 participants with annual rental payments, including certain incentive payments and cost-share assistance:

Rental Payments

- In return for establishing long-term, resource conserving covers, FSA provides rental payments to participants. FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent or cash-rent equivalent. County office staff working with the producer will calculate the maximum CRP rental rate for each offer prior to enrollment. Producers may offer land below the rate to increase the likelihood that FSA will accept their offer.

Cost-Share Assistance

- FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved cover on eligible cropland. The cost-share assistance cannot exceed 50 percent of the participant's costs to establish approved practices.

Ranking CRP Offers

FSA will rank offers for CRP sign-up 43 according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). FSA collects data (primarily based on location, soils information and selected conservation practice) and determines the environmental indices for the land offered.

FSA ranks each eligible offer in comparison to all other offers and selects from that ranking. After the sign-up ends, the Secretary will decide where to make the EBI cutoff. Those who have met previous sign-up EBI thresholds are not guaranteed a contract under this sign-up. Producers may consult with local FSA and NRCS staff on how to maximize EBI points and increase the likelihood that their offer will be accepted.

More information on EBI for CRP sign-up 43 is available by reading the FSA fact sheet, "Conservation Reserve Program Sign-up 43, Environmental Benefits Index."

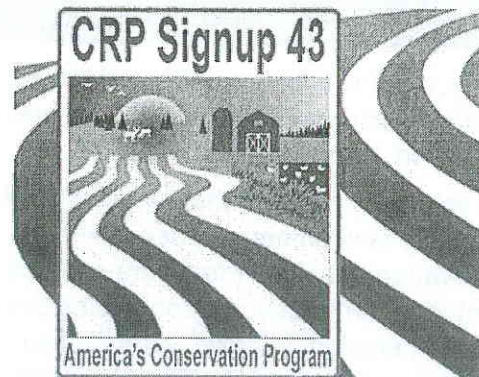
CRP Continuous Sign-up

In addition to CRP sign-up 43, producers at any time can participate in CRP continuous sign-up, in which producers can enroll the most environmentally sensitive land.

More information on CRP continuous sign-up is available in the FSA fact sheet "Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Sign-up."

For More Information

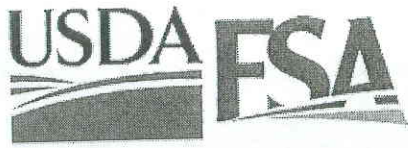
For more information on CRP, contact a local FSA office, or visit FSA's website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>.



For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your local USDA Service Center.

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Conservation Reserve Program Sign-Up 43 Environmental Benefits Index

Wisconsin Farm Service Agency

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will hold a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up from March 12 through April 6, 2012.

CRP is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers use environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolled in CRP plant or maintain long-term, resource-conserving covers to control soil erosion, improve water and air quality and enhance wildlife habitat.

More information on CRP sign-up 43 is available in the FSA fact sheet, "Conservation Reserve Program General Sign-up 43, March 12 through April 6, 2012."

Ranking CRP Offers

FSA will rank offers for CRP sign-up 43 according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). FSA collects data for each EBI factor based on the relative environmental benefits for the land offered. EBI rankings are unique for each tract of land offered into CRP.

FSA assigns each offer a point score based on the offer's relative environmental factors. Each offer competes with all other offers. FSA determines offer acceptability based on the ranking results.

For CRP sign-up 43, FSA will use the following EBI factors to assess the environmental benefits for the land offered:

- Wildlife habitat benefits resulting from covers on contract acreage (N1);
- Water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff and leaching (N2);
- On-farm benefits from reduced erosion (N3);
- Benefits that will likely endure beyond the contract period (N4);
- Air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion (N5); and
- Cost (N6).

N1 - Wildlife Factor Point Score: 0 to 100

Factor N1 is an evaluation of the expected wildlife benefits of the offer and is comprised of three subfactors (N1a-c). The formula for N1 = N1a + N1b + N1c.

- N1a - Wildlife Habitat Cover Benefits (10 to 50 points)



This subfactor is an evaluation of the wildlife habitat cover offered. FSA assigns points for cover practice planting mixtures based on the potential value to wildlife within each state. FSA awards higher scores for cover types that are more beneficial to wildlife. Local USDA Service Centers have a list of approved planting mixes and the assigned point scores for each cover mix. Point scores are based on the weighted average score for cover mixes the producer selects. Native mixes of diverse species generally receive the highest point scores. Eligible cover practices under the N1a criteria are in Table 1.

(Producers should note that wildlife habitat cover selection is the most critical factor impacting wildlife benefits. Optimum cover types significantly increase the point score for this factor).

- N1b - Wildlife Enhancement (0, 5 or 20 points)

This subfactor provides up to 20 points for actions producers take to enhance the wildlife benefits for the offered acreage. Enhancement to the acreage is necessary in order to receive the points. For example, to receive 20 points producers may offer to establish a minimum of 10 percent of the acreage offered to pollinator habitat. Eligible practices under the N1b criteria are provided in Table 2.

- N1c - Wildlife Priority Zones (0 or 30 points)

FSA consulted with farm, commodity, wildlife and environmental groups to develop high-priority wildlife areas that would benefit from being enrolled in CRP.

For land located within this defined geographic area, points are awarded for planting cover mixes to benefit wildlife species. This subfactor provides 30 points if at least 51 percent of the offered acreage is located within the wildlife priority zone and the weighted average N1a score is greater than or equal to 40 points.

N2 - Water Quality Benefits from Reduced Erosion, Runoff, and Leaching Point Score: 0 to 100

One of CRP's main goals is to reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients and pollutants that enter our nation's waterways. Factor N2 is an evaluation of the potential impacts that CRP may have on both surface and groundwater quality. N2 is comprised of three subfactors (N2a-c). The formula for $N2 = N2a + N2b + N2c$.

- N2a - Location (0 or 30 points)

This subfactor is an evaluation of the benefits of improving ground or surface water quality impaired by crop production. States have identified water quality zones for protection. At least 51 percent of the acreage offered must be within an approved water quality zone to receive 30 points. Local USDA Service Centers have detailed maps of the approved water quality zones.

- N2b - Groundwater quality (0 to 25 points)

This subfactor is an evaluation of the predominant soils, the potential leaching of pesticides and nutrients into groundwater, and the impact to people who rely on groundwater as a primary source of drinking water. Point scores are based on the weighted average leach index for soils offered for enrollment and the population that utilizes groundwater for drinking.

- N2c - Surface water quality (0 to 45 points)

This subfactor is an evaluation of the amount of sediment that may be delivered into streams or other water courses and the human population that may be affected. This factor is determined by potential water erosion, distance to the water and the watershed in which the offer is located.

N3 - Erosion Factor Point Score: 0 to 100

CRP helps maintain the long-term productivity of the land for future generations. Factor N3 is an evaluation of the potential for the land to erode as the result of either wind or water erosion. This factor is measured using an Erodibility Index (EI). FSA awards points for the weighted average of the higher value of



either the wind or water EI, based on the results from Table 3.

N4 - Enduring Benefits Factor Point Score: 0 to 100

Factor N4 is an evaluation of the likelihood for certain practices to remain in place beyond the CRP contract period. N4 values are determined by calculating the weighted average score for all practices in Table 4.

N5 - Air Quality Benefits from Reduced Wind Erosion Point Score: 0 to 45 points

Factor N5 is an evaluation of the air quality improvements by reducing airborne dust and particulate caused by wind erosion from cropland. In addition, this factor has points for the value of CRP land that provides carbon sequestration. This factor is comprised of four subfactors (N5a-d). The formula for $N5 = N5a + N5b + N5c + N5d$.

- N5a - Wind Erosion Impacts (0 to 25 points)

FSA will determine the potential for the site to have wind erosion damage. FSA will award points based on potential wind erosion and the amount of population that may be impacted by the erosion. The potential wind erodibility is based on a climatic factor (wind speed, wind direction and duration of wind events) and soil erodibility.

- N5b - Wind Erosion Soils List (0 or 5 points)

A list of soils that are susceptible to wind and contribute significantly to nonattainment of air quality standards has been developed. These soils have a dominant component of volcanic or organic materials that are highly erodible and can be transported great distances on the wind. If at least 51 percent of the offered acres are comprised of these soils, the offer is awarded five points.

- N5c - Air Quality Zones (0 or 5 points)

FSA awards a maximum of five points if at least 51 percent of the acreage offered is located in an air quality zone that contributes to nonattainment of air quality standards and the calculated weighted wind EI is equal to or greater than three.

- N5d - Carbon Sequestration (0 to 10 points)

The subfactor is an evaluation of the benefits of sequestering greenhouse gases by practice over the expected life of the practice. FSA awards points based on a weighted average of carbon sequestration benefits for all practices using the value in Table 5.

N6 - Cost

Factor N6 is an evaluation of the cost of environmental benefits per dollar expended. This factor assists in optimizing environmental benefits per dollar for CRP rental payments. Factor N6 is comprised of two subfactors (N6a and N6b). The formula for N6 = N6a + N6b.

- N6a - Cost (point value determined after end of sign-up based on actual offer data)

Offers with lower per acre rental rates may increase chances of being accepted.

- N6b - Offer Less Than Maximum Payment Rate (0 to 25 points)

Offers equal to the maximum payment rate will receive 0 points. Offers below the maximum payment rate will receive points according to the value in Table 6.

EBI Threshold for Acceptance

After CRP sign-up 43 ends on April 6, 2012, FSA will analyze and rank all eligible offers. The Secretary of Agriculture will then determine the EBI threshold used to accept offers. Because CRP is a highly competitive program, producers who would have met previous sign-up EBI cutoffs are not guaranteed an offer acceptance under CRP sign-up 43.

Making CRP Offers More Competitive

While the United States has over 360 million acres of cropland, the maximum CRP enrollment authority is 32 million acres. As such, the demand to enroll land in CRP is expected to be greater than the amount that FSA can accept.

To make offers more competitive, producers should consider the following:

The single most important producer decision involves determining which cover practice to apply to the acreage offered. Planting or establishing the highest scoring cover mixture is the best way to improve the

chances of offer acceptance.

Producers should only offer the most environmentally sensitive land. Where possible, subdividing fields to include only the most sensitive acreage can substantially increase the point score for erosion and improve the water quality score and/or air quality score. Producers should consider enhancing covers for the benefit of wildlife or establishing pollinator habitat. In addition, producers may plant and manage hardwood or softwood trees that increase wildlife habitat values or restore certain rare and declining habitats. These potentially increase the EBI score in subfactors N1a and N4.

Producers should consider accepting a lower payment rate than the maximum amount FSA is willing to offer.

FSA also encourages producers to consult with local USDA experts on steps to take to maximize EBI points and increase the likelihood that an offer will be accepted.

For More Information

For more information on CRP, contact a local FSA office or visit FSA's CRP website <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>.

For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your local USDA Service Center.

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Conservation Reserve Program Sign-Up 43 Environmental Benefits Index Tables

Practice	Point Score
CP1 – Permanent introduced grasses and legumes	
Existing stand or planting of two to three species of an introduced grass species	10
Existing stand or planting mixture (minimum of four species) of at least 3 introduced grasses and at least one forb or legume species best suited for wildlife in the area.	40
CP2 – Establishment of permanent native grasses and legumes	
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of three species) of at least two native grass species and at least one forb or legume species beneficial to wildlife.	20
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of five species) of at least 3 native grasses and at least one shrub, forb, or legume species best suited for wildlife in the area.	50
CP3 – Tree planting (general) 2/	
Southern pines (softwoods) – Solid stand of pines/softwoods (existing or planted at more than 550 trees per acre).	10
Northern conifers (softwoods) – Solid stand of conifers/softwoods (existing or planted at more than 850 trees per acre).	10
Western pines (softwoods) – Solid stand of pines/softwoods (existing or planted at more than 650 trees per acre).	10
Southern pines (softwoods) – Pines/softwoods existing or planted at a rate of 500 to 550 per acre depending upon the site index (state-developed standards) with 10 to 20 percent openings managed to a CP4D wildlife cover.	50
Northern conifers (softwoods) – Conifers/softwoods existing or planted at a rate of 750 to 850 trees per acre depending upon the site index (state-developed standards) with 10 to 20 percent openings managed to a CP4D wildlife cover.	50
Western pines (softwoods) – Pines/softwoods existing or planted at a rate of 550 to 650 per acre depending upon the site index (state-developed standards) with 10 to 20 percent openings managed to a CP4D wildlife cover.	50
CP3A – Hardwood tree planting	
Existing or planting solid stand of nonmast producing hardwood species.	10
Existing or planting solid stand of a single hard mast producing species.	20
Existing or planting mixed stand of two hardwood species best suited for wildlife in the area.	30
Existing or planting mixed stand (three or more species) of hardwood species best suited for wildlife in the area.	50
Existing or planting stand of Longleaf pine or Atlantic white cedar - Planted at rates appropriate for the site index.	50
CP4B – Permanent wildlife habitat (corridors), noncessment.	
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of four species) of either grasses, trees, shrubs, forbs, or legumes planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited for various wildlife species in the area. A wildlife conservation plan must be developed with the participant.	40
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of five species) of either predominantly native species including grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs, or trees planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited to providing wildlife habitat. Only native grasses are authorized. Introduced grasses are not authorized for and cannot be included in cover mixes for 50-point N1a scores for CP4B. A wildlife conservation plan must be developed with the participant.	50

Practice	Point Score
CP4D – Permanent wildlife habitat, noncessment	
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of four species) of either grasses, trees, shrubs, forbs, or legumes planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited for various wildlife species in the area. A wildlife conservation plan must be developed with the participant.	40
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of five species) of either predominantly native species including grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs, or trees planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited to providing wildlife habitat. Only native grasses are authorized. Introduced grasses are not authorized for and cannot be included in cover mixes for 50-point N1a scores for CP4D. A wildlife conservation plan must be developed with the participant.	50
CP12 – Wildlife food plot 3/	
Wildlife food plots are small non-cost-shared plantings in a larger area. Wildlife food plots will never be the predominant cover.	NA
CP25 – Rare and declining habitat restoration 4/	
Existing stand or seeding or planting will be best suited for wildlife in the area. Plant species selections will be based upon Ecological Site Description data.	50
CP42 – Pollinator Habitat	
Existing stand or planting of a diverse mix of multiple species suited for pollinators.	50
Footnotes:	
1/ Cover that is existing or will be established must accomplish the purpose of the practice.	
2/ State Conservationist may revise the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) on planting rate to be consistent with CRP. The opening for southern and western pines must be a minimum of two acres up to a maximum of five acres in size for fields of 20 acres and larger. For smaller fields, the size is based on a percentage. Opening in northern conifers will be one-half to two acres in size. The opening may include buffers on the interior of the field. Field edges (borders) may be used if they are irregular in shape and average 30 feet in width. Natural regeneration of native herbaceous or shrubby vegetation with required maintenance may be permitted within open areas if it is consistent with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) technical standards and the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, and has concurrence from state fish and wildlife service (FWS) or U.S. FWS officials. Open areas of native grasses and/or shrub planting best suited for wildlife in the area is considered CP3 for EBI scoring and contract purposes.	
3/ CP12 acreage is not included in the weighted average point score. For example, a 50-acre offer with 45 acres planted to CP25 and five acres planted to a wildlife food plot would calculate a weighted average using only the 45 acres of the CP25 planting. This calculates as follows: 45 acres x 50 points (CP 25 EBI score) = 2,250 points. 2,250 points / 45 acres = 50 points.	
4/ Technical practice standards for the selected habitat type must meet applicable standards and be approved by FSA at least 30 calendar days before the beginning of sign-up.	

Practice	Point Score
Conversion of at least 51 percent of a primarily monoculture stand to a mixture of native species that provides wildlife benefits.	20
Establishment of pollinator habitat (CP42) that remains in the location of the CRP-1. The habitat size, shape, and composition must meet the following requirements:	20
Size	
CRP Parcel	Habitat Size Requirement
Less than 10 acres	At least one acre of pollinator habitat. Habitat areas must be at least 0.5 acre.
10 acres or greater	At least 10 percent of the parcel in pollinator habitat. Habitat areas must be at least 0.5 acre.
Annual or permanent food plot (CP12) that remains in the same location for the contract length, or rotated food plot (CP12) for which the location on the contract is moved during the contract length consistent with the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide up to 10 percent of a field, not to exceed 5 acres per field.	5

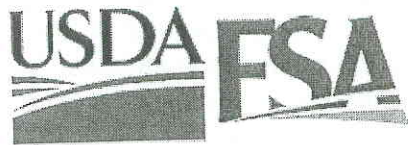
Practice	Point Score
CP3 (Tree planting - general), CP3A (Hardwood tree planting), and CP25 (Rare and declining habitat restoration) planted to trees.	10
CP25 (Rare and declining habitat restoration) planted to grass/shrub complexes, and CP42 (Pollinator Habitat).	5
CP4B (Permanent wildlife habitat (corridors), noncessment) and CP4D (Permanent wildlife habitat, noncessment).	4
CP1 (Permanent introduced grasses and legumes) and CP2 (Establishment of permanent native grasses).	3
CP12 (Wildlife food plot).	0

EI	Points	EI	Points	EI	Points
4	1	10	22	16	79
5	2	11	29	17	92
6	4	12	37	18	97
7	7	13	46	19	98
8	11	14	56	20	99
9	16	15	67	21+	100

1/ EI of less than 4 = 0 points

Percent Below Maximum Payment Rate	N6b Points
1	2
2	4
3	6
4	8
5	10
6	12
7	14
8	16
9	18
10	20
11	21
12	22
13	23
14	24
>= 15	25

Practice	Point Score
New hardwood tree, longleaf pine, and/or Atlantic white cedar plantings (CP3A) and CP25 (Rare and declining habitat restoration) if the plant community is existing or will be established to primarily trees.	30
Existing or enhanced stand of hardwood tree, longleaf pine, and/or Atlantic white cedar plantings (CP3A).	40
New pine/softwood tree (CP3)	30
Rare and declining habitat restoration (CP25) where the plant community is existing or will be established to a primarily grass and/or shrub complex.	25
Existing pine/softwood tree - original contract signed as CP3.	20
CP1, CP2, CP4B, CP4D, and CP42.	0



Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Sign-Up

Wisconsin Farm Service Agency

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers use environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. CRP participants plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water and air, control soil erosion and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance.



FSA administers CRP while other USDA agencies and partners provide technical support. More detailed information on CRP is available in the FSA fact sheet "Conservation Reserve Program."

CRP Continuous Sign-up

Environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled in CRP at any time under continuous sign-up. Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. Offers for continuous sign-up are not subject to competitive bidding. Continuous sign-up contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration.

To offer land for continuous sign-up, producers should contact their local FSA office. To find your local office, visit FSA's website at: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Contract Effective Date

For continuous sign-up, the effective date of the CRP contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval. In certain circumstances,

producers may defer the effective date for up to six months.

If the acreage is currently under CRP contract and is within one year of the scheduled expiration date, the effective date is October 1 following the expiration date.

Eligible Producers

To be eligible for CRP continuous sign-up enrollment, a producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to submitting the offer, unless:

- The new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- The ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right or redemption in accordance with state law; or
- The circumstances of the acquisition present adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

Eligible Land

To be eligible for placement in CRP, land must be cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the previous six crop years from 2002 to 2007, and is physically and legally capable of being planted (no planting restrictions due to an easement or other legally binding instrument) in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.



Eligible Practices

The land must be eligible and suitable for any of the following conservation practices:

- Riparian buffers;
- Wildlife habitat buffers;
- Wetland buffers;
- Filter strips;
- Wetland restoration;
- Grass waterways;
- Shelterbelts;
- Living snow fences;
- Contour grass strips;
- Constructed Wetlands;
- Restoration of Aquaculture Wetlands;
- Wildlife Habitat Restoration within approved State Areas for wildlife Enhancement Projects;
- Salt tolerant vegetation; and
- Shallow water areas for wildlife.

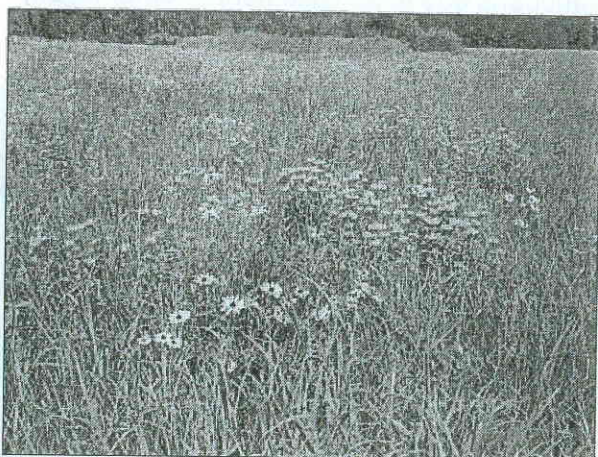
Land within an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated public wellhead area also may be eligible for enrollment on a continuous basis.

CRP Continuous Sign-Up Payments

FSA provides CRP continuous sign-up participants with annual rental payments, including certain incentives and cost-share assistance:

- Rental Payments

In return for establishing long-term, resource-conserving covers, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants. FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each



county and the average dryland cash rent (using data provided by National Agricultural Statistical Service) or cash rent equivalent as guidelines. The maximum CRP rental rate for each offer is calculated in advance of enrollment.

The per-acre annual rental rate may not exceed the calculated rate determined in advance of enrollment. While continuous sign-up acceptance is not determined by a competitive offer process, producers may elect to receive an amount less than the maximum payment rate.

- Cost-Share Assistance

-An upfront signing incentive payment (CRP-SIP) up to \$100 per acre for eligible participants who enroll certain practices. The one-time SIP will be made after the contract is approved and all payment eligibility criteria are met; and

-A practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of the eligible installation costs for eligible participants who enroll certain practices. The one-time PIP will be issued after the practice is installed, eligible costs are verified and other payment eligibility criteria are met.

For More Information

For more information on CRP continuous sign-up, contact a local FSA office, or visit FSA's website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>.

For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your local USDA Service Center.

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FSA REPORT TO WTCAC – FEBRUARY 29, 2012

By Susan Hunter, FSA Tribal Liaison (715) 362-5941 ext 104, susan.hunter@wi.usda.gov

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Signup – Local county FSA offices will be holding a General CRP signup starting March 12 through April 6, 2012. Producers can offer bids on eligible cropland to put in conserving covers for annual payments. For more information on the eligibility and evaluation/ranking of offers, visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>

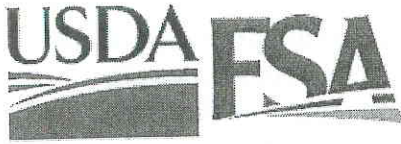
March 15th deadline - Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) Policies on Spring Seeded Crops – Individuals who have spring seeded crops that are grown for sale have an opportunity to insure those crops that cannot be insured by a local crop insurance agent. The deadline to obtain a NAP loss policy on spring seeded crops is March 15th. The cost is \$250 per crop, not to exceed \$750 per county.

County Committee Minority Advisors – Elected FSA county committee members help deliver FSA farm programs at the local levels by helping with decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. FSA offices throughout the state are looking for tribal members who are actively involved in some sort of farming to serve as minority advisors to the local County Committee. Advisors are appointed to county committee in counties that have a significant number of minority and women producers and lack such members on the Committee. Advisors play an important role by providing diverse viewpoints and by representing the interest of minorities and women in decisions made by county committees.

Farm and Youth Loans – FSA has targeted funds available for minority, women and beginning farmers/individuals looking to start or supplement a farm operation. There are also funds available for youth ages 10-20 to start an agricultural related money making business. For more details contact the local FSA farm loan official.

Indian Tribal Land Acquisition Program – This program extends credit to Indian Tribes that do not qualify for standard commercial loans to purchase land within their reservation. There has not been much activity in this loan program due to the following:

- Tribes must show they cannot get funding elsewhere by providing at least three letters from outside lenders, one of which must be from the BIA stating funding has been denied to the tribe
- Tribes must provide complete financial statement on all holdings: current financial statements, projected cash flow statements and past 3 years of financial statements and cash flow statements.



Conservation Reserve Program General Sign-up 43

Wisconsin Farm Service Agency



USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will hold a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up from March 12 through April 6, 2012.

CRP is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers use environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to control soil erosion, improve water and air quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 to 15 years. Accepted contracts for sign-up 43 will begin on October 1, 2012.

FSA administers CRP, while other USDA agencies and partners provide technical support. More detailed information on CRP is available in the FSA fact sheet "Conservation Reserve Program".

Submitting CRP Offers

Land that is not currently enrolled in CRP may be offered for enrollment during CRP sign-up 43. In addition, CRP participants with contracts expiring on September 30, 2012, may submit offers.

To submit CRP offers, producers must visit their local FSA office. FSA will accept offers only during the sign-up period (March 12 through April 6, 2012). To find your local FSA office, visit the USDA's website at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

Eligible Producers

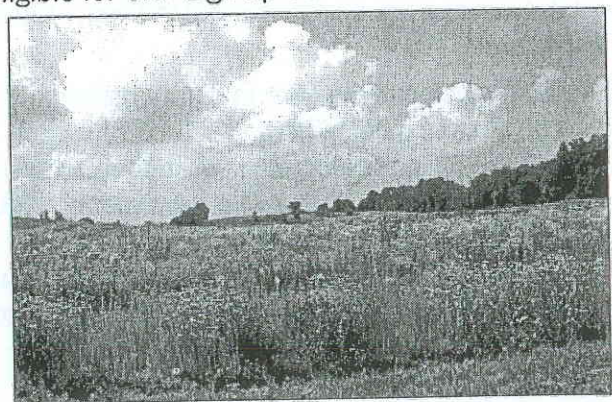
To be eligible for CRP enrollment, a producer must

have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the end of the CRP sign-up period, unless:

- the new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- the ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right of redemption in accordance with state law or;
- the circumstance of the acquisition presents adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

Eligible Land

To be eligible for placement in general sign-up CRP, land must be cropland (including field margins) that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2002 to 2007, and be physically and legally capable of being planted (no planting restrictions due to an easement or other legally binding instrument) in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Alfalfa or other multiyear grasses and legumes growing in a rotation not to exceed 12 years may be eligible for CRP sign-up 43.



Additional Cropland Requirements

In addition to the eligible land requirements, for general sign-up, cropland must meet one of the following criteria:

- have a weighted average erosion index of eight or higher;
- be expiring CRP acreage or;

- be located in a national or state CRP conservation priority area

CRP Payments

FSA provides CRP sign-up 43 participants with annual rental payments, including certain incentive payments and cost-share assistance:

Rental Payments

- In return for establishing long-term, resource conserving covers, FSA provides rental payments to participants. FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent or cash-rent equivalent. County office staff working with the producer will calculate the maximum CRP rental rate for each offer prior to enrollment. Producers may offer land below the rate to increase the likelihood that FSA will accept their offer.

Cost-Share Assistance

- FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved cover on eligible cropland. The cost-share assistance cannot exceed 50 percent of the participant's costs to establish approved practices.

Ranking CRP Offers

FSA will rank offers for CRP sign-up 43 according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). FSA collects data (primarily based on location, soils information and selected conservation practice) and determines the environmental indices for the land offered.

FSA ranks each eligible offer in comparison to all other offers and selects from that ranking. After the sign-up ends, the Secretary will decide where to make the EBI cutoff. Those who have met previous sign-up EBI thresholds are not guaranteed a contract under this sign-up. Producers may consult with local FSA and NRCS staff on how to maximize EBI points and increase the likelihood that their offer will be accepted.

More information on EBI for CRP sign-up 43 is available by reading the FSA fact sheet, "Conservation Reserve Program Sign-up 43, Environmental Benefits Index."

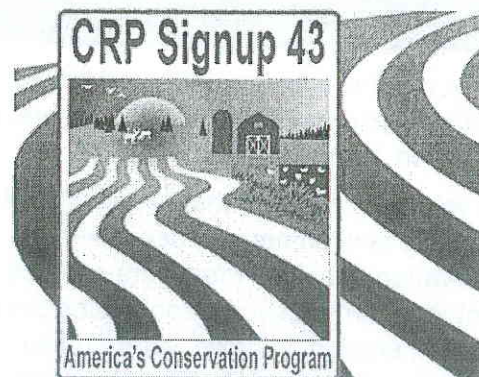
CRP Continuous Sign-up

In addition to CRP sign-up 43, producers at any time can participate in CRP continuous sign-up, in which producers can enroll the most environmentally sensitive land.

More information on CRP continuous sign-up is available in the FSA fact sheet "Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Sign-up."

For More Information

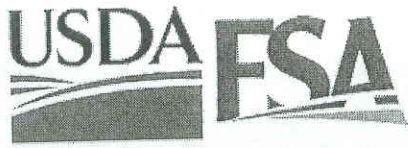
For more information on CRP, contact a local FSA office, or visit FSA's website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>.



For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your local USDA Service Center.

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Conservation Reserve Program Sign-Up 43 Environmental Benefits Index

Wisconsin Farm Service Agency

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will hold a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up from March 12 through April 6, 2012.

CRP is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers use environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolled in CRP plant or maintain long-term, resource-conserving covers to control soil erosion, improve water and air quality and enhance wildlife habitat.

More information on CRP sign-up 43 is available in the FSA fact sheet, "Conservation Reserve Program General Sign-up 43, March 12 through April 6, 2012."

Ranking CRP Offers

FSA will rank offers for CRP sign-up 43 according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). FSA collects data for each EBI factor based on the relative environmental benefits for the land offered. EBI rankings are unique for each tract of land offered into CRP.

FSA assigns each offer a point score based on the offer's relative environmental factors. Each offer competes with all other offers. FSA determines offer acceptability based on the ranking results.

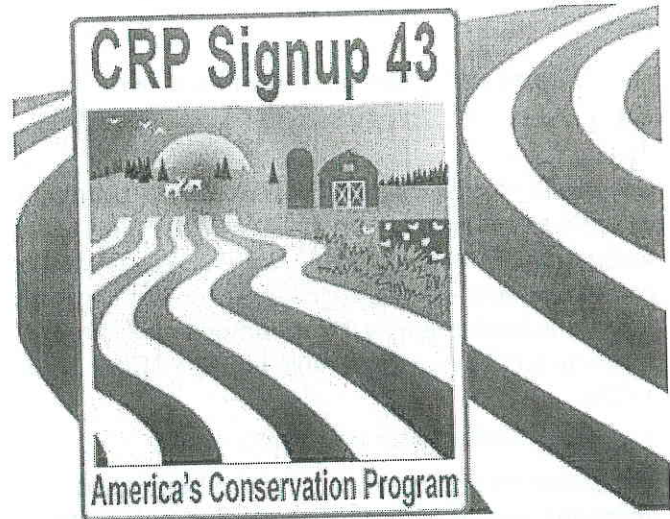
For CRP sign-up 43, FSA will use the following EBI factors to assess the environmental benefits for the land offered:

- Wildlife habitat benefits resulting from covers on contract acreage (N1);
- Water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff and leaching (N2);
- On-farm benefits from reduced erosion (N3);
- Benefits that will likely endure beyond the contract period (N4);
- Air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion (N5); and
- Cost (N6).

N1 - Wildlife Factor Point Score: 0 to 100

Factor N1 is an evaluation of the expected wildlife benefits of the offer and is comprised of three subfactors (N1a-c). The formula for N1 = N1a + N1b + N1c.

- N1a - Wildlife Habitat Cover Benefits (10 to 50 points)



This subfactor is an evaluation of the wildlife habitat cover offered. FSA assigns points for cover practice planting mixtures based on the potential value to wildlife within each state. FSA awards higher scores for cover types that are more beneficial to wildlife. Local USDA Service Centers have a list of approved planting mixes and the assigned point scores for each cover mix. Point scores are based on the weighted average score for cover mixes the producer selects. Native mixes of diverse species generally receive the highest point scores. Eligible cover practices under the N1a criteria are in Table 1.

(Producers should note that wildlife habitat cover selection is the most critical factor impacting wildlife benefits. Optimum cover types significantly increase the point score for this factor).

- N1b - Wildlife Enhancement (0, 5 or 20 points)

This subfactor provides up to 20 points for actions producers take to enhance the wildlife benefits for the offered acreage. Enhancement to the acreage is necessary in order to receive the points. For example, to receive 20 points producers may offer to establish a minimum of 10 percent of the acreage offered to pollinator habitat. Eligible practices under the N1b criteria are provided in Table 2.

- N1c - Wildlife Priority Zones (0 or 30 points)

FSA consulted with farm, commodity, wildlife and environmental groups to develop high-priority wildlife areas that would benefit from being enrolled in CRP.

For land located within this defined geographic area, points are awarded for planting cover mixes to benefit wildlife species. This subfactor provides 30 points if at least 51 percent of the offered acreage is located within the wildlife priority zone and the weighted average N1a score is greater than or equal to 40 points.

N2 - Water Quality Benefits from Reduced Erosion, Runoff, and Leaching Point Score: 0 to 100

One of CRP's main goals is to reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients and pollutants that enter our nation's waterways. Factor N2 is an evaluation of the potential impacts that CRP may have on both surface and groundwater quality. N2 is comprised of three subfactors (N2a-c). The formula for $N2 = N2a + N2b + N2c$.

- N2a - Location (0 or 30 points)

This subfactor is an evaluation of the benefits of improving ground or surface water quality impaired by crop production. States have identified water quality zones for protection. At least 51 percent of the acreage offered must be within an approved water quality zone to receive 30 points. Local USDA Service Centers have detailed maps of the approved water quality zones.

- N2b - Groundwater quality (0 to 25 points)

This subfactor is an evaluation of the predominant soils, the potential leaching of pesticides and nutrients into groundwater, and the impact to people who rely on groundwater as a primary source of drinking water. Point scores are based on the weighted average leach index for soils offered for enrollment and the population that utilizes groundwater for drinking.

- N2c - Surface water quality (0 to 45 points)

This subfactor is an evaluation of the amount of sediment that may be delivered into streams or other water courses and the human population that may be affected. This factor is determined by potential water erosion, distance to the water and the watershed in which the offer is located.

N3 - Erosion Factor Point Score: 0 to 100

CRP helps maintain the long-term productivity of the land for future generations. Factor N3 is an evaluation of the potential for the land to erode as the result of either wind or water erosion. This factor is measured using an Erodibility Index (EI). FSA awards points for the weighted average of the higher value of



either the wind or water EI, based on the results from Table 3.

N4 - Enduring Benefits Factor Point Score: 0 to 100

Factor N4 is an evaluation of the likelihood for certain practices to remain in place beyond the CRP contract period. N4 values are determined by calculating the weighted average score for all practices in Table 4.

N5 - Air Quality Benefits from Reduced Wind Erosion Point Score: 0 to 45 points

Factor N5 is an evaluation of the air quality improvements by reducing airborne dust and particulate caused by wind erosion from cropland. In addition, this factor has points for the value of CRP land that provides carbon sequestration. This factor is comprised of four subfactors (N5a-d). The formula for $N5 = N5a + N5b + N5c + N5d$.

- N5a - Wind Erosion Impacts (0 to 25 points)

FSA will determine the potential for the site to have wind erosion damage. FSA will award points based on potential wind erosion and the amount of population that may be impacted by the erosion. The potential wind erodibility is based on a climatic factor (wind speed, wind direction and duration of wind events) and soil erodibility.

- N5b - Wind Erosion Soils List (0 or 5 points)

A list of soils that are susceptible to wind and contribute significantly to nonattainment of air quality standards has been developed. These soils have a dominant component of volcanic or organic materials that are highly erodible and can be transported great distances on the wind. If at least 51 percent of the offered acres are comprised of these soils, the offer is awarded five points.

- N5c - Air Quality Zones (0 or 5 points)

FSA awards a maximum of five points if at least 51 percent of the acreage offered is located in an air quality zone that contributes to nonattainment of air quality standards and the calculated weighted wind EI is equal to or greater than three.

- N5d - Carbon Sequestration (0 to 10 points)

The subfactor is an evaluation of the benefits of sequestering greenhouse gases by practice over the expected life of the practice. FSA awards points based on a weighted average of carbon sequestration benefits for all practices using the value in Table 5.

N6 - Cost

Factor N6 is an evaluation of the cost of environmental benefits per dollar expended. This factor assists in optimizing environmental benefits per dollar for CRP rental payments. Factor N6 is comprised of two subfactors (N6a and N6b). The formula for N6 = N6a + N6b.

- N6a - Cost (point value determined after end of sign-up based on actual offer data)

Offers with lower per acre rental rates may increase chances of being accepted.

- N6b - Offer Less Than Maximum Payment Rate (0 to 25 points)

Offers equal to the maximum payment rate will receive 0 points. Offers below the maximum payment rate will receive points according to the value in Table 6.

EBI Threshold for Acceptance

After CRP sign-up 43 ends on April 6, 2012, FSA will analyze and rank all eligible offers. The Secretary of Agriculture will then determine the EBI threshold used to accept offers. Because CRP is a highly competitive program, producers who would have met previous sign-up EBI cutoffs are not guaranteed an offer acceptance under CRP sign-up 43.

Making CRP Offers More Competitive

While the United States has over 360 million acres of cropland, the maximum CRP enrollment authority is 32 million acres. As such, the demand to enroll land in CRP is expected to be greater than the amount that FSA can accept.

To make offers more competitive, producers should consider the following:

The single most important producer decision involves determining which cover practice to apply to the acreage offered. Planting or establishing the highest scoring cover mixture is the best way to improve the

chances of offer acceptance.

Producers should only offer the most environmentally sensitive land. Where possible, subdividing fields to include only the most sensitive acreage can substantially increase the point score for erosion and improve the water quality score and/or air quality score. Producers should consider enhancing covers for the benefit of wildlife or establishing pollinator habitat. In addition, producers may plant and manage hardwood or softwood trees that increase wildlife habitat values or restore certain rare and declining habitats. These potentially increase the EBI score in subfactors N1a and N4.

Producers should consider accepting a lower payment rate than the maximum amount FSA is willing to offer.

FSA also encourages producers to consult with local USDA experts on steps to take to maximize EBI points and increase the likelihood that an offer will be accepted.

For More Information

For more information on CRP, contact a local FSA office or visit FSA's CRP website <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>.

For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your local USDA Service Center.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Conservation Reserve Program Sign-Up 43 Environmental Benefits Index Tables

Practice	Point Score
CP1 – Permanent introduced grasses and legumes	
Existing stand or planting of two to three species of an introduced grass species	10
Existing stand or planting mixture (minimum of four species) of at least 3 introduced grasses and at least one forb or legume species best suited for wildlife in the area.	40
CP2 – Establishment of permanent native grasses and legumes	
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of three species) of at least two native grass species and at least one forb or legume species beneficial to wildlife.	20
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of five species) of at least 3 native grasses and at least one shrub, forb, or legume species best suited for wildlife in the area.	50
CP3 – Tree planting (general) 2/	
Southern pines (softwoods) – Solid stand of pines/softwoods (existing or planted at more than 550 trees per acre).	10
Northern conifers (softwoods) – Solid stand of conifers/softwoods (existing or planted at more than 850 trees per acre).	10
Western pines (softwoods) – Solid stand of pines/softwoods (existing or planted at more than 650 trees per acre).	10
Southern pines (softwoods) – Pines/softwoods existing or planted at a rate of 500 to 550 per acre depending upon the site index (state-developed standards) with 10 to 20 percent openings managed to a CP4D wildlife cover.	50
Northern conifers (softwoods) – Conifers/softwoods existing or planted at a rate of 750 to 850 trees per acre depending upon the site index (state-developed standards) with 10 to 20 percent openings managed to a CP4D wildlife cover.	50
Western pines (softwoods) – Pines/softwoods existing or planted at a rate of 550 to 650 per acre depending upon the site index (state-developed standards) with 10 to 20 percent openings managed to a CP4D wildlife cover.	50
CP3A – Hardwood tree planting	
Existing or planting solid stand of nonmast producing hardwood species.	10
Existing or planting solid stand of a single hard mast producing species.	20
Existing or planting mixed stand of two hardwood species best suited for wildlife in the area.	30
Existing or planting mixed stand (three or more species) of hardwood species best suited for wildlife in the area.	50
Existing or planting stand of Longleaf pine or Atlantic white cedar - Planted at rates appropriate for the site index.	50
CP4B – Permanent wildlife habitat (corridors), noncessment.	
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of four species) of either grasses, trees, shrubs, forbs, or legumes planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited for various wildlife species in the area. A wildlife conservation plan must be developed with the participant.	40
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of five species) of either predominantly native species including grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs, or trees planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited to providing wildlife habitat. Only native grasses are authorized. Introduced grasses are not authorized for and cannot be included in cover mixes for 50-point N1a scores for CP4B. A wildlife conservation plan must be developed with the participant.	50

Practice	Point Score
CP4D – Permanent wildlife habitat, noncessment	
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of four species) of either grasses, trees, shrubs, forbs, or legumes planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited for various wildlife species in the area. A wildlife conservation plan must be developed with the participant.	40
Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of five species) of either predominantly native species including grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs, or trees planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited to providing wildlife habitat. Only native grasses are authorized. Introduced grasses are not authorized for and cannot be included in cover mixes for 50-point N1a scores for CP4D. A wildlife conservation plan must be developed with the participant.	50
CP12 – Wildlife food plot 3/	
Wildlife food plots are small non-cost-shared plantings in a larger area. Wildlife food plots will never be the predominant cover.	NA
CP25 – Rare and declining habitat restoration 4/	
Existing stand or seeding or planting will be best suited for wildlife in the area. Plant species selections will be based upon Ecological Site Description data.	50
CP42 – Pollinator Habitat	
Existing stand or planting of a diverse mix of multiple species suited for pollinators.	50
Footnotes:	
1/ Cover that is existing or will be established must accomplish the purpose of the practice.	
2/ State Conservationist may revise the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) on planting rate to be consistent with CRP. The opening for southern and western pines must be a minimum of two acres up to a maximum of five acres in size for fields of 20 acres and larger. For smaller fields, the size is based on a percentage. Opening in northern conifers will be one-half to two acres in size. The opening may include buffers on the interior of the field. Field edges (borders) may be used if they are irregular in shape and average 30 feet in width. Natural regeneration of native herbaceous or shrubby vegetation with required maintenance may be permitted within open areas if it is consistent with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) technical standards and the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, and has concurrence from state fish and wildlife service (FWS) or U.S. FWS officials. Open areas of native grasses and/or shrub planting best suited for wildlife in the area is considered CP3 for EBI scoring and contract purposes.	
3/ CP12 acreage is not included in the weighted average point score. For example, a 50-acre offer with 45 acres planted to CP25 and five acres planted to a wildlife food plot would calculate a weighted average using only the 45 acres of the CP25 planting. This calculates as follows: 45 acres x 50 points (CP 25 EBI score) = 2,250 points. 2,250 points / 45 acres = 50 points.	
4/ Technical practice standards for the selected habitat type must meet applicable standards and be approved by FSA at least 30 calendar days before the beginning of sign-up.	

Practice	Point Score
Conversion of at least 51 percent of a primarily monoculture stand to a mixture of native species that provides wildlife benefits.	20
Establishment of pollinator habitat (CP42) that remains in the location of the CRP-1. The habitat size, shape, and composition must meet the following requirements:	20
Size	
CRP Parcel	Habitat Size Requirement
Less than 10 acres	At least one acre of pollinator habitat. Habitat areas must be at least 0.5 acre.
10 acres or greater	At least 10 percent of the parcel in pollinator habitat. Habitat areas must be at least 0.5 acre.
Annual or permanent food plot (CP12) that remains in the same location for the contract length, or rotated food plot (CP12) for which the location on the contract is moved during the contract length consistent with the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide up to 10 percent of a field, not to exceed 5 acres per field.	5

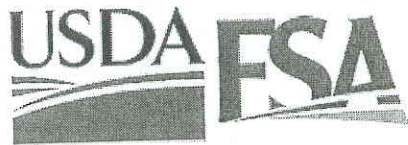
Practice	Point Score
CP3 (Tree planting - general), CP3A (Hardwood tree planting), and CP25 (Rare and declining habitat restoration) planted to trees.	10
CP25 (Rare and declining habitat restoration) planted to grass/shrub complexes, and CP42 (Pollinator Habitat).	5
CP4B (Permanent wildlife habitat (corridors), noncessment) and CP4D (Permanent wildlife habitat, noncessment).	4
CP1 (Permanent introduced grasses and legumes) and CP2 (Establishment of permanent native grasses).	3
CP12 (Wildlife food plot).	0

EI	Points	EI	Points	EI	Points
4	1	10	22	16	79
5	2	11	29	17	92
6	4	12	37	18	97
7	7	13	46	19	98
8	11	14	56	20	99
9	16	15	67	21+	100

1/ EI of less than 4 = 0 points

Percent Below Maximum Payment Rate	N6b Points
1	2
2	4
3	6
4	8
5	10
6	12
7	14
8	16
9	18
10	20
11	21
12	22
13	23
14	24
>= 15	25

Practice	Point Score
New hardwood tree, longleaf pine, and/or Atlantic white cedar plantings (CP3A) and CP25 (Rare and declining habitat restoration) if the plant community is existing or will be established to primarily trees.	30
Existing or enhanced stand of hardwood tree, longleaf pine, and/or Atlantic white cedar plantings (CP3A).	40
New pine/softwood tree (CP3)	30
Rare and declining habitat restoration (CP25) where the plant community is existing or will be established to a primarily grass and/or shrub complex.	25
Existing pine/softwood tree - original contract signed as CP3.	20
CP1, CP2, CP4B, CP4D, and CP42.	0



Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Sign-Up

Wisconsin Farm Service Agency

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers use environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. CRP participants plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water and air, control soil erosion and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance.



FSA administers CRP while other USDA agencies and partners provide technical support. More detailed information on CRP is available in the FSA fact sheet "Conservation Reserve Program."

CRP Continuous Sign-up

Environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled in CRP at any time under continuous sign-up. Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. Offers for continuous sign-up are not subject to competitive bidding. Continuous sign-up contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration.

To offer land for continuous sign-up, producers should contact their local FSA office. To find your local office, visit FSA's website at: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Contract Effective Date

For continuous sign-up, the effective date of the CRP contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval. In certain circumstances,

producers may defer the effective date for up to six months.

If the acreage is currently under CRP contract and is within one year of the scheduled expiration date, the effective date is October 1 following the expiration date.

Eligible Producers

To be eligible for CRP continuous sign-up enrollment, a producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to submitting the offer, unless:

- The new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- The ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right or redemption in accordance with state law; or
- The circumstances of the acquisition present adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

Eligible Land

To be eligible for placement in CRP, land must be cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the previous six crop years from 2002 to 2007, and is physically and legally capable of being planted (no planting restrictions due to an easement or other legally binding instrument) in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.



Eligible Practices

The land must be eligible and suitable for any of the following conservation practices:

- Riparian buffers;
- Wildlife habitat buffers;
- Wetland buffers;
- Filter strips;
- Wetland restoration;
- Grass waterways;
- Shelterbelts;
- Living snow fences;
- Contour grass strips;
- Constructed Wetlands;
- Restoration of Aquaculture Wetlands;
- Wildlife Habitat Restoration within approved State Areas for wildlife Enhancement Projects;
- Salt tolerant vegetation; and
- Shallow water areas for wildlife.

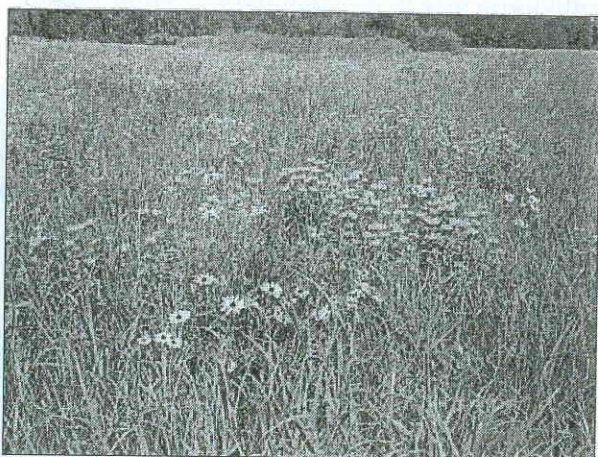
Land within an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated public wellhead area also may be eligible for enrollment on a continuous basis.

CRP Continuous Sign-Up Payments

FSA provides CRP continuous sign-up participants with annual rental payments, including certain incentives and cost-share assistance:

- Rental Payments

In return for establishing long-term, resource-conserving covers, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants. FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each



county and the average dryland cash rent (using data provided by National Agricultural Statistical Service) or cash rent equivalent as guidelines. The maximum CRP rental rate for each offer is calculated in advance of enrollment.

The per-acre annual rental rate may not exceed the calculated rate determined in advance of enrollment. While continuous sign-up acceptance is not determined by a competitive offer process, producers may elect to receive an amount less than the maximum payment rate.

- Cost-Share Assistance

-An upfront signing incentive payment (CRP-SIP) up to \$100 per acre for eligible participants who enroll certain practices. The one-time SIP will be made after the contract is approved and all payment eligibility criteria are met; and

-A practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of the eligible installation costs for eligible participants who enroll certain practices. The one-time PIP will be issued after the practice is installed, eligible costs are verified and other payment eligibility criteria are met.

For More Information

For more information on CRP continuous sign-up, contact a local FSA office, or visit FSA's website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>.

For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your local USDA Service Center.

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