CREP

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Good Stewardship Has Its Rewards

CREP is a voluntary program that pays landowners rent, a signing bonus and all the costs for establishing buffers along creeks, ditches & wetlands. Participants receive annual rental payments in return for land that is removed from production and grazing, under a 10 to15 year agreement.

Overview

The CREP program pays for wooded buffers and/or a combination of hedgerows, filter strips & wetland restoration. The native plant buffers improve fish and wildlife habitat, increase stream stability, and contribute to improved water quality.

In addition, the program may pay for livestock exclusion fencing, livestock watering facilities, and in the case of small streams, livestock crossings.

Buffer Design and Program Flexibility

The boundary of CREP buffers is flexible & can be configured to meet land-owner needs. Landowners can enroll all or a portion of eligible streams, ditches & wetlands on their land.

Site Improvement

Sites are prepared by removing invasive non-native plants such as Himalayan Blackberries and Reed Canary Grass. A mix of native trees and shrubs that are well-adapted to the local conditions and site are planted.

Buffer Maintenance

CREP covers 100% of buffer maintenance costs for the first 3-5 years after planting. Most projects are well established after that time period. Further maintenance through the length of the contract should be minimal. Whatcom Conservation District technicians will monitor the buffer & develop maintenance prescriptions that ensure the successful establishment of the stock.

Program Options

<u>Riparian Forest Buffers</u>: 35'-180' wide. Eligible on rivers and streams that provide habitat for salmonid fish that migrate to the ocean.

<u>Hedgerows:</u> 15' wide. Eligible on streams and drainages with a channel less than 15 feet wide. Can reduce ditch maintenance and improve & channel conditions. Mostly planted with shrubs.

<u>Wetland Buffers:</u> 20'-120' wide. Protect wetland functions.

<u>Wetland Restoration:</u> Includes surrounding wetland buffers. May include herbaceous plants as well as native trees, shrubs. Provides floodwater storage & attenuation. Maintains surface base flows in streams. Practice is eligible on cropland only.

Buffer Development

Whatcom
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

How Can We Help?

Whatcom Conservation District Staff will provide the technical assistance to design, install & maintain the buffer. Please contact WCD with questions or to schedule a meeting with a resource specialist to discuss your restoration options.

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