

Name of Practice: CREP WILDLIFE HABITAT BUFFER
VACS Program Specification for No. CP-29

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's CREP Wildlife Habitat Buffer which are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice provides the state rental portion of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) for herbaceous wildlife habitat buffer installation (i.e. composed of grasses, shrubs and forbs) on marginal pastureland along water features.

The purpose of this practice is to improve water quality and wildlife habitat by establishing a herbaceous buffer along water features in marginal pastureland.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. This is the rental payment for the installation of a herbaceous buffer in conjunction with a CREP contract with FSA.
2. Applicable in marginal pastureland only.
3. FSA determines eligibility.
4. See applicable state BMP specifications for technical guidance:
 - i. CRSL-6 Grazing Land Protection (used when the water source is a well, spring development or pond) to report the linear feet of stream bank protection.
 - ii. CRWP-2 Stream Protection (used when the water source is a hardened access) to report the linear feet of stream bank protection.
 - iii. CRWQ-1 Grass Filter Strips (used to report the acreage of the
 - iv. herbaceous wildlife habitat buffer planted. This buffer planting must be at least 50 feet in average width.
 - v. CRLF-1 reporting marker will be used in conjunction with CP-29 (rental practice) and the WQ-1 (Filter Strip) practice to report the linear feet of stream bank protected when livestock are removed from access to the CREP restored wildlife habitat buffer, rather than installing buffer fencing (reported as linear feet protected under a WP-2 or SL-6 practice).
5. This practice is subject to the standards of the CP-29 contained in the FSA 2-CRP Handbook and the CREP amendment to the CRP Handbook. The buffer shall be a minimum average width of **50 feet** from the top of the stream bank, up to one-third of the flood plain not to exceed 120 feet.

6. All practice components implemented must be maintained for the lifespan of the CREP contract. By accepting either a cost-share payment or a state tax credit for this practice, the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the District throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost-share and/or tax credits.

C. Rate(s)

The state rental rate is \$5 per acre, per full year of the contract (as identified in field 9 of the CRP-1) for the life of the contract paid in a lump sum amount when all BMPs in conjunction with a CREP contract have been installed.

D. Administrative Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and District staff in consultation, where appropriate and based on the controlling standard, with DCR, Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner(s), NRCS, DOF, and VCE. Individuals certifying technical need and technical practice installation shall have appropriate certifications as identified above and/or Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA) for the designed and installed component(s). All practices are subject to spot check procedures and any other quality control measures.

Revised April 2023