



Update for Soil & Water Conservation Districts

OCTOBER 2004

WRAPPING UP THE FIRST YEAR

Success Stories Sought

September 30th brought us to the close of the first Federal Fiscal Year of the NYS CREP. What a year it's been! The CREP agreement was signed last Fall, and SWCD, NRCS and FSA folks leapt into action. We already have about 1500 acres in active NYS CREP contracts! This means that the conservation plans have been approved, the contracts have been signed, and some producers have even gotten payments. Way to go, all of you!

We will be putting together an annual report on the status of NYS CREP, and we need some "success stories." You may not have practices on the ground yet, but please take a moment to consider whether you have a notable CREP success in your county. Have you gotten several farms to sign up in a critical area? Do you have one particularly important site to highlight? If you have a story to tell (especially with photos), please contact Emily Svenson to have your story included in the annual report. This is a prime opportunity to put your district in the spotlight.

Thanks to all for a super first year!

COME IN FROM THE COLD TO LEARN ABOUT CREP

Three regional training sessions will be offered this winter to explain how to prepare a CREP conservation plan that will meet program requirements, consider all natural resource issues, and establish clear expectations for the producer. A sample conservation plan is being developed for you to model your plans after.

Step-by-step instructions and a sample to duplicate – it doesn't get much better than that, folks!

Keep an eye out for an upcoming announcement of dates and locations. If there are specific topics you'd like to see included in the training, please drop me an e-mail: emily.svenson@agmkt.state.ny.us.



PARTNERSHIP PAVES THE WAY

Did you ever wonder if there's anyone out there who wants to hear your suggestions on CREP? Actually, there is a NYS CREP Steering Committee that meets every couple of months to work out the issues encountered as this new program gets up and running. The committee is comprised of representatives from FSA, NRCS, the State Committee, Ag & Markets, NYCDEA, NYS DEC, NYS DOH, and Delaware County SWCD. If you ever have issues that you would like the Steering Committee to consider, you can submit them to Emily Svenson. The next Steering Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, November 30.

Like the Logo?

CREP has a new look! The acronym we've all grown to love has undergone a makeover. If you would like to use the new bluebird logo for your publications, please contact Emily or Michele for an electronic file.

ELIGIBLE WATERSHEDS

In July, FSA released a final revised listing of watersheds eligible for NYS CREP. It is important to note that for each 11-digit hydrologic unit code (HUC) number listed, any land in that HUC can be considered for NYS CREP. The notice also clarified that public wellheads need not be in eligible HUCs in order to be eligible for NYS CREP. Thanks to Allien LaPierre for getting the new list approved!

A map of the eligible HUCs was recently e-mailed to each county FSA office. Contact Emily if you need a copy.

HAVE YOU HEARD.....?

Have farmers in your county heard about NYS CREP? Chances are they haven't, unless you or your FSA or NRCS partners have informed them. Now that the program is up and running, it's a great time to get the word out.

In August, we sent you a packet of outreach materials, including brochures, a sample news article, and a Q&A sheet for farmers. Here are some ideas on how to use them:

PLANT A SEED

Say you're working with a farmer to complete an AEM Tier II assessment, and you note that a buffer would be useful. This is a perfect opportunity to mention CREP. Even if your District is not providing technical services for CREP, you can still hand the farmer a brochure and Q&A sheet and let him know that CREP could be a great way to cost-share his buffer.

STOP THE PRESSES

In your next District newsletter, add an article about the NYS CREP program. The outreach packet you received included a sample news article for you to cut, paste and personalize.

PUT IT ON DISPLAY

We have a tabletop display available for you to borrow. This display is quite compact and can easily fit in a car, so you can bring it along to events or just set it up outside your office for a few days. Please contact Michele Moore at 518-485-5749 to borrow the display.

RUN THE NUMBERS

Take a minute to familiarize yourself with the economic benefits of CREP – cost share, rental payments, incentive payments, etc. Maybe you could even calculate a couple of possible scenarios. That way you'll have dollar figures on the tip of your tongue when talking with farmers.

MAKE WAY FOR DUCKLINGS

An ideal way to use CREP is to identify a stream corridor where a few buffers would go a long way. Is there a cluster of farms along a stream where a continuous stream buffer could be established to control runoff and provide a corridor for wildlife? If so, this would be an excellent spot to target your CREP outreach.

WELL, WELL, WELL

CREP isn't just for riparian buffers! Highly erodible slopes and wellhead protection areas are eligible, too. If there is a public wellhead with a farm or two nearby, inform those farmers about CREP. The wellhead does not need to be in a CREP-eligible watershed.

CREP'S PLACE IN THE BASIN

When you're looking at watershed needs in your county - whether it's through AEM strategic planning, your County Water Quality Coordinating Committee, etc. – consider the watersheds eligible for CREP and think about whether riparian buffers or conservation cover on steep slopes would meet the needs of those watersheds. Focus your outreach efforts on places where the program fits the needs of the watershed!

To request more brochures or to borrow the CREP display, please contact Michele Moore at 518-485-5749 or michele.moore@agmkt.state.ny.us.

WORKING WITH WILLOWS

At the last NYS CREP Steering Committee meeting, the group heard a presentation from Tim Volk of SUNY-ESF about the use of willows to stabilize streambanks and slopes and offer wildlife habitat while providing a source of biomass for energy production. There was a lengthy discussion about how willow planting could fit in to the CREP program to meet program goals while providing a source of income to farmers. Stay tuned for details!



For more information about NYS CREP, contact Emily Svenson at the NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee: 518-457-8886 or emily.svenson@agmkt.state.ny.us.