



# Site Condition Evaluation & Environmental Benefits Report

**Background**

The New York State Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is a collaborative effort between the USDA and the State of New York. The goal of this program is to restore permanent vegetative cover on 40,000 acres of cropland and/or marginal pasture over a 5-year time period. Vegetative cover will improve water quality by reducing the amount of sediment, nutrients and pathogens entering waterways and drinking water supplies from adjacent agricultural lands.

**Purpose of the site condition evaluation:**

The purpose of this worksheet is to record a visual assessment of a site before and after CREP practices are implemented. This will provide documentation of the environmental impact of the CREP program. The “before” section of the worksheet should be completed as part of the planning process before CREP practices are installed. The “after” section of the worksheet should be completed after all CREP practices are complete and certified. It is only necessary to complete the section that applies to the appropriate CREP category (riparian buffer, highly erodible field or wellhead protection area).

**Purpose of the environmental benefits report:**

USDA Farm Service Agency requires that all CREP contracts installed under the NYS CREP report environmental benefits derived from this program. In order to meet these requirements, the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee require that an Environmental Benefits Report (EBR) be completed immediately following the installation and certification of CREP practices and complementary practices.

**Participant Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to contact \_\_\_\_\_

**Site Information**

CREP Contract # \_\_\_\_\_ AEM Farmer ID # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location of property \_\_\_\_\_ X coordinate \_\_\_\_\_ Y coordinate \_\_\_\_\_  
 Town and County \_\_\_\_\_  
 Watershed: Basin \_\_\_\_\_ 11-digit HUA \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of CREP site:       riparian buffer       highly erodible field       wellhead protection area  
 Current land use:       annually tilled       pasture       crop rotation \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Predominant soil type \_\_\_\_\_  
 Does the site flood?       never       rarely (1 year out of 5, or less)  
                                   occasionally (2 years out of 5)       frequently (once in two years or more)

What type of wetlands are present on the site?

- none  converted wetland (CW)  
 farmed wetland (FW)  farmed wetland – pasture & hayland (FWP)  
 prior converted cropland (PC)  other \_\_\_\_\_

Resource concerns:  wildlife  water quality  erosion  flooding

**Status AEM Planning**

Potential pollutants to address:  nutrients  pathogens  sediment  pesticides

Were CREP practices selected through AEM planning?  yes  no

What level of AEM planning has been achieved? Tier \_\_\_\_\_

## CREP SITE CONDITION EVALUATION

► **RIPARIAN BUFFER** *(Complete this section only if the CREP project site is a riparian buffer.)*

Site Condition Factors <i>Please enter the number that best describes the current site condition.</i>	Condition Before	Condition After
What does the water look like? 1. Water is clear along the entire reach with a diverse aquatic plant community. <b>AND/OR</b> No noticeable film on submerged objects or rocks. 2. Fairly clear or slightly greenish or cloudy water along the entire reach; moderate algal growth present. 3. Greenish water of considerable cloudiness most of the time along the entire reach; rocks or submerged objects are covered with heavy green or olive green film, especially during the summer months. 4. Pea-green, gray or brown water along the entire reach; severe algal blooms create thick algal mats.		
What is the condition of the streambank/shore? 1. Bank/shore is stable. Bank is well vegetated with little or no evidence of erosion. Banks are not undercut, and there are no trees falling into the waterbody. 2. Stable to moderately stable. Any eroding slopes are at a less than 3:1 slope and no trees have fallen into the stream. 3. Moderately unstable. Stream flows tend to be high (flooding occurs 1 year out of 5 or less). Areas of active erosion with banks generally steeper than 3:1; some slope failures are apparent. Trees have fallen into the stream. 4. Unstable banks/shore with typically high flows. Erosion is evident throughout the reach with banks of 1:1 slope or greater. Numerous areas of slope failure, with numerous mature trees falling into the stream annually.		

<p>What is the condition of the existing vegetation in the riparian zone?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Natural vegetation extends two active channel widths on each side OR extends 100 ft. on each side of stream. There are no concentrated flows through the riparian zone.</li> <li>2. Natural vegetation extends one channel width on each side or 35 ft. on each side of the stream. Any concentrated flows are from areas buffered with vegetated filter strips and/or grassed waterways.</li> <li>3. Natural vegetation extends at least 15 feet on each side of the channel. <b>OR</b> Filtering function of vegetation is moderately compromised by concentrated flows.</li> <li>4. Natural vegetation is less than 15 feet wide or nonexistent on either side. <b>OR</b> Filtering function of vegetation is severely compromised by concentrated flows.</li> </ol>		
<p>Do livestock have access to the stream?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Livestock are fenced from the waterbody and the floodplain. <b>AND</b> Livestock are separated from waterbody by a riparian forest buffer or filter strip meeting NRCS standards.</li> <li>2. Livestock are fenced from the waterbody <b>AND</b> Livestock are not separated from the waterbody by a buffer or filter meeting NRCS standards. <b>OR</b> Livestock cross the stream over a limited access constructed culvert or stone crossing.</li> <li>3. Livestock is not fenced from the waterbody. The stream is crossed in many places and is used as a water source for livestock.</li> <li>4. Livestock are not fenced from the waterbody and have denuded the vegetation and/or damaged the bank.</li> </ol>		
<p>When flooding occurs does it scour (erode) the site?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No erosion is occurring from flooding.</li> <li>4. Flood waters erode site.</li> </ol>		
<p>Is there a conservation plan in place on the crop fields contributing runoff to the CREP site?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is AEM Tier 3B or 3C plan (CNMP or whole farm plan) in place that controls erosion to a level of "T" or less. <b>AND</b> Meets the NRCS standard for Nutrient Management (590). <b>AND</b> The producer follows the plan and keeps it up to date.</li> <li>2. There is an AEM Tier 3A plan in place addressing either erosion, to a level of "T" or less, or nutrient management (to NRCS standard 590). <b>AND</b> Plan is being followed and kept up to date.</li> <li>3. A Food Security Act plan is in place to address erosion. <b>AND</b> The plan is being followed.</li> <li>4. Plan is in place that is largely ignored. <b>OR</b> There is no conservation plan in place addressing erosion or nutrient management.</li> </ol>		

<p>To what extent is the stream corridor forested?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a continuous forested buffer along the stream allowing wildlife to move freely.</li> <li>2. A forested buffer exists on this site, but a continuous wildlife corridor does not exist along the stream.</li> <li>3. No forested buffer exists on this site, but forested buffers do exist on both sides of the site. (Establishment of a forested buffer would connect the existing patches of forest to create a wildlife corridor.)</li> <li>4. No forested buffer exists on this site. Forested patches are scarce or widely scattered along the stream corridor.</li> </ol>		
<p>What is the degree of canopy cover over the stream (for coldwater fisheries)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. &gt;50% of water surface in reach is shaded.</li> <li>2. 20-50% of water surface in the reach is shaded.</li> <li>3. &lt;20% of water surface in the reach is shaded.</li> </ol>		
<p>If wetlands exist on the site, are they being managed to ensure maximum functioning?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wetlands managed to enhance existing or desired functions.</li> <li>2. Wetlands are not actively managed. There is no agricultural use.</li> <li>3. Wetlands are not actively managed. Livestock have access to wetlands.</li> <li>4. Wetlands are not actively managed. Livestock frequently graze in the wetlands.</li> </ol>		
<p>If wetlands exist on the site, does an upland buffer strip exist between wetland and cropland?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wide upland buffer strip (greater than 100 ft). Natural or planted upland vegetation. Buffer strip is permanently retired from agriculture.</li> <li>2. Narrow upland buffer strip (25-100 ft). Natural or planted upland vegetation. Buffer strip is permanently retired from agriculture.</li> <li>3. Narrow upland buffer strip (less than 25 ft). Upland vegetation is cut or grazed annually.</li> <li>4. Upland buffer strip does not exist between cropland and the wetland or pond.</li> </ol>		
<p>If potential restorable wetlands exist on the site, at what level are they functioning?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wetland fully functioning and providing multiple resource benefits (wildlife habitat, filtration of runoff, etc.)</li> <li>2. Wetland functioning somewhat and providing at least one resource benefit.</li> <li>3. Wetland exists but needs further management to promote its functioning (i.e., need to reduce sedimentation from eroding upland field).</li> <li>4. Wetland previously converted to agricultural production. Could be restored to provide multiple resource benefits.</li> </ol>		

► **WELLHEAD PROTECTION AREA** (Complete this section only if the CREP project site is a wellhead protection area.)

<b>Site Condition Factors</b> <i>Please enter the number that best describes the current site condition.</i>	<b>Condition Before</b>	<b>Condition After</b>
<p>Is there a conservation plan in place for the field?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Field is planted to permanent vegetative cover according to a conservation plan.</li> <li>2. There is AEM Tier 3B or 3C plan (CNMP or whole farm plan) in place that includes nutrient management and pest management. <b>AND</b> Meets the NRCS standard for Nutrient Management (590). <b>AND</b> The producer follows the plan and keeps it up to date.</li> <li>3. There is an AEM Tier 3A plan in place addressing either nutrient management or pest management. <b>AND</b> Plan is being followed and kept up to date.</li> <li>4. Plan is in place that is largely ignored. <b>OR</b> There is no conservation plan in place addressing nutrient management or pest management.</li> </ol>		
<p>Does the site provide habitat for wildlife?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The site is planted to permanent vegetation to provide food and shelter for wildlife, and it connects two or more existing wildlife habitat areas to provide a travel corridor.</li> <li>2. The site is planted to permanent vegetation and is managed to provide food and shelter for wildlife.</li> <li>3. The field is cropped with efforts made to enhance wildlife habitat, including tillage methods that leave winter food for wildlife or management of hedgerows to provide shelter for wildlife.</li> <li>4. The site is continuously cropped with no efforts made to support wildlife.</li> </ol>		

► **HIGHLY ERODIBLE FIELD** (Complete this section only if the CREP project site is a highly erodible field.)

<b>Site Condition Factors</b> <i>Please enter the number that best describes the current site condition.</i>	<b>Condition Before</b>	<b>Condition After</b>
<p>Is there a conservation plan in place for the field?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Field is planted to permanent vegetative cover according to a conservation plan.</li> <li>2. There is AEM Tier 3B or 3C plan (CNMP or whole farm plan) in place that controls erosion to a level of “T” or less. <b>AND</b> Meets the NRCS standard for Nutrient Management (590). <b>AND</b> The producer follows the plan and keeps it up to date.</li> <li>3. There is an AEM Tier 3A plan in place addressing either erosion, to a level of “T” or less, or nutrient management (to NRCS standard 590). <b>AND</b> Plan is being followed and kept up to date.</li> <li>4. Plan is in place that is largely ignored. <b>OR</b> There is no conservation plan in place addressing erosion or nutrient management.</li> </ol>		

<p>Does the site provide habitat for wildlife?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The site is planted to permanent vegetation and is managed to provide food and shelter for wildlife.</li> <li>2. The field is cropped with efforts made to enhance wildlife habitat, including tillage methods that leave winter food for wildlife or management of hedgerows to provide shelter for wildlife.</li> <li>3. The site is continuously cropped with no efforts made to support wildlife.</li> </ol>		
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## NOTES

**“Before” Site Condition Evaluation**

Completed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Notes \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**“After” Site Condition Evaluation**

Completed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Notes \_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

# CREP ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS REPORT

<b>Conservation Buffer Practice Information</b>	<p><b>For Riparian Buffers:</b></p> <p>Length of Streambank Buffered _____ (ft)  <i>(Note: measure both sides if both sides buffered)</i></p> <p>Average Riparian Forest Buffer Width:          Zone 1 _____ Zone 2 _____ Zone 3 _____</p> <p>Watershed Acres Above Buffer _____</p> <p>Current Land Use Above Buffer _____</p> <p>Number and Type of Animals Excluded _____</p> <p>Did you receive funding from the NYS Ag NPS program for installing CREP practices?  <input type="checkbox"/> yes    <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>If yes, list Grant Contract # _____</p>																				
<b>Complementary Practice Information</b>	<p><b>NRCS Conservation Practices Installed:</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">Practice Code #</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 45%;">Practice Name</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;">Amount/Unit</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;">Date Installed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> <tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> <tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> <tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Practice Code #	Practice Name	Amount/Unit	Date Installed	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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<b>Environmental Benefit</b> <i>(to be completed by NYSSWCC)</i>	<p>Please list all complementary practices installed on this farm:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>																				
	<p>Did you receive funding from the NYS Ag NPS program for installing complementary practices?  <input type="checkbox"/> yes    <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>If yes, please list grant contract # _____</p>																				
	<p>Total Acres: _____      Pounds of P Reduced: _____</p> <p>Tons of Sediment Reduced: _____      Pounds of N Reduced: _____</p>																				

***Please return the CREP Environmental Benefits Report, along with the CREP Site Condition Evaluation to the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee office:  
 NYS SWCC, 10B Airline Dr, Albany, NY 12235 fax: 518-457-3412***