

**Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
2006 Annual Report**

**Submitted by
Indiana State Department of Agriculture,
Division of Soil Conservation**

I. Executive Summary

The Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) focuses on the installation of conservation buffers and restoring wetlands within the Tippecanoe, Upper White, and Pigeon/Highland River Watersheds (Map 1). Runoff within these 3 watersheds contributes high non-point source sediment, nutrient, pesticide and herbicide losses from agricultural lands. This agreement was designed to help Indiana landowners address water quality. In 2006, landowners committed to installing conservation buffers and wetlands on over 2,000 acres of Indiana's most environmentally sensitive lands.

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture maintains 4 full-time CREP Coordinators in the field to assist landowners, create Conservation Plans, and oversee the daily CREP activities, but there are many partners involved with the promotions, administration, and funding of the Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. The links below are examples of just a few of the websites that have Indiana CREP information posted for promotions to landowners. Websites as well as numerous newsletter articles and flyers regarding CREP have been directly mailed to individuals within these targeted watersheds.

<http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/programs/crep/index.html>

http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/news/cultivating_connections/issue%202.11/Cultivating%20Connections.htm

<http://vandswcd.org/IDNR.htm>

The current Indiana CREP Agreement is for 7000 acres. The first CREP participants began signing up for the program in January of 2006, therefore in less than 10 months nearly 1/3 of the acres under this agreement have been obligated (Table 1). For the purposes of this report land acres are considered obligated for the Indiana CREP once the State's Letter of Intent has been signed by an interested landowner.

Table 1
Indiana CREP Obligated Acres
and Dollars

Oct-06	Letters of Intent	Obligated Acres	Obligated Funds
Tippecanoe River	227	1553.70	\$210,340.00
Upper White River	61	468.60	\$153,060.00
Pigeon/Highland Rivers	54	159.70	\$22,180.00
TOTAL	342	2182.00	\$385,580.00

Eligible Practices

The Indiana CREP offers a menu of conservation practices to address non-point source pollution runoff issues. The following is a list of practices offered through this program.

For riparian areas, the following practices are available provided the land is adjacent to an eligible stream, river or water body, and:

- has a minimum average width of 50 feet and a maximum average width of 120 feet (up to 300 feet in alluvial soils) or,
- has a minimum average width of 35 feet and a maximum average width of 180 feet (up to an average width of 300 feet in alluvial soils)
- practices include CP2 – Establishment of Permanent Native Grass, CP3A – Hardwood Tree Planting, CP4D – Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement CP22 – Riparian Buffer

For buffer areas, the following practices are available provided the land is adjacent to an eligible stream, river or water body, and:

- has a minimum average width of 35 feet and a maximum average width of 120 feet (up to 300 feet average width in alluvial soils)
- practices include CP21 – Filter Strips

For wetland areas, the following practices are available:

- CP23 – Wetland Restoration is available within the 100-year floodplain
- CP23a – Wetland Restoration – Non-floodplain
- CP31 – Bottom Timber Establishment on Wetland

Obligated Acres for Federal Fiscal Year 2006

In Federal Fiscal Year 2006, landowners signed up for a variety of the Conservation Practices offered through CREP. Between the three watersheds, Filter Strips has been the most popular practice among landowners comprising of 75.24% of the sign-up thus far (Table 2 & Chart 1). Tables 3, 4 and 5 below illustrate the total number of acres obligated for each practice within each watershed and Table 2 displays the summary totals.

Table 2

Indiana CREP Totals - Obligated Acres by Conservation Practice

Conservation Practice	Acres	%
Permanent Native Grass(CP2)	0.00	0.00%
Hardwood Tree Planting(CP3A)	19.10	0.88%
Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement(CP4D)	0.00	0.00%
Riparian Buffer(CP22)	52.00	2.38%
Filter Strips(CP21)	1642.00	75.25%
Wetland Restoration(CP23)	0.00	0.00%
Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain(CP23A)	154.50	7.08%
Bottomland Timber Establishment(CP31)	314.40	14.40%
	2182.00	100.00%

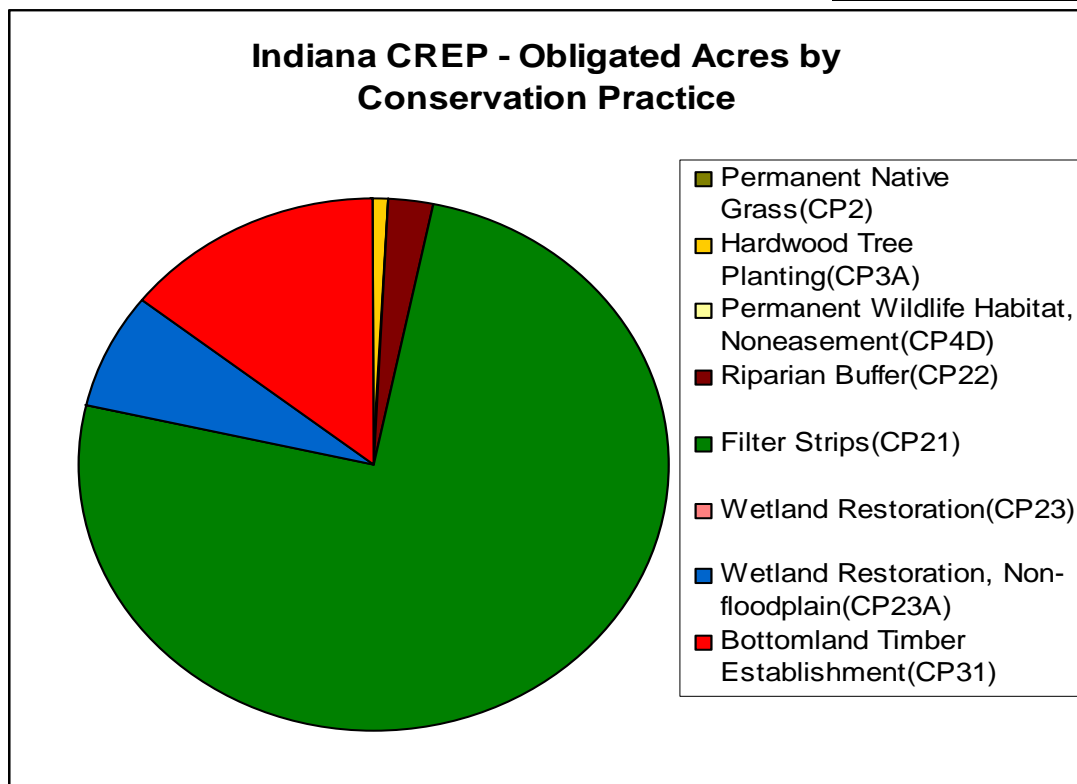


Chart 1

Table 3
Tippecanoe River Watershed – Obligated Acres by
Conservation Practice

Conservation Practice	Acres
Permanent Native Grass(CP2)	0.00
Hardwood Tree Planting(CP3A)	0.00
Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Noneasement(CP4D)	0.00
Riparian Buffer(CP22)	0.60
Filter Strips(CP21)	1383.80
Wetland Restoration(CP23)	0.00
Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain(CP23A)	154.50
Bottomland Timber Establishment(CP31)	14.80
	1553.70

Table 4
Upper White River Watershed – Obligated Acres by
Conservation Practice

Conservation Practice	Acres
Permanent Native Grass(CP2)	0.00
Hardwood Tree Planting(CP3A)	0.00
Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement(CP4D)	0.00
Riparian Buffer(CP22)	49.80
Filter Strips(CP21)	119.20
Wetland Restoration(CP23)	0.00
Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain(CP23A)	0.00
Bottomland Timber Establishment(CP31)	299.6
	468.60

Table 5
Pigeon/Highland River Watershed – Obligated Acres by
Conservation Practice

Conservation Practice	Acres
Permanent Native Grass(CP2)	0.00
Hardwood Tree Planting(CP3A)	19.10
Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Noneasement(CP4D)	0.00
Riparian Buffer(CP22)	1.60
Filter Strips(CP21)	139.00
Wetland Restoration(CP23)	0.00
Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain(CP23A)	0.00
Bottomland Timber Establishment(CP31)	0.00
	159.70

II. Financial Contribution

The Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program provides incentives to landowners through both state and federal contributions. Through the CREP, eligible Indiana participants who establish one of the prescribed conservation practices shall receive incentive, cost-share, and rental payments as outlined below.

Federal Incentives:

- **Signing Incentive Payment:** A one-time payment of \$100 per acre for land enrolled in CP21, CP22 or CP 31. This payment may be made after the contract has been signed and is approved for 14-15 year contracts.
- **Practice Incentive Payment:** A one-time payment equal to 40 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost to establish CP21, CP22 or CP31.
- **Wetland Restoration Practice Incentive Payment:** A one-time incentive payment that is equal to 25 percent of the eligible reimbursable hydrology restoration costs for CP23 and CP23A.
- **Cost-share Assistance:** Cost-share of up to 50 percent to install approved conservation practices.
- **Annual Rental Payment:** An annual payment for the life of the contract. The payment consists of the sum of three components:

Base Soil Rental Rate: Determined by calculating the normal CRP weighted average soil rental rate for the three predominant soil types using the current posted applicable local soil rental rates for cropland.

Incentive Payment of 40 percent of the base rental rate without regard to other incentive payments for all practices offered and eligible for CREP.

Annual Maintenance Payment according to regular continuous CRP enrollments.

State Incentives:

- **Pay to participants a one-time** Clean Water Incentive Payment (CWIP) to participants of \$400 per acre for land enrolled in CP3A, CP22, CP23, CP23A or CP31.
- **Pay to participants a one-time** CWIP to participants of \$100 per acre for land enrolled in CP2, CP4D or CP21.
- **Make direct, one-time payments** of \$500 for CP3A, CP22 and CP31 acres voluntarily enrolled in permanent easements in a priority area within the Upper White River Watershed.
- **Make direct, one-time payments** of \$500 per acre for CP3A, CP22 and CP31 acres voluntarily enrolled in state permanent easements in a priority area within the Tippecanoe Watershed; or \$250 per acre for CP3A, CP4D, CP22, CP23, CP23a and CP31 acres voluntarily enrolled in 10-year contract extensions in a priority area within the Tippecanoe Watershed.

The provisions within the Indiana CREP agreement state that:

“The State of Indiana will **contribute at least 20 percent** of the overall costs of implementing the CREP through a combination of annual in-kind services and direct program costs.”

Incentive Payments - Paid

Of the state’s 20% contribution, 10% shall be in the form of incentive payments to landowners for practice installation. According to their records, as of October 2006 the Indiana Farm Service Agency has contractually obligated 1,092 acres to the sum of \$3,026,206. As of October 2006 the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation has obligated 2182.0 acres to the sum of \$385,580. The difference in obligated acres simply occurs due to the difference in the application process. Acres are obligated through Indiana’s CREP sign-up process earlier than the federal process. Conversely the federal contracts are typically finalized before the state’s contracting process is finished. The state payments are not issued until the conservation practice has been installed which triggers the finalization of the contract. As of October 2006, no state CREP incentives have been issued, however several projects have recently been verified as complete and payments are being processed.

Incentive Payments – Obligated for Payment

The numbers of completed contracts received by the state office for payment processing has been increasing weekly. The administrations and systems in place for placing payments is now effectively in place. As of October 11, 2006 contracts totaling \$26,720 have been received and payments to these landowners who have installed CREP practices will occur within days.

In-kind Services

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation implements the state’s portion of the CREP responsibilities. The CREP responsibilities include working directly with interested landowners to develop conservation plans, CREP sign-up, tracking, and CREP promotions. To accomplish these tasks the ISDA-DSC and State Soil Conservation Board has allocated funds and grants to Soil and Water Conservation Districts and ISDA-DSC staffing. The ISDA-DSC/SWCD investment for staff resources to administer and provide technical assistance for the CREP is well in excess of \$200,000 annually.

Within the ISDA-DSC, 4 full-time Resource Specialists stationed within the watersheds have been directly assigned to implement the CREP. The ISDA-DSC has also assigned supporting staff to aid in tracking, payments, mapping and statewide coordination. The State Soil Conservation Board directs the use of Clean Water Indiana funds which are not only used for the direct payments to CREP landowners, but also for granting funds to Soil and Water Conservation Districts. These districts receiving Clean

Water Indiana Grants (CWI) utilize the funds to market conservation programs such as CREP or perhaps hire additional staff for technical assistance. See Table 6 below.

<http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/swcd/cwi/grants.html>

The purpose of the CWI Grants Program is to provide financial assistance to SWCDs to implement conservation practices to reduce non-point sources of water pollution through education, technical assistance, training, and cost sharing programs.

Aside from the funds and administrative assistance issued through the ISDA-DSC, Indiana is fortunate to have a significant amount of additional conservation activities occurring within the three watersheds which enhances the environmental goals outlined in the Indiana CREP agreement. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife administers the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program. This is a state funded program focused on ensuring the continued viability of public-access lakes and streams by utilizing a watershed approach to reduce non-point source sediment and nutrient pollution of Indiana's surface waters to a level that meets or surpasses state water quality standards. See Table 6 below.

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/lare/>

To accomplish this goal, the LARE Program provides technical and financial assistance for qualifying projects. Approved grant funding may be used for one or more of the following purposes:

- Investigations to determine what problems are affecting a lake/lakes or a stream segment.
- Evaluation of identified problems and effective action recommendations to resolve those problems.
- Cost-sharing with land users in a watershed above upstream from a project lake or stream for installation or application of sediment and nutrient reducing practices on their land.
- Matching federal funds for qualifying projects.
- Watershed management plan development.
- Feasibility studies to define appropriate lake and stream remediation measures.
- Engineering designs and construction of remedial measures.
- Water monitoring of public lakes.

Another state agency that administers a grant program which has been beneficial to conservation within the Pigeon/Highland, Upper White, and Tippecanoe Watersheds is the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). IDEM is responsible for administering 319 funds within Indiana. See Table 6 below.

The Federal Clean Water Act Section 319(h) provides funding for various types of projects that work to reduce non-point source water pollution. Funds may be used to conduct assessments, develop and implement TMDLs and watershed management plans, provide technical assistance, demonstrate new technology and provide education and outreach. Organizations eligible for funding include nonprofit organizations, universities,

and local, State or Federal government agencies. A 40% (non-federal) in-kind or cash match of the total project cost must be provided.

http://www.in.gov/idem/resources/grants_loans/319h/

Table 6

CREP In-Kind Contributions by County

CREP County	Spring 06 CWI Marketing Grants	IDEM 319 06	LARE 06
Benton			
Boone			\$6,687
Carroll			
Cass			\$17,329
Delaware	\$1,250.00		
Fulton			\$8,608
Gibson		\$153,325.00	
Hamilton			\$6,687
Hancock		\$107,650.00	\$6,687
Hendricks	\$4,660.00		
Henry			
Jasper			
Kosciusko		\$208,760.00	\$2,101
Madison	\$5,569.00		
Marion		\$192,900.00	
Marshall			
Miami			
Noble			\$36,000
Pike			
Posey		\$131,700.00	\$24,617
Pulaski			\$8,608
Randolph			
Starke			
Tippecanoe			
Tipton			
Vanderburgh			
Warrick			
White			
Whitley			\$36,000
Sub -TOTAL	\$11,479.00	\$794,335.00	\$153,324

TOTAL	\$959,138.00
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III. Monitoring and Evaluation

In Indiana, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management samples streams throughout the state on a revolving continuum. This data will be accessed and evaluated for measurable results as the Indiana CREP matures.

<http://www.in.gov/idem/programs/water/quality/>

Another avenue for monitoring the success of this program that will be researched is the data collected by Indiana volunteers and logged through Indiana Riverwatch.

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/riverwatch/>

IV. Success Stories and Recommendations

The first signups for the Indiana CREP began in January, 2006. By October, 2006, over 2182 acres have been obligated establishing the beginning of a successful Indiana conservation initiative. Since many of the conservation practices under obligation are planned to be installed in the near future, there is little feedback from landowners regarding the program at this time. It has been evident that the Soil and Water Conservation Districts who have utilized Clean Water Indiana Grants to send direct mailings to landowners have reaped the rewards of having more landowner inquiries and signups.

Since direct mailings to landowners have been effective, SWCDs are being encouraged to follow a similar model to encourage more participation from landowners throughout the eligible CREP watersheds. The Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program will continue to grow and be more successful as others realize the financial and environmental benefits of this program.