



# **Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program 2025 Annual Report**



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Division of Soil Conservation  
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## 1. Introduction

2025 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in Indiana. The program was first announced in 2005, covering three watersheds in Indiana and had an enrollment goal of 7,000 acres. The program expanded in 2010, to include eleven priority watersheds touching 65 counties with an acreage enrollment goal of 26,250 acres. Starting October 1, 2024, the program was expanded further and is now available in every county and watershed in the state with a new acreage enrollment goal of 100,000 acres. (Figure 1)

The Indiana CREP aims to improve water quality and address wildlife issues by reducing erosion, sedimentation and nutrients, and enhancing wildlife habitats. This program is designed to help alleviate some of the concerns of high non-point source sediment, nutrient, pesticide, and herbicide losses from agricultural lands by restoring grass and riparian buffers and wetlands to improve water quality, as well as to protect land from frequent flooding and excessive erosion by planting hardwood trees in floodplain areas along rivers and streams. CREP continues to address a major milestone of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), showcasing Indiana's progressive and meaningful implementation of conservation practices to protect Indiana's soil, water and related natural resources, and to help alleviate hypoxia in the Gulf of America<sup>1</sup>.

Through CREP, program participants receive financial cost-share and incentives from FSA and ISDA to voluntarily enroll in the program and implement conservation practices on environmentally sensitive land. The program operates under an Agreement between FSA and ISDA, Division of Soil Conservation (DSC), dated July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005 and amended thereafter in August of 2010, May of 2016, and in September of 2024. ISDA administers the CREP program on behalf of the State of Indiana and submits required reports to FSA on CREP enrollments, progress and accomplishments of the Indiana CREP each year.

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<sup>1</sup> Drainage from Indiana eventually finds its way to the Gulf via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. A fraction of nitrogen and phosphorus originating from Indiana end ups in the Gulf and contributes to a low dissolved oxygen area (hypoxic zone), threatening aquatic habitats in the Gulf.



## 2. Eligible Practices and Incentives

### A. ELIGIBLE PRACTICES

The Indiana CREP offers a menu of conservation practices to address nonpoint source pollution runoff issues. Table 1 identifies the various conservation practices offered through CREP and are further discussed below. All these practices must be installed on former cropland, in other words the land must have a farming history as defined by FSA requirements.

**TABLE 1: CONSERVATION PRACTICES AND CODES ELIGIBLE WITHIN CREP**

Conservation Practice	Practice Code
Permanent Native Grass	CP2
Hardwood Tree Planting	CP3A
Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement	CP4D
Riparian Buffer	CP22
Filter Strips	CP21
Wetland Restoration	CP23
Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain	CP23A
Bottomland Timber Establishment	CP31
Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife	CP9

Practices **CP2**, **CP3A**, **CP4D**, **CP22** and **CP21** must be installed on former cropland adjacent to an eligible stream, river or water body and meet additional buffer requirements.

BUFFER REQUIREMENTS:

**CP2** – minimum average width of 50 feet and a maximum width of 120 feet (up to 300 feet in alluvial soils)

**CP3A**, **C4D** and **CP22** – minimum average width of 35 feet and a maximum width of 180 feet (up to 300 feet in alluvial soils)

**CP21** – minimum average width of 35 feet and a maximum width of 120 feet (up to 300 feet in alluvial soils)

**CP23**, **CP23A**, **CP31**, and **CP9** also must be installed on former cropland but are not required to be adjacent to a stream, river or waterbody; however, **CP 23** and **CP31** are required to be located in the 100-yr floodplain.

### B. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

CREP provides financial incentives to landowners through both state and federal contributions. Through CREP, eligible Indiana participants who establish one of the prescribed conservation practices receive cost-share and rental payments as outlined below. All Contracts within the CREP program cannot be less than 14 years and no more than 15 years.

## FEDERAL INCENTIVES

- **Cost-share Assistance:** Cost-share for practice installation based on 50% of an eligible cost, Not-to-Exceed rate determined by FSA and NRCS; and for wetland restorations, 50% of engineering design estimate.
- **Annual Rental Payment:** An annual payment for the life of the contract. The payment consists of:
  - **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% of the base rental rate without regard to other incentive payments for all practices offered and eligible for CREP.
- **Signing Incentive Payment (SIP):** A one-time payment of 32.5% of the 1<sup>st</sup> full year Annual Rental Payment for new land enrolled in all CREP eligible practices. This payment may be made after the contract has been signed and is approved. Re-enrolled acres are not eligible for the SIP payment.
- **Practice Incentive Payment (PIP):** A one-time payment equal to 50% of the eligible installation costs to establish **CP21, CP22, CP23, CP23A, CP31, and CP9.**

## STATE INCENTIVES

After practice installation, participants receive a one-time payment from the state equal to:

- \$100 per acre for land enrolled or re-enrolled in Native Grasses (**CP2**), Wildlife Habitat (**CP4D**) or Filter Strips (**CP21**).
- \$400 per acre for land enrolled or re-enrolled in Hardwood Tree Planting (**CP3A**), Riparian Buffer (**CP22**), or Bottomland Timber Establishment (**CP31**).
- \$950 per acre for land newly enrolled in Wetland Restorations (**CP23** or **CP23A**) or Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife (**CP9**).
- \$400 per acre for land re-enrolled in Wetland Restorations (**CP23** or **CP23A**) or Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife (**CP9**).



Bottomland Timber Establishment



Filter Strip



Wetland Restoration

### 3. CREP Goals and Accomplishments

There are many partners involved with the promotion, administration, technical assistance and funding of CREP in order to meet and work toward the goals and objectives of the program. Our CREP partners include USDA-FSA, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), and the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB), all of which are a part of the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP). CREP is one of the top priorities of this partnership. The SSCB provides funding direction to the ISDA, DSC on the administration of the Clean Water Indiana (CWI) program, which helps to fund the state incentives for the CREP program. These partners as well as the staff within the ISDA help to carry out the CREP program in Indiana.

In addition, ISDA partners with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to help promote the program and provide support dollars for the Indiana CREP. Since 2018, the Indiana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has provided support dollars in the amount of \$1,139,340 to help pay for the state incentives available to landowners through the Indiana CREP program. Without this support, the program would not continue to reach its goals and accomplishments each year.

In the written Agreement between FSA and ISDA the goals and objectives of the program are stated as:

- Protect a minimum of 4,000 linear miles of watercourses through the installation of conservation buffer practices
- Reduce the amount of sediment, phosphorus, and nitrogen entering rivers and streams by 4,900 tons per year of sediment, 4,800 pounds per year of phosphorus, and 9,400 pounds per year of nitrogen.
- Increase the acres of wetlands in the watersheds for erosion control, sediment reduction, storm water retention, and nutrient uptake.
- Seek enrollment of 100,000 acres of eligible cropland, including frequently flooded agricultural lands, and restorable wetlands.

#### **A. LINEAR MILES OF PROTECTION ON WATERCOURSES**

ISDA records and tracks all practices that are enrolled in the Indiana CREP and that have a State Landowner Participation Agreement form. When a project is recorded as completed in the state's tracking system, the Resource Specialist field staff records the length in feet of the practice that is protecting a body of water. The feet are then totaled and converted to miles. Through the installation of conservation buffer practices in the Indiana CREP, approximately 986 linear miles of watercourses have been protected within Indiana. This is for all the current and active contracts that have been enrolled into the program. Table 2 lists the total length in feet and miles of buffers that are installed and currently under contract in Indiana.

**TABLE 2: CONSERVATION BUFFER LENGTHS**

Approximate length in active contracts
5,111,661 feet
968.12 linear miles

The acres associated with the conservation buffers can be small, so this goal is the hardest goal to reach. Projects that have expired and are not re-enrolled back into the program are not counted towards this goal. It is possible that the buffers are still installed on the grounds from the initial installation, but they are not enrolled in the program.

## **B. SEDIMENT AND NUTRIENT LOAD REDUCTIONS THROUGH CREP**

The CREP program actively continues to work toward the goal of reducing the amount of sediments and nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrogen, into the rivers and streams within the designated watersheds by applying buffers, planting trees and restoring wetlands. The DSC uses the Region 5 Sediment and Nutrient Load Reduction Model developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to estimate the sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus load reductions from individual best management practices installed on the ground. ISDA staff apply this model to each conservation practice enrolled and installed through the CREP to estimate the positive effects of the practice on water quality. This data continues to be gathered and provides cumulative information on the estimated sediment and nutrient load reductions.

The annual goal to reduce sediment and nutrients from entering rivers and streams in the designated watersheds is 4,900 tons of sediment, 4,800 pounds of phosphorus, and 9,400 pounds of nitrogen. Table 3 below shows the sediment and nutrient load reductions for the CREP practices that were installed in 2025, as well as the overall benefits of the nutrient load reductions since the program's first expansion in 2010 when this goal began.

**TABLE 3: ESTIMATED NUTRIENT LOAD REDUCTIONS IN CREP WATERSHEDS**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Sediment (Tons)</b>	<b>Phosphorus (lbs.)</b>	<b>Nitrogen (lbs.)</b>
<b>2025</b>	8,697	10,818	21,472
<b>Overall</b>	109,380	130,173	256,477

\*'Overall' refers to the estimated total sediment and nutrient load reductions since the program's first expansion in 2010 according to the Region 5 model calculations.

## **C. WETLANDS**

One of the CREP objectives is to increase the acres of wetlands in the watersheds for erosion control, sediment reduction, storm water retention, and nutrient uptake. During the first 5 years of the CREP program in Indiana, from 2005-2010 when we had 3 designated watersheds, the amount of enrollment of wetland acres was 1,061.7 acres.



*Benefits of wetlands include erosion control, sediment reduction, storm water retention, nutrient uptake, and wildlife habitat creation.*

Since the expansion in 2010, according to ISDA's tracking system, the program has seen a significant increase in the number of wetland acres installed, including approximately 7,282 acres of wetland restorations completed or re-enrolled, and an enrollment of 7,891 acres. In 2025, approximately 606 acres of wetland restorations were completed/installed on the ground or re-enrolled, and 959 acres were enrolled.

## D. ACREAGE ENROLLMENT

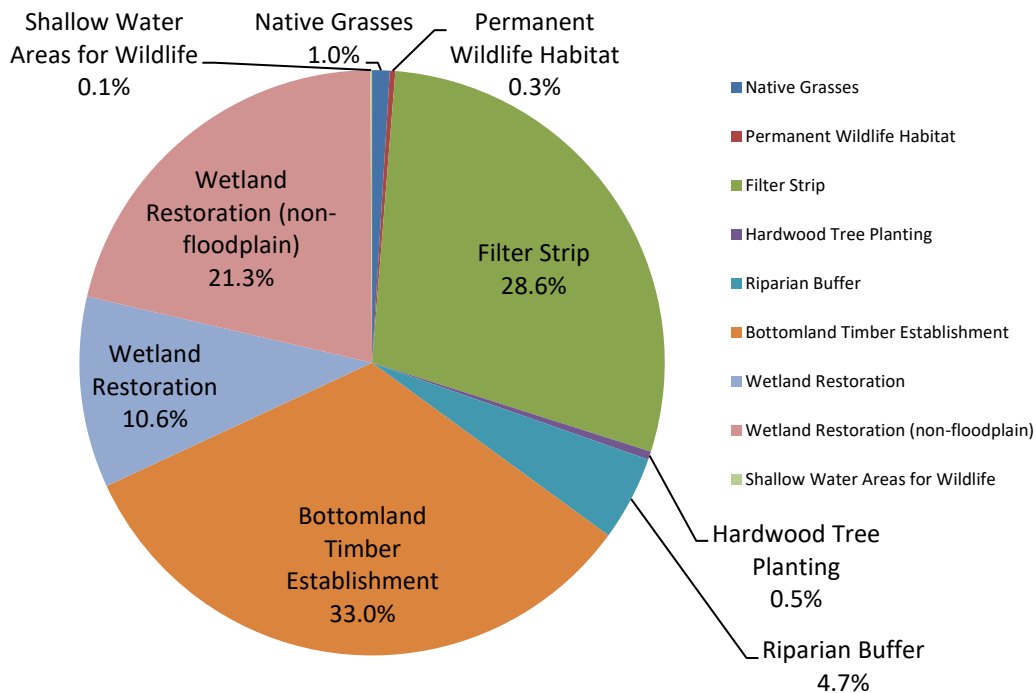
A main goal of the CREP program in Indiana is to enroll 100,000 acres of eligible cropland including frequently flooded agricultural lands, and restorable wetlands. With the expansion of the CREP program in Indiana from 26,250 to 100,000 acres, it allows for more landowners to participate in the program and more acres to be installed in conservation practices. Over the years, there are many acres that have been installed in the Indiana CREP program since its inception in 2005, however, many projects have contracts that have expired and are not re-enrolled back into the program, and are no longer considered active contracts in CREP, although many of these projects have acreage that is kept in conservation especially the tree practices and the wetland practices. According to the state's tracking system as of December 2025, there are approximately 23,408 acres completed in the program.

Figure 2 below illustrates the comparison in percentage of enrolled conservation practices. Table 4 on the next page provides a detailed listing of all the practices and acres that are under an active contract in each CREP watershed by practice.



Wildlife Habitat

**FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES ENROLLED IN CREP**



**TABLE 4: TOTAL ACREAGE OF COMPLETION IN ACTIVE CONTRACTS**

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	CP-9	
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
Auglaize	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Blue-Sinking	0.00	0.00	19.27	0.57	1.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	21.15
Chicago	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Driftwood	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Flatrock-Haw	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Highland-Pigeon	0.00	0.00	62.01	4.08	17.52	216.87	0.00	0.00	0.00	300.48
Iroquois	0.00	0.00	228.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	228.05
Kankakee	0.00	0.00	20.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	99.76	45.77	2.87	168.77
Little Calumet-Galien	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lower East Fork White	56.07	45.20	270.32	41.60	146.40	794.47	376.56	0.00	11.50	1742.12
Lower Eel River (White RB)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lower Great Miami	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lower Ohio-Little Pigeon	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.11
Lower Wabash	0.00	0.00	18.36	0.00	0.00	669.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	687.96
Lower White	10.70	0.00	201.48	8.43	135.63	2369.64	305.29	3.48	0.00	3034.65
Maumee	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Middle Ohio-Laughery	0.00	0.00	17.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	17.20
Middle Wabash-Busseron	2.00	0.00	38.18	0.00	17.09	1601.16	840.81	91.60	0.00	2590.84
Middle Wabash-Deer	6.60	0.00	189.09	0.00	4.72	89.18	50.86	71.77	0.00	412.22
Middle Wabash-Little Vermillion	4.50	1.00	378.08	6.97	115.45	874.96	505.89	325.49	0.00	2212.34
Mississinewa	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Muscatatuck	0.00	5.96	28.77	0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	43.73
Patoka	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Salamonie	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Silver Little-Kentucky	0.00	0.00	5.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.03
St. Joseph (Michigan)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
St. Joseph (Ohio)	0.00	0.00	41.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	28.70	0.00	69.76
St. Marys	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sugar Creek	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tippecanoe River	81.84	6.50	2461.30	0.00	26.22	35.46	87.30	4028.97	0.00	6727.59
Upper East Fork White	0.00	0.00	818.19	0.00	57.94	311.96	0.00	0.00	0.00	1188.09
Upper Eel River (Wabash RB)	0.00	0.00	0.80	0.00	9.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.60
Upper Great Miami	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Upper Wabash	23.15	7.00	1239.97	5.34	77.80	312.06	184.72	89.10	0.00	1939.14
Upper White	49.20	0.00	522.70	0.00	350.86	748.49	12.63	112.18	0.00	1796.06
Vermillion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Whitewater	0.00	0.00	17.72	0.00	103.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	121.10
Wildcat Creek	0.00	0.00	1.70	0.00	25.31	39.17	20.92	0.00	0.00	87.10
<b>Reported Completed as of 12/20/2025</b>	<b>234.06</b>	<b>65.66</b>	<b>6579.65</b>	<b>66.99</b>	<b>1094.43</b>	<b>8067.13</b>	<b>2484.74</b>	<b>4797.06</b>	<b>18.37</b>	<b>23,408.09</b>

\* CREP Completion refers to those projects where conservation practices have been installed on the ground or re-enrolled into the program.

## **E. ADDITIONAL BENEFITS**

When conservation practices are applied, there are several benefits that come from these practices beyond the benefits listed above in the nutrient load reduction and wetlands sections. These additional benefits include creating wildlife habitat and protecting floodplains through planting of trees, which also can improve air quality. All of the acres applied through the CREP program are considered to be wildlife habitat acres.

Through the CP31 Bottomland Timber Establishment practice, trees are planted in floodplain areas to protect waterbodies. In 2025, 67.3 acres of new trees were planted through CP31, resulting in approximately 40,362 trees being planted. Since the inception of the program in late 2005, there have been 7,527 acres of new trees planted within the CREP watersheds, resulting in the planting of 4.5 million trees.



Bur Oak species in a Bottomland Planting

## 4. 2025 Completed Practices and Acres

In 2025, landowners installed or re-enrolled a variety of conservation practices offered through CREP. According to the state’s tracking system, approximately 3,176 acres were enrolled, which includes approximately 2,251 acres being re-enrolled from CRP to CREP and 338 acres from CREP to CREP.

In 2025, there were 2,302.25 practice acres that were completed, with 2,009.13 acres newly completed on the ground or re-enrolled from CRP to CREP, and 293.12 acres that were re-enrolled from CREP to CREP. Table 5 below provides a breakdown of the practice acreage completed in 2025. (Note: these numbers are given according to the State’s tracking system.)

**TABLE 5: 2025 COMPLETED PRACTICES\***

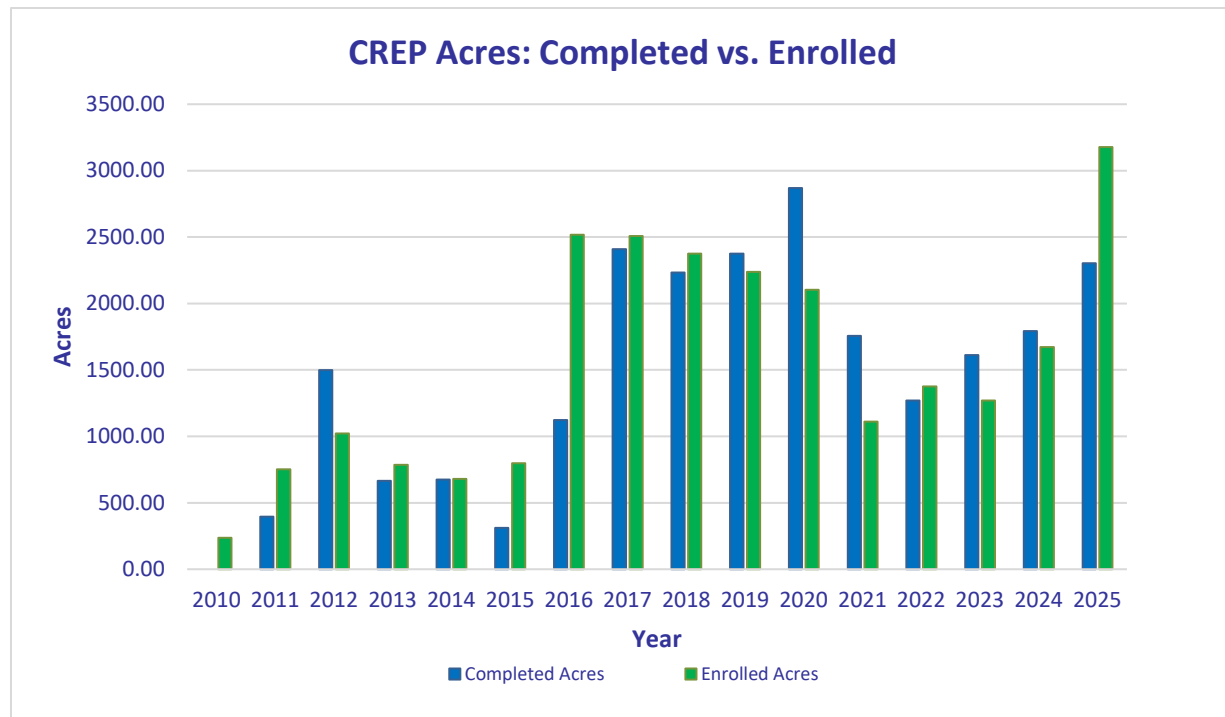
Completed Practices* (in acres)									
2025	CP3A	CP4D	CP21	CP22	CP31	CP23	CP23A	CP9	Total
New Program Acres	0.57	5.96	978.31	242.98	156.96	133.31	472.67	18.37	2,009.13
CREP to CREP	0.00	6.50	158.05	4.78	123.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	293.12
									<b>2,302.25</b>

\* Completed practices are those projects where conservation practices have been installed on the ground or have been re-enrolled into the program.

\*\* There were no CP2 practices installed in 2025.

Figure 3 below shows a comparison of each year, Completed vs. Enrolled acres, since the expansion in 2010.

**FIGURE 3: COMPLETED ACRES VS. ENROLLED ACRES FROM 2010-2025**



## 5. 2025 Financial Contributions and Support

### **A. INDIANA’S PROGRAM COSTS AND SUPPORT FOR CREP**

The ISDA, Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) employs Resource Specialists who are located throughout the state, to provide administrative and technical assistance to landowners, assist NRCS with field visits and creating conservation plans and oversee daily CREP activities. The Resource Specialists also work with landowners/participants to enroll them in the program which provides state financial incentives to establish one of the eligible and prescribed conservation practices as described in section 2 of this report. In federal fiscal year 2025, the state paid out \$724,161.50 in direct payments to participants for installation of practices.

To streamline the payment process, the Resource Specialist field staff and the CREP Program Manager work closely with 31 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to help administer funds to participants. These SWCDs are known as the SWCD CREP Administrators. The State paid \$72,416.15 in administrative fees to partnering SWCDs in 2025.

#### NON-FEDERAL SUPPORT

In 2025, the SSCB appropriated \$1,943,477 from the Clean Water Indiana program to go toward supporting practice installations and incentive fees to participating landowners in CREP, and administrative fees to the SWCD CREP Administrating counties.

In addition, in 2025, The Nature Conservancy committed to provide funds through Enterprise to be used toward the incentive payments to landowners for the installation of eligible CREP practices, in the amount of \$80,000 within the CREP watersheds.

### **B. INDIANA’S IN-KIND SERVICES TO CREP**

As mentioned above, DSC has Resource Specialists located around the state to provide administrative and technical assistance to landowners, assist NRCS with field visits and creating conservation plans, and to oversee daily CREP activities in their specified watersheds. The Resource Specialists also work with landowners/participants to enroll them in the program, and work with the county FSA and NRCS offices and SWCD CREP Administrators on processing paperwork and help with marketing opportunities.

Also, the CREP & Water Quality Initiatives Program Manager handles all aspects of the program and provides technical expertise and critical decision-making, and the DSC Director and Deputy Director provide overall supervision and assistance in decision-making. The DSC’s staff time contributes to the overall in-kind services. The Lt. Governor’s Business Office Controller and contract staff also provide in-kind services through payment processing and contract processing and management.

Other partners, such as the SSCB, SWCDs, IDNR and TNC also contribute to the state’s overall contribution through administration, conservation plan development, payment processing, program costs on easements, and staff time.

Table 6 shows a detailed summary of the direct program costs, support, and the in-kind services provided by the state and its partners. The table also shows the amount of federal dollars that were paid out to landowners for cost-share and incentives during federal fiscal year 2025.

**TABLE 6: INDIANA’S OVERALL ANNUAL DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS AND IN-KIND MATCH**

<b>Direct Program Costs from CWI</b>	<b>2025 Total</b>
State Funds for Incentives to Participants	\$724,161.50
SWCD Administrative Fees	\$72,416.15
<b>State In-Kind Match</b>	
CREP Program Manager and ISDA State office staff	\$80,326.62
Resource Specialist Time and DSS Time	\$132,560.10
SWCD County Administrators Time	\$21,007.50
SSCB	\$1,260.00
CREP Steering Committee	\$1,381.79
DNR (conservation plan development and easement processing time)	\$19,144.00
TNC In-kind and Admin Time	\$12,000.00
<b>Financial Commitments from CWI and partners</b>	<b>\$2,023,477.25</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,087,734.91</b>
<b>Federal Total</b>	<b>\$7,005,502</b>

\*Numbers are according to federal fiscal year 2025