



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Office of Water Management



A Success Story Waiting to Happen : Delaware River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Agricultural Advisory Board Meeting

October 17, 2012

Overview

- What is the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)?
- How Does CREP Work?
- Goals/Benefits
- DEP's Role
- The Future - Delaware River CREP

What Is CREP Nationwide?

- Enhancement of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) established by 1985 Farm Bill.
- Authorized by Section 1234 of Food Security Act of 1985.
- First CREP – Maryland 1997.
- 41 agreements.
- 31,124,343 acres enrolled.

What Is PA CREP Today?

- Partnership amongst state and federal agencies.
- Available in 59 counties in the Susquehanna, Potomac and Ohio River Basins.
- PA has invested \$34,075,512
- Federal return on PA's investment is \$349,334,956

PA CREP Partners



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Save the Bay



What Is PA CREP Today?

- 2 Agreements
 - Chesapeake Bay Drainage
 - 219,000 acres
 - Ohio and Lake Erie Drainage
 - 40,000 acres

CREP Counties Covered by 2 Agreements



How Does CREP Work?

- Enrolls highly erodible cropland and marginal pastureland in conservation plantings
- Entirely voluntary
- State and federal government reimburse landowner for costs
- Federal government pays “soil rental rates” for 10-15 years

Cropland

- Annually planted commodity crops
- Perennial crops
- Hayland in rotation meeting cropping history requirements

Highly Erodible Land (HEL)

- Has Erodibility Index (EI) of 8 or greater
- EI is determined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) using
 - Soil type
 - Slope
 - Slope length

Marginal Pastureland

- Within 180 feet of a stream
- Not more than 30% forested
- Not cropland
- Undeveloped
- Determined by County Farm Service Agency (FSA) committee

CREP Process

- Initial CREP interest sign-up
- FSA eligibility check
- Biologist site visit
- FSA offer
- CREP Conservation Plan
- FSA Contract
- CREP Conservation Practice Installment

Cool Season and Native Warm Season Grasses – CP 2

- Establish permanent cover
- Introduced or Native grasses
- Reduce Erosion
- Provide wildlife habitat



Riparian Forest Buffers – CP 22

- Eligible lands
 - Cropland with HEL
 - Marginal Pastureland



PA CREP Goals and Accomplishments

Enroll 250,000 acres in conservation practices

- 205,921 acres enrolled so far
- Enroll 35,000 acres in Forest Riparian Forest Buffers (RFBs)
- 24,741 acres enrolled so far
- Additional 3,000 acres existing RFBs protected through agreement with DEP.

CREP Goals (continued)

- Improve and protect water quality
- Create grassland wildlife habitat for song and ground-nesting birds
- Reduce sediments and nutrients in the Ohio, Potomac and Susquehanna River Basins

Benefits of CREP

- Improves Water Quality
- Protects Topsoil from Erosion
- Increases and Enhances Habitat for Fish and Wildlife
- Boosts Economy

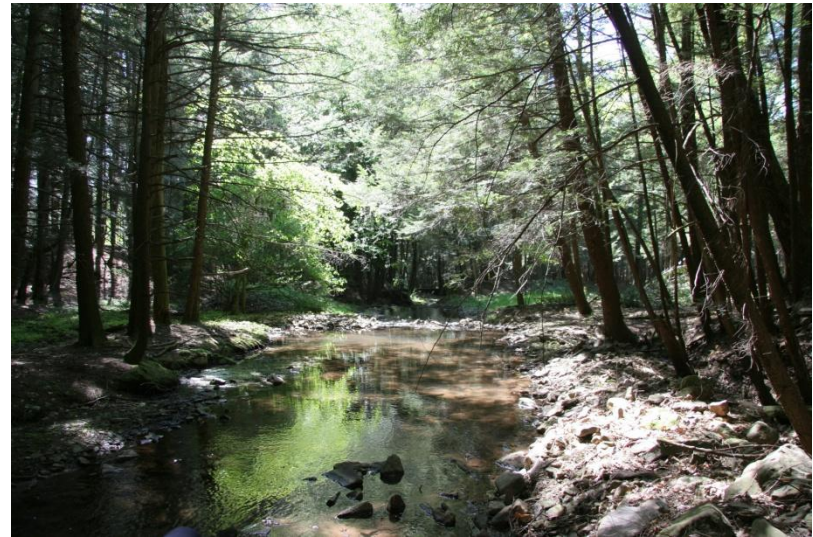


Boosts Economy

- Provides landowner with income on less productive, highly erodible land
- Provides landowner with cost-effective way to address environmental problems
- Infuses federal dollars into local economy (10 Federal \$\$ for every 1 State\$)

Sample Payment to Landowner Forest Riparian Buffer – CP 22

- Installation cost up to \$2,500/acre
- Signing incentive payment up to \$150/acre
- Annual soil rental payment -\$120/acre for 15 years



Sample Payment to Landowner Native Grasses– CP 2



- Installation
\$80/acre
 - State cost share
contingent upon
buffer practices
- Annual Soil Rental
Rate Based on
Erodibility Index

Challenges

- Outreach to meet acre goals
- Technical Assistance
- Maintenance of practices
- Competition with high commodity prices and hydrofracking of natural gas

DEP's Role

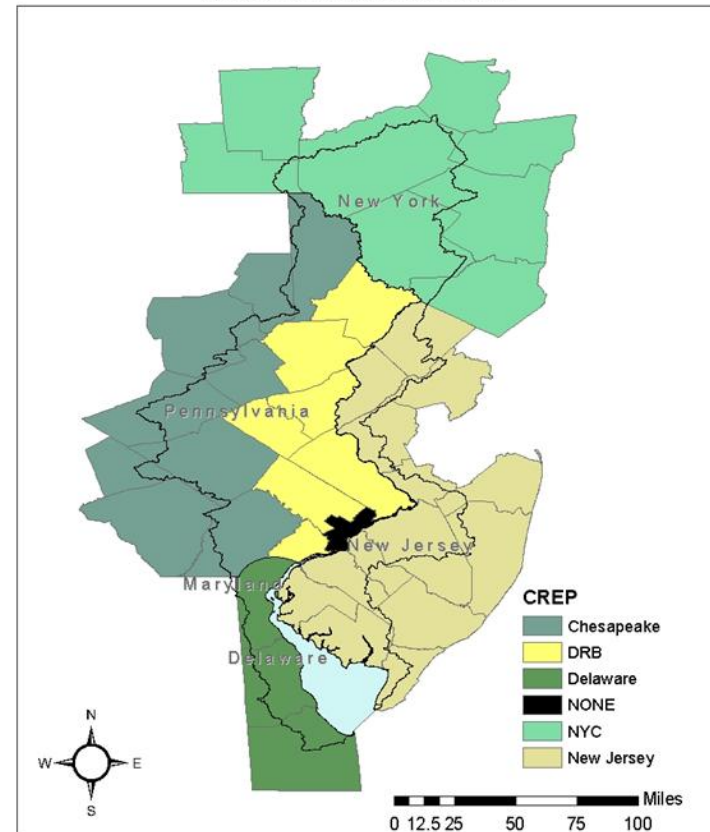
- Participates in overall policy decision making
- Participates in technical policy decision making
- Coordinates water quality monitoring
- Provides up to 50% of practice installation fee for most practices
- Pays PA Association of Conservation Districts to administer cost share through Growing Greener

The Future - Delaware River CREP

Seven counties:

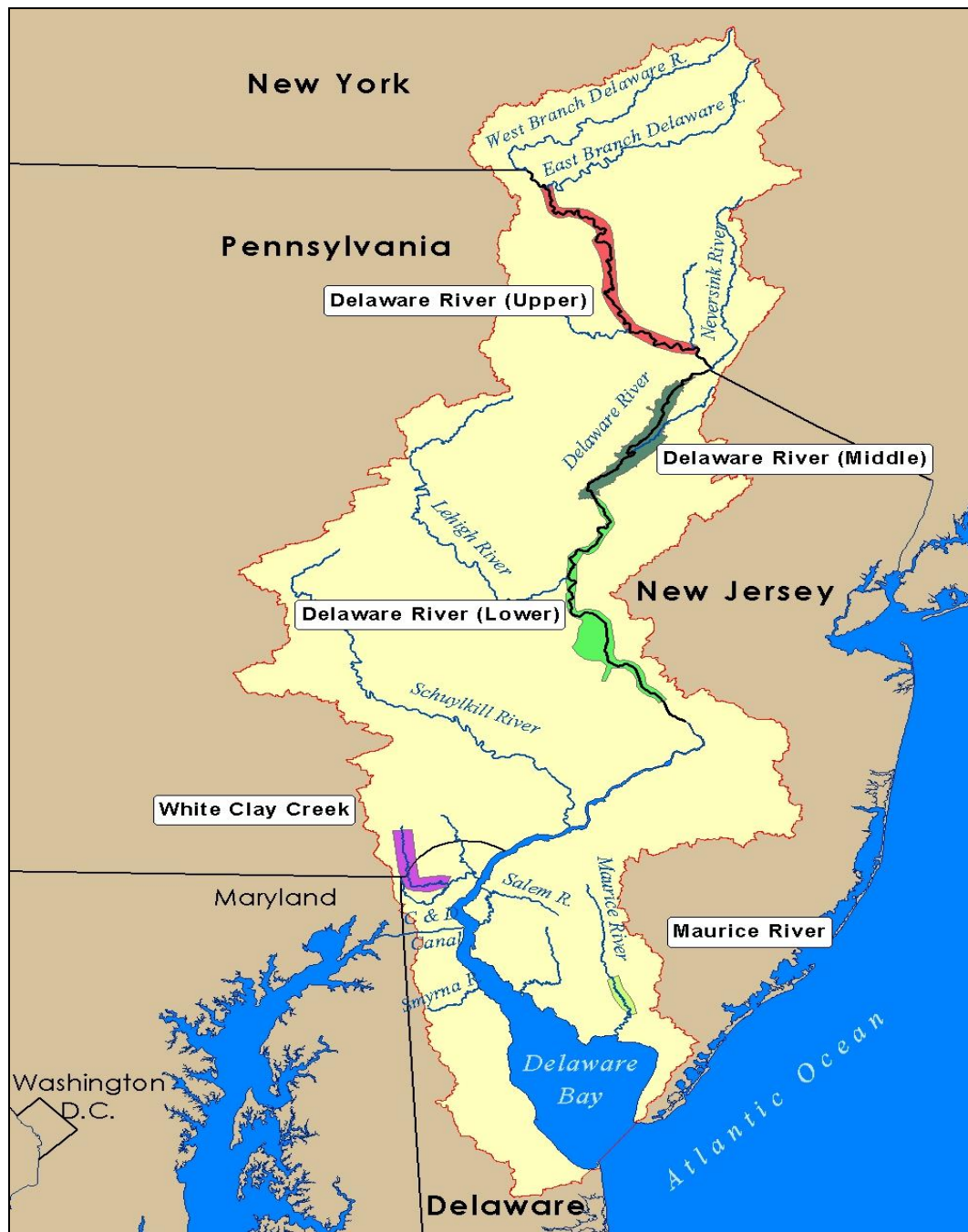
- Pike
- Monroe
- Northampton
- Lehigh
- Bucks
- Montgomery
- Delaware

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Programs
in the Delaware River Basin



Delaware River CREP Partners

- USDA – Farm Service Agency
- USDA- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- SE PA Resource Conservation & Development Council
- Delaware River Basin Commission
- Pennsylvania Game Commission
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Montgomery County Conservation District
- Northampton County Conservation District
- Monroe County Conservation District
- Martins Jacoby Watershed Association
- Heritage Conservancy
- Pheasants Forever, Inc.
- Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
- National Wild Turkey Federation
-



Delaware River Basin

- PA accounts for 50.3% of the basin's total land area
- Basin totals 6,422 square miles or 14% of PA's total land area
- Over 5 million people live in the Delaware River Basin area of PA.

Delaware River CREP Goals

- Reduce agriculture-sourced non-point nutrient and sediment loading
- Improve Pennsylvania's surface and ground water quality
- Establish and restore wildlife habitat

Projected Potential Reductions

- Sediment edge of stream loading by approximately 557 tons per year.
- Nitrogen edge of stream loading by approximately 349,500 pounds per year.
- Phosphorous edge of stream loading by approximately 12,353 pounds per year.

Eligible Conservation Practices

- Establishment of introduced grasses and legumes
- Establishment of native grasses
- Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- Grass Waterway
- Shallow Water Area for Wildlife)
- Wildlife Food Plots
- Establishment of Contour Buffer Strips
- Filter Strips
- Riparian Buffers
- Wetland Restoration
- Wildlife Buffer
- Wetland Buffer
- Habitat Buffer for Upland Birds

Potential Federal Costs

- Rental Rates and Incentives - \$63,629,395
- Cost to Establish Conservation Practices - \$5,475,000
- Incentive Payments – \$3,300,000
 - Total = \$72,404,395

Potential State Costs

- Cost to Establish Conservation Practices-
\$5,475,000
- Incentive Payments - \$240,000
- Monitoring of CREP Goals and Objectives -
\$3,150,000
- Administration, Outreach, and Technical
Assistance - \$ 1,540,000

- Total = \$10,500,000



pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Office of Water Management

Diane Wilson

Bureau of Conservation and Restoration

PA Department of Environmental Protection

Rachel Carson State Office Building

10th Floor

400 Market St.

Harrisburg, PA 17105

(717) 787-3730

diawilson@pa.gov