

For: State and County Offices

Renewing and Revising State Conservation Priority Areas (CPA's)

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

National and State CPA's provide basic land eligibility for CRP. In addition, offers in water, wildlife, and air quality zones were awarded points within the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). In previous CRP general signups, CPA's were limited to not more than 33 percent of the remaining available cropland in the State.

State CPA's expire after 5 years. State Offices must renew (leave unchanged) or revise their State CPA's and associated zones. **State Offices renewing the State CPA's must follow all the provisions in this notice.**

B Purpose

This notice:

- provides procedure for renewing and revising State CPA's
- informs State Offices that the deadline for renewing and revising State CPA's and associated zones and reporting to CEPD is March 31, 2010.

2 State CPA's

A Developing State CPA's

STC's shall consult with State Conservationists and State Technical Committees to develop State CPA's. State CPA's will be reported to DAFP, through CEPD. STC's must certify to DAFP that State Technical Committees concur with CPA and zone establishment.

| Disposal Date | Distribution |
|---------------|---|
| July 1, 2010 | State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices and NRCS State Offices |

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2 State CPA's (Continued)

B Establishing State CPA's

The State CPA's must be based on only 1 of the following geographic aggregations:

- entire county
- entire 8-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC)
- entire 10-digit HUC
- entire 12-digit HUC
- combination of county and 8-digit HUC
- combination of county and 10-digit HUC
- combination of county and 12-digit HUC.

Examples: A State seeks to establish a State CPA for water quality on the eastern side of the State using 10-digit HUC boundaries. That same State wants to use 12-digit HUC boundaries on the western side of the State. This is **not** permissible. The State CPA must be based on only 1 of the geographic aggregations included in the list.

A State seeks to establish a State CPA for water quality using major land resource areas. This is **not** permissible. The State CPA must be based 1 of the geographic aggregations included in the list.

A State seeks to establish a State CPA for water quality using non-NRCS certified 14-digit HUC. This is **not** permissible. Only 8-, 10-, or 12-digit HUC's are permissible. The State CPA must be based on 1 of the geographic aggregations included in the list.

Note: States with CREP agreements may request a waiver to this policy. States that have previously received a waiver **must** renew their waiver request.

State CPA's must be identified by primary purpose of CPA (wildlife, water quality, or air quality).

Example: A State establishes CPA in a portion of Haynes County. The primary purpose is water quality.

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2 State CPA's (Continued)

C Size Limitations for State CPA's

State CPA's are limited to no more than 33 percent of the available remaining State cropland.

A future notice will describe the data source and procedure necessary to calculate State cropland.

Note: To determine available cropland, State Offices must subtract any applicable National CPA acreage.

Example: North Dakota has 25 million acres of cropland as of December 31, 2009. A total of 10 million acres of cropland is within counties that are part of the Prairie Pothole National CPA. Therefore, North Dakota has 15 million acres of cropland available to be included in the State CPA. However, no more than 33 percent (5 million acres) may be included in the North Dakota State CPA.

STC's will need to certify to DAFP, through CEPD, that not more than 33 percent of the available cropland in the State has been designated as State CPA.

3 Zones

A Zone Establishment and Size Within State CPA's

States may establish water, wildlife, and air quality zones within the State CPA's. Eligible acreage offered within the applicable zone will be awarded EBI points. In the case of wildlife zones, points will be awarded if the offer is within the zone **and** the practice and cover are consistent with the habitat requirements.

States may submit 1 or more zones. Zones with different purposes may overlap. The water and wildlife zones may include up to 100 percent of the State CPA. The air quality zones may include 100 percent of the State CPA, consistent with the criteria used to establish the air quality zones.

STC's shall consult with State Conservationists and State Technical Committees to develop zones.

B Zone Establishment and Size Within National CPA's

States may establish water, wildlife, and air quality zones within the National CPA's. Eligible acreage offered within the applicable zone will be awarded EBI points. In the case of wildlife zones, points will be awarded if the offer is within the zone **and** the practice and cover are consistent with the habitat requirements.

States may submit 1 or more zones. Zones with different purposes may overlap. The water, wildlife, and air quality zones may include up to 100 percent of the National CPA.

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3 Zones (Continued)

C Zone Boundaries

Zone boundaries with State CPA's must be based on the same geographic aggregation used to establish the State CPA's according to subparagraph 2 B.

Example: The State CPA's for Iowa are based on the combination of county and 12-digit HUC boundaries. The zones for Iowa must also be based on the combination of county and 12-digit boundaries.

Zone boundaries with National CPA's must be based on counties.

Example: Certain counties in North Dakota are in the Prairie Pothole National CPA. The State Office may designate up to 100 percent of the counties as a water, wildlife, or air quality zones.

4 Wildlife Zones

A Establishing Wildlife Zones

Wildlife zones shall be established in locations where proposed land may contribute to restoration of habitat of threatened or endangered species or contribute to the restoration of important and declining species of national, regional, State, or local significance. Restoration of rare and declining native habitat (Long Leaf Pine, Tall Grass Prairie, bottomland, etc.) may also be addressed. This could include designating areas for the protection or restoration of Northern Bobwhite, the Greater Prairie Chicken, and other species.

STC's shall consult State Technical Committees, State Fish and Game Biologists, USFWS officials, NRCS State Biologists, State Foresters, and other wildlife interests, to determine areas within the State that will be designated as wildlife zones.

B Practices

Within the wildlife zone, STC's, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, must specify wildlife practices that will be beneficial to the species of concern that the zone is addressing. Any general signup CRP practice listed in 2-CRP, Exhibit 9 may be used for the zone if the practice and cover are consistent with the habitat requirements.

Note: A wildlife zone must have **at least 1** practice associated with it.

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4 Wildlife Zones (Continued)

C Wildlife Points in EBI

Acreage offered for CRP located in wildlife zones will be awarded applicable points in wildlife subfactor only if the practice and cover are consistent with the habitat requirements **and** the offer is within the area and contains approved practices.

At least 51 percent of the offered acreage must be within the wildlife zone to be awarded points. If less than 51 percent of the offered acreage is within the wildlife zone, zero EBI points shall be awarded.

5 Water Quality Zones

A Establishing Water Quality Zones

Water quality zones shall be established in locations where proposed land may contribute to groundwater or surface water quality impairment.

STC shall:

- consult with EPA, State Water Quality Agency, and State Technical Committee in developing recommendations
- ensure areas submitted will assist in compliance of State water quality laws
- prioritize and approve only the highest priority water resources of the State.

Note: Areas may include ground water or source water protection areas.

STC, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, may use the following as tools in developing high priority water resource designations:

- areas where CRP enrollment would assist in the compliance of total maximum daily load standards
- State-identified wellhead and groundwater recharge areas
- areas with Coastal Zone Management Act Reauthorization Amendment coastal nonpoint pollution control programs
- State 303(d) and 305(b) reports.

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5 Water Quality Zones (Continued)

B Water Quality Points in EBI

Acreage offered for CRP located in water quality zones will be awarded applicable points in water quality subfactor.

At least 51 percent of the offered acreage must be within the water quality zone to be awarded points. If less than 51 percent of the offered acreage is within the water quality zone, zero EBI points shall be awarded.

6 Air Quality Zones

A Establishing Air Quality Zones

STC, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, EPA, and State air quality representatives, shall recommend designated agricultural zones that contribute to the nonattainment of air quality standards.

STC, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, may also recommend zones within 50 miles of a Class 1 air designated area in which agricultural crop production could impact air quality standards.

Note: The State Office shall consult with the State air quality official for the most recent Class 1 designations.

B Air Quality Points in EBI

Acreage in air quality zones will be awarded applicable points in the air quality subfactor if **both** of the following conditions are met:

- at least 51 percent of the offer must be in the designated areas
- the weighted wind erodibility index must be equal to or greater than 3.0.

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7 Process for Analysis, Development, Certification, and Submission of Zones

A Data Sources for State CPA's and Zones Within State CPA's

All National and State CPA's, and their respective zones, will be created by the National Office using:

- Dynamap County boundaries enhanced by FSA
- HUC boundaries from the Watershed Boundary Datasets.

B Informing National Office of Selected Aggregation and Requesting "Master List of State CPA and Zones" and "Zones Within National CPA's"

After the State Office has determined which geographic aggregation will be used to create State CPA's according to subparagraph 2 B, the State Office shall provide information to the National Office of the selection.

Based on the State Office's selection, the National Office will create template spreadsheets that will be used to establish State CPA's and zones, as well as zones within National CPA's. The template spreadsheet (Excel files) will be named:

- "Master List of State CPA and Zones" (st_CPAZONE.xls)
- "Zones Within National CPA's" (st_NATZONE.xls) (if applicable).

State Offices will:

- be completing and submitting 1 or both of the template spreadsheets
- **not** be required or permitted to submit shape files of their boundaries.

For the purposes of analysis in support of developing State CPA's and zones, each State Offices will be provided a shapefile of their chosen geographic aggregation.

C Completing "Master List of State CPA and Zones" and "Zones Within National CPA's"

Instructions for completing the:

- "Master List of State CPA and Zones" Excel file are included in Exhibit 1
- "Zones Within National CPA's" Excel file are included in Exhibit 2.

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7 Process for Analysis, Development, Certification, and Submission of Zones (Continued)

D Certifying “Master List of State CPA and Zones”

According to:

- subparagraph 2 C, State CPA’s may include no more than 33 percent of cropland
- subparagraph 3 B, water, wildlife, and air quality zones may include up to 100 percent of State CPA’s.

Each State Office is required to conduct analysis necessary to ensure that provisions in subparagraphs 2 C and 3 B are followed.

State Offices requiring assistance in complying with provisions in subparagraphs 2 C and 3 B shall contact Jean Agapoff by either of the following:

- e-mail at jean.agapoff@ca.usda.gov
- phone at 530-792-5594.

Each State Office must certify in writing their State CPA’s include no more than 33 percent of cropland.

E Submitting “Master List of State CPA and Zones” and “Zones Within National CPA’s”

State Offices will e-mail their completed and certified Excel files to Jean Agapoff at jean.agapoff@ca.usda.gov.

F Using Checklist of Necessary Actions

See Exhibit 3 for a checklist of steps necessary to ensure proper completion of the tasks in this notice.

8 CPA’s and Conference Calls

A Effective Dates for CPA’s

CPA’s will be effective after the National Office has processed the template spreadsheets and created corresponding shapefiles. State Offices will be notified individually when the shapefiles have been completed and the new CPA’s are effective.

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8 CPA's and Conference Calls (Continued)

B Conference Calls

The National Office will hold 2 conference calls on the following dates to discuss the provisions of this notice:

- Thursday, January 7, 2010, at 2 p.m. e.t.
- Monday, January 11, 2010, at 2 p.m. e.t.

The call in number is 888-455-1945 and the pass code is "56402".

9 Action

A State Office Action

State Offices shall follow the provisions of this notice.

B County Office Action

No action is required.

Instructions for Completing the “Master List of State CPA and Zones” (st_CPAZONE.xls)

The Excel file will be in 1 of the 3 following formats.

- **county only**

| FIPS | State CPA | Air Quality Zone | Water Quality Zone | Wildlife Zone | Wildlife CP1 | 8 Additional Columns for Wildlife Practices |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--|
| 1001 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | |
| 1001 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| 1001 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |

- **HUC (watershed) only**

| HUC-(8, 10, 12) | State CPA | Air Quality Zone | Water Quality Zone | Wildlife Zone | Wildlife CP1 | 8 Additional Columns for Wildlife Practices |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--|
| 120001234525 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | |
| 120001234536 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| 120001234547 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |

- **combination of county and HUC.**

| FIPS | HUC-(8, 10, 12) | State CPA | Air Quality Zone | Water Quality Zone | Wildlife Zone | Wildlife CP1 | 8 Additional Columns for Wildlife Practices |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--|
| 1001 | 120001234525 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | |
| 1001 | 120001234536 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| 1001 | 120001234547 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |

For each polygon with the geographic aggregation, State Offices must specify a value of 0 (not included) or 1 (included) for the State CPA, each zone, and the practice within the wildlife zones.

Instructions for Completing “Zones Within National CPA’s” (st_NATZONE.xls)

The Excel file will be in the following format.

| FIPS | Air Quality Zone | Water Quality Zone | Wildlife Zone | Wildlife CP1 | 8 Additional Columns for Wildlife Practices |
|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--|
| 1001 | 1 | 0 | 1 | | |
| 1001 | 0 | 1 | 0 | | |
| 1001 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |

For each polygon with the geographic aggregation, State Offices must specify a value of 0 (not included) or 1 (included) for the State CPA, each zone, and the practice within the wildlife zones.

Checklist for Revising and Submitting State CPA and Zones

| Steps | Reference | Completed |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Identify the geographic aggregations to be used in creating the State CPA and zones within the State CPA. | Subparagraph 2 B | |
| 2. Inform CEPD of selected geographic aggregation. | Subparagraphs 2 E and 7 B | |
| 3. Receive “Master List of State CPA and Zones” spreadsheet from CEPD. | Subparagraph 7 B | |
| 4. Receive master “Zones Within National CPA” spreadsheet from CEPD, if applicable. | Subparagraph 7 B | |
| 5. Chose polygons to be included in State CPA. | Subparagraphs 2 B and 7 C | |
| 6. Chose polygons within State CPA that are to be included in water, wildlife, and air quality zones. | Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 6 | |
| 7. Complete, certify, and submit “Master List of State CPA and Zones” spreadsheet. | Subparagraphs 7 C, 7 D, and 7 E | |
| 8. Chose polygons within National CPA that are to be included in water, wildlife, and air quality zones. | Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 6 | |
| 9. Complete, certify, and submit “Zones Within National CPA” spreadsheet. | Subparagraphs 7 C, 7 D, and 7 E | |