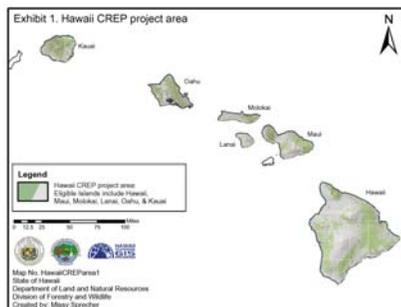


# Hawaii Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

## Overview

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a federal-state natural resources conservation program that addresses state and nationally significant agricultural related environmental concerns. Through CREP, program participants receive financial incentives from USDA and the State to voluntarily enroll in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in contracts of 15 years. Participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to native grasses, trees and other vegetation.

The **Hawaii CREP** is a partnership between USDA and the State of Hawaii. The program seeks to enroll 15,000 acres of eligible cropland or marginal pastureland in 15 year contracts within the following counties: Hawaii, Maui, Kauai, and Honolulu. The project will restore



riparian forest buffers, wetland buffers, and other reforestation sites by planting native vegetation and controlling invasive species. The primary goals of the project are to enhance wildlife habitat and control invasive species, as well as improve water quality and quantity, increase groundwater recharge, improve near shore coral reef health and diversity by filtering agricultural runoff and



increasing water condensation in the uplands.

## Benefits

Hawaii CREP will provide for restoration of previously forested, degraded agricultural land. The project will improve wildlife habitat through the creation of riparian forest buffers corridors and expansion of critical



habitat for the many threatened, endangered, and rare species of Hawaii. This project will improve water quality and quantity by reducing soil runoff, increasing potential ground absorption, and reducing stream sedimentation and nutrient loading to near-shore environments. In addition, Hawaii CREP seeks to enhance coral reef habitat and increase diversity of associated aquatic species by decreasing the amount of run-off from the upland terrestrial environment.

## Goals

The goals of Hawaii CREP:

- Reduce sediment and nutrient runoff by 10 percent from current levels.

- Increase coral reef cover by 5 percent and substantially increase coral diversity on coral reefs throughout the State.



- Improve wildlife and plant habitats of at least 10 threatened or endangered species through restoration of native forest ecosystems and riparian buffers.
- Reforestation of native vegetation in riparian buffer zones as well as rare and declining native habitats.
- Increase groundwater recharge through the planting of trees in upland pastures.
- Reduction in and control of invasive species in watersheds within the CREP target areas.



## Eligibility

Landowners or lessees with land that are physically and legally capable of being agricultural productive are eligible for the program. Other requirements may also apply. Interested producers should contact their local FSA service center for specific information regarding their eligibility for CREP.

# Hawaii Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

## Sign-up

Local FSA service centers and the State of Hawaii will soon announce the Hawaii CREP sign-up date. The State of Hawaii has been jointly working with USDA over the last 6 years to bring CREP to Hawaii, a program that has been extremely successful in many other states, but under utilized in Hawaii.

## USDA Payments

Hawaii CREP participants will be eligible for the following types of USDA payments (subject to contract terms and certain limitations):

- **Annual per acre Rental Payment:** An annual payment according to FSA CRP National Directives and the Hawaii CREP Agreement.
- **Cost-share Payments:** A payment to all participants for up to 50% of eligible reimbursable costs for established conservation practices.



- **Signing Incentive Payment:** A one time payment of \$100 per acre for eligible pastureland practices;
- **Practice Incentive Payment:** A one-time additional payment equal to 40% of the eligible reimbursable cost;
- **Mid-contract Management Payment:** A payment is available 3 times during the contract for up to \$450 per acre. Payment includes invasive species control.

## State of Hawaii Payments

The State of Hawaii will provide the following payments to Hawaii CREP participants:

- An **annual Hawaii CREP Incentive Payment (HCIP)** in the amount of \$17 per acre for enrollment into any approved practices.



- Funds may be available for reimbursement of eligible cost-share practices to be determined annually and subject to availability of funding;
- Funds may also be available to landowners in CREP watersheds for the purchase of permanent Conservation Easements (CE). The purchase of CE's will be in conjunction with the Hawaii Legacy Land Conservation Fund. All interested landowners shall have the opportunity to donate a CE in a CREP watershed.

Under Hawaii CREP, the State of Hawaii will provide a program coordinator; staffing and support for technical assistance to implement the CREP, annual monitoring and evaluation of project progress; establish a program steering committee, seek potential participants and perform other duties according to the Hawaii CREP Agreement.

## Cost

Hawaii CREP brings in federal monies in support of conservation that will benefit the

agricultural and the general public. The total cost for Hawaii CREP over a 20-year period is estimated at **\$67 million**, with USDA contributing **\$53.6 million** and the State of Hawaii funding **\$13.4 million** or 20% of the total program cost. The \$67 million does not include any costs that may be assumed by producers.

## Partners

Hawaii CREP will bring together partnerships that will allow conservation to be more effective throughout the State and is one of the missing pieces in conservation support on agricultural lands. The program will be implemented jointly by:

- **USDA FSA**
- **USDA NRCS**
- **Hawaii DLNR**



Other Partners involved in Hawaii CREP include (among others):

- **Watershed Partnerships**
- **University of Hawaii**
- **Hawaii DOA**
- **Hawaii DOH**

## For More Information

For more information on Hawaii CREP contact Hawaii DLNR, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (808) 587-1467

For more information about FSA and its programs, visit a local FSA or USDA Service Center or on the World Wide Web at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.