



Conservation Stewardship Program

FACT SHEET



What is CSP?

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers agricultural producers and forestland managers the opportunity to earn payments for taking their conservation efforts to the next level. Assistance is available for both the active management of existing conservation systems and the adoption of new conservation activities on working agricultural and forest lands. CSP rewards advanced conservation across an entire farming operation and supports the continual improvement of conservation systems.

Is CSP for me?

CSP is unique. It is a fit for almost any type of agriculture operation that is currently maintaining a minimum level of stewardship for at least two resource concerns. Crop producers, ranchers, dairy farmers, forest landowners, poultry producers, organic farmers and specialty crop farmers all participate in the program. CSP is delivering real results on the ground for these producers and it can for you.

What is a resource concern?

Natural resources that are evaluated in CSP are soil, water, air, plants, animals and energy. Resource concerns are areas where a natural resource might not be in optimum condition or the sustainability is impaired and can be improved with installation of conservation practices or management activities. The NRCS objective in conservation planning is to help you manage your resources for sustained use and productivity and through CSP, to take

your conservation of these resources to the next level by meeting or exceeding stewardship levels.

The major resource concerns that are evaluated throughout the application, planning and implementation of CSP include:

- Concentrated Erosion
- Soil Quality Limitation
- Pest Pressure
- Source Water Depletion
- Degraded Plant Condition
- Terrestrial Habitat
- Field Sediment, nutrients and Pathogen Loss
- Wind and Water Erosion
- Fire Management

Within the major resource concern categories, there are several specific minor concerns that are evaluated. For instance, in the major resource concern soil erosion, a specific type of soil erosion called concentrated flow will be evaluated. Concentrated flow, or gully erosion, can be visually identified. A conservation planner will help you identify possible causes and potential solutions if concentrated flow erosion is a resource concern on your operation.

Potential Causes

- Bare or unprotected soil
- Excess runoff
- Inadequate outlet for water



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Potential Solutions

- Residue Management
- Cover Crops
- Grassed Waterway
- Grade Stabilization Structure
- Water and Sediment Control Basin

What's in it for me?

NRCS staff will work with you to evaluate your natural resource conditions and plan the conservation practices and CSP conservation practice enhancements that will ensure you meet or exceed your natural resource concern objectives. Implementation of conservation activities can improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related natural resources on agricultural and non-industrial private forest land. Good land stewardship not only conserves your natural resources, it also provides multiple benefits to local communities, including better water and air quality and wildlife habitat, all while keeping the working lands working that are contributing to America's supply of food and fiber.

The program represents a genuine commitment to conservation – CSP contracts are for five years, with the option to renew if you successfully fulfill the initial contract and agree to achieve additional conservation objectives.

Contract payments are based on two components:

- a payment to maintain the existing conservation based on the operation type and number of resource concerns that are meeting the stewardship level at the time of application and
- payments to implement additional conservation activities.

All CSP contracts will have a minimum annual payment of \$1500.

What kind of options do I have in the program?

After soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources on your property are inventoried and evaluated, the NRCS conservationist will be able to identify any resource concerns you may have on your land. Once the resource concerns are

identified the NRCS conservationist will review several alternatives for you to consider.

In CSP these alternatives consist of enhancement activities and conservation practices that could be applied to treat the resource concerns identified. A suite of alternatives are offered and you choose the enhancements and practices that are best suited to your operation and resource goals. CSP provides adaptive management options to better respond to market and weather conditions, allowing participants to choose enhancements that best fit their unique circumstances.

What I am required to do in a CSP contract?

For new CSP contracts you will be required to at least maintain the stewardship level of the resource concerns you are already meeting plus meet or exceed at least one additional priority resource concern. If the objectives of the initial CSP contract are achieved, you may be eligible to re-enroll for an additional 5 year contract if you agree to adopt additional conservation activities.

Am I eligible for CSP?

To participate in CSP, you must control or own the land, be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements, and have current farm records with USDA Farm Service Agency. You must have effective control of the land for the term of the proposed contract which is 5 years in CSP. Only those who participate in the day-to-day management of an agricultural operation and share in the risks associated with agricultural production are eligible to apply. You must also be meeting at least two priority resource concerns as determined by each state at the time of application. Your local NRCS office personnel can help you determine if you meet these requirements.

How do I apply?

You can apply for CSP any time throughout the year but there may be cutoff dates for current funding opportunities. For more information on applications visit [USDA NRCS Florida CSP](#) or visit your local Service Center.

