

CREP – Conservation Practice Descriptions

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Permanent Native Grasses (CP-2)

The purpose of this conservation practice is to establish and maintain a vegetative cover of native grasses on land no longer used for crop production. Plant species typically include both warm season native grasses and forbs. The practice often requires mowing to establish the practice, and maintenance, including prescribed burns or spot mowing to control invasive plants. This cover will protect soil and water resources that will enhance environmental benefits such as improved water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and increase food for wildlife.



Filter Strips (CP-21)

The practice is often located between cropland fields and water resources and creates improved habitat for aquatic organisms and habitat for wildlife. Plant species are typically cool season or warm season grasses and forbs. The practice often requires periodic spot mowing to control box elders, willow, and other unwanted species. The purpose of this conservation practice is to provide vegetation to remove nutrients, sediment, organic matter, pesticides, and other pollutants from surface runoff and subsurface flow by deposition, absorption, plant uptake, denitrification, and other processes. The resulting cover reduces pollution and protects surface water and subsurface water quality while enhancing the ecosystem of the water body.



Buffer Strips (CP-22)

This practice consist of strips of trees and shrubs planted along rivers, creeks, or ponds. Often planted on marginal pasturelands. Riparian buffers can cut sediment, nitrogen and phosphorous runoff, and support five times the number of bird species as cropped or heavily grazed land. Buffers also remove nitrate from the groundwater and cut stream bank erosion. Buffers can be economic sites for growing various forest products, from seeds (nuts) to high quality fast growing timber.



Wetland Restoration (CP-23)

The practice often includes breaking drainage tiles and plugging drainage ditches. Plant species are grasses, forbs and legumes tolerant to wet soils. The practice often requires maintenance to remove undesirable species such as willow and box elder.

The purpose of this conservation practice is to rehabilitate the functions and values of wetland ecosystems that have been previously devoted to agricultural use. Restored functions include increasing sediment trapping efficiencies, improving surface and ground water quality, preventing erosion, providing habitat for waterfowl and other wetland species, and reducing flood flows.



Tall Grass Prairie and Oak Savanna Restoration (CP-25)

Species found on these sites include grass and forbs species. The practice often requires mowing to establish the practice, and maintenance, including prescribed burns or spot mowing to control invasive plants. This conservation practice aims to restore and conserve the functions of rare, endangered, and threatened habitats. The goal is to create additional critical habitat for rare and declining grassland wildlife species, such as the Meadowlark and Greater prairie chicken, by increasing the diversity of native plant communities.



Grassed Waterway (CP-8A)

This practice is a natural or constructed channel that is shaped or graded to required dimensions and established with suitable grass vegetation. Grassed waterways are used to convey runoff from concentrated flow without causing soil erosion, to control gully erosion, and/or to protect and improve water quality. Depending on the type of vegetation established, these also may provide habitat for a variety of wildlife such as pheasants, quail, and rabbit. In Wisconsin, this practice must be enrolled in combination with a riparian buffer and/or filter strip and can extend up to 1000 ft from these practices.

