

# ISAP's EDGE-OF-FIELD INCENTIVE DIRECTORY: MAY 2023

The **Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership's (ISAP) Edge-of-Field Directory** provides an overview of edge-of-field (EoF) incentive payment opportunities for farmers in Illinois. EoF practices are defined as those practices which intercept, capture, and treat subsurface drainage (conservation drainage practices) or surface runoff at the field level. The conservation drainage practices include bioreactors, constructed wetlands for tile-drainage treatment, drainage water management, drainage water recycling, and saturated buffers. Surface runoff practices include vegetated riparian buffers, filter strips, prairie strips, and restored wetlands.

The directory also includes a "Stacking Matrix" so farmers can easily determine if they may be eligible to stack payments from multiple programs.

ISAP does not endorse any particular program or organization. Our aim is to facilitate data sharing among our farmer networks. This information was accurate at the time of publication (May 2023), but we encourage you to contact your local USDA field office or the lead organization for the most up-to-date information.



## ISAP's Edge-of-Field Incentive Directory: Publicly Funded Federal Programs

Programs with Description and Website Link	Geography	Contract Length	Payment Details	Sign-up Details*
<p>Under the Farm Bill's <b>Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) [Link]</b>, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to producers/landowners to help plan and implement conservation practices on agricultural and forest land. EQIP addresses natural resource concerns and delivers environmental benefits. <b>All EoF practices.</b></p>	Statewide	Not to exceed 10 years	Varies by practice	Applications accepted year-round; signed applications cut-off is typically in early January.
<p>Under the Farm Bill's <b>Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) [Link]</b>, NRCS helps producers maintain and improve existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. CSP offers annual payments for implementing activities on land and operating and maintaining existing conservation efforts. <b>Practices include filter strips, riparian buffers, and wetland wildlife habitat management.</b></p>	Statewide	5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varies by activity (practices and enhancements)</li> <li>Annual payments for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing practices.</li> </ul>	Applications accepted year-round; signed applications cut-off is typically in January or February.
<p>Under the Farm Bill's <b>Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE) [Link]</b> help landowners protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on priority land areas. NRCS enters into purchase agreements with eligible private landowners or Indian tribes that include the right for NRCS to develop and implement a wetland plan of operations. Landowner retains ownership and access to the property. Eligible land includes privately held farmed or converted wetlands that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. NRCS will prioritize applications based the easement's potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. <b>Wetland restoration or enhancement practices.</b></p>	Statewide	Permanent, 30 years, or term  Term is for the max duration allowed under applicable State laws.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanent - NRCS pays 100% of the easement value for the purchase of the easement.</li> <li>30-year and term - NRCS pays 50-75% of the easement value for the purchase of the easement.</li> <li>NRCS pays between 50-75% of the restoration costs for all easements.</li> </ul>	The application cutoff date is typically in December.
<p>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's <b>Partners for Fish &amp; Wildlife Program (PFW) [Link]</b> assists landowners, managers, tribes, corporations, schools and nonprofits interested in improving wildlife habitat on their land by restoring forest, prairie, wetland, and stream habitat. <b>Practices include wetland restoration and enhancement and riparian reforestation.</b></p>	Statewide	At least 10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free technical and financial assistance to plan, design, supervise, and monitor customized habitat restoration projects.</li> </ul>	Contact an USFWS Illinois Private Lands Biologist.

\* Visit your local USDA field office to determine your eligibility and to apply. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff can help determine which programs and practices fit your conservation goals. NRCS provides the technical and financial assistance for EQIP, CSP, and ACEP-WRE practices. Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides the financial assistance for CRP and federal component of CREP with NRCS providing the technical assistance.



Programs with Description and Website Link	Geography	Contract Length	Payment Details for Newly Enrolled acreage**	Sign-up Details
<p>The <b>Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) [Link]</b> is a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. There are 2 enrollment options: <b>General and Continuous</b>.</p>	Statewide	10-15 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual rental payments</li> <li>• Cost-share assistance up to 50% of THE ALLOWABLE COSTS to establish a practice</li> <li>• Climate-Smart Practice Incentive (3,5, or 10%) for practices that increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gases</li> </ul>	Applications are accepted year-round.
<p><b>General CRP sign-up [Link]</b> may not happen every year. For enrollment, the land is ranked using the EBI (Environmental Benefits Index). Landowners bid into the program and compete across all other offers submitted nationwide. Offers with the highest environmental benefits are selected. Practices eligible are typically whole field enrollments.</p>	Statewide	10-15 years		USDA announces the sign-up period each year, but it is around January to April.
<p><b>Continuous CRP sign-up [Link]</b> works on a first come, first serve basis. Necessary enrollment requirements must be met, but the acres are automatically accepted until the national statutory acreage cap is reached. Land must be cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2012 to 2017 and is physically and legally capable of being planted. Enrollment opportunities include <b>SAFE, CLEAR, FWP, and CREP</b>.</p>	Statewide	10-15 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual rental payments</li> <li>• Cost-share assistance up to 50% of THE ALLOWABLE COSTS to establish a practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications are accepted year-round.</li> <li>• Continuous CRP practices are not subject to competitive ranking during specific periods.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative [Link]</b> restores vital habitat in order to meet high-priority state wildlife conservation goals. Selected practices are designed to enhance important wildlife populations by creating critical habitat and food sources and to protect soil and water health by working as a barrier to sediment and nutrient runoff into waterways. <b>Practices include buffers and wetlands</b>.</p>	Statewide	10-15 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Climate Smart Annual Practice Incentive of 3,5, or 10% based on the practice cover</li> <li>• A 50% Practice Incentive Payment (PIP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the national statutory cap.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) [Link]</b> is designed to restore previously farmed wetlands and wetland buffers to improve both vegetation and water flow. Land generally must have been used for agricultural purposes for 3 of the past 10 crop years. Enrolled land cannot exceed 40 acres for wetlands or constructed wetlands. <b>Practices include wetlands, wetland buffers, and constructed wetlands</b>.</p>	Statewide	10-15 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign-up Incentive Payment (SIP) equal to 32.5% of first full year's annual rental payment</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR) [Link]</b> prioritizes water quality practices on the land that will help reduce sediment loadings, nutrient loadings, and harmful algal blooms. <b>Practices include prairie strips, filter strips, saturated filter strips, saturated riparian buffer, riparian buffer, denitrifying bioreactor on filter strips, denitrifying bioreactor on riparian buffers, wetland restoration, wetland restoration non-floodplain</b>.</p>	Statewide	10-30 years	All continuous CRP payments plus 20% water quality Incentive	

\*\* FSA bases rental rates on the productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent. The per-acre annual rental rate may not exceed the calculated rate or \$300/acre for continuous CRP and \$240 for General CRP. Producers may elect to receive a rental rate amount less than the maximum payment rate.



Programs with Description and Website Link	Geography	Contract Length	Payment Details	Sign-up Details
<p>The <b>Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) [Link]</b> is an enhanced version of CRP. It is intended to reduce the amount of agricultural chemicals and sediment from agricultural lands entering waters within the project area and enhance aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat. The federal funds are supplemented with non-federal funds from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to achieve the state's high-priority conservation goals. The program does accept non-cropland acres adjacent to CREP enrolled cropland. <b>Practices include filter strips, riparian buffers, wetland restoration (floodplain and non-floodplain) located in the 100-year floodplain or previously farmed wetland).</b></p>	<p>100-year floodplain of the Illinois River and Kaskaskia River Watersheds</p>	<p>30 years to perpetuity (Federal and State combination)</p>	<p><b>Federal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For eligible practices, a Sign-up Incentive Payment (SIP) equal to 32.5% of first full year's annual rental payment</li> <li>A 25% incentive rate above the annual rental payment for lands enrolled in riparian, wetland, or HEL practices.</li> </ul> <p><b>State:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One-time lump sum payment calculated for the execution of a 15-year or permanent easement.</li> <li>FSA and IDNR together cover 100% cost-share for federal practice establishment (new federal enrollments only).</li> </ul>	<p>Visit your local FSA or SWCD office for applications and cut-off dates.</p>



Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership's Edge of Field Incentive Directory: Publicly Funded Initiative Programs

Regional Conservation Partnership Programs (RCPP) with Description and Website Link	Geography	Lead Organization & Funding Source	Sign-up Details
<p>The <b>Lake Springfield (RCPP) [Link]</b> will provide funds for nutrient planning, building soil health and resiliency, decreasing input costs, installing structural practices to reduce erosion and treat drained water to producers in the Lake Springfield watershed.</p>	<p>Lake Springfield Watershed</p>	<p>City Water, Light, &amp; Power USDA Farm Bill</p>	<p>Visit your local NRCS or SWCD office.</p> <p>Applications are accepted year-round. There may be one or more cut-off dates depending on program, but typically in late February or early March.</p>
<p>The <b>Working Lands, Water and Wildlife Partnership RCPP [Link]</b> will support implementation of conservation practices, land rental payments and conservation easements that address impaired water quality, wildlife habitat, and farmland conversion.</p>	<p>Multiple counties in Illinois</p>	<p>The Conservation Fund USDA Farm Bill</p>	
<p>The <b>Kankakee River Basin RCPP [Link]</b> will provide producers in the Kankakee and Iroquois watersheds funds to implement conservation practices or establish habitat to address water quality and quantity issues. The initiative goal is to install 3,000 acres of new conservation cover, two-miles of two-stage ditches, 800 acres of wetland easements, and 2500+ conservation practices. (Expected to begin in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024.)</p>	<p>Kankakee &amp; Iroquois River Watersheds (IN &amp; IL)</p>	<p>Indiana State Dept. of Agriculture USDA Farm Bill</p>	
<p>The <b>Rend Lake Watershed Conservation Initiative RCPP</b> will help implement climate-smart ag practices to reduce nutrient pollution in the watershed as published in the Rend Lake Total Maximum Daily Load watershed-based plan. (Expected to begin in FY2024)</p>	<p>Rend Lake Watershed</p>	<p>Jefferson County SWCD USDA Farm Bill</p>	
<p>The <b>Lake Decatur Water Quality Initiative and RCPP [Link]</b> will address causes of sediment and nutrient loading and focus on management, timing and placement of nutrients, cover crops, reduced tillage on highly erodible soils, and strategic structural practices. (Expected to begin in FY2024)</p>	<p>Lake Decatur Watershed</p>	<p>City of Decatur USDA Farm Bill</p>	



Programs with Description and Website Link	Geography	Lead Organization & Funding Source	Contract Length	Details	Contact
<b>Pheasants Forever &amp; Quail Forever Illinois (PFQF) [Link]</b> will assist private landowners, land trusts, land managers and partners interested in enrolling marginal cropland acres into quality wildlife habitat.	Statewide	PFQF IDNR NRCS USDA Farm Bill	Varies	Free technical, financial and hands on assistance those interested in establishing or improving habitat for pheasants or quail.	Contact your local PFQF county Farm Bill Biologist
The Wetland Initiative's <b>Smart Wetland Program [Link]</b> provides free technical and financial assistance to farmers/landowners interested in implementing tile-treatment wetlands.	North-central IL	The Wetlands Initiative	Varies	Free technical and financial assistance to plan, design, supervise and construct wetlands that intercept and treat tile drainage water.	Request a <a href="#">consultation</a> or email <a href="mailto:jmcguire@wetlands-initiative.org">jmcguire@wetlands-initiative.org</a>

### Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership's Edge of Field Incentive Stacking Matrix

ISAP's Edge of Field Incentive "Stacking Matrix" is designed to demonstrate opportunities for farmers to stack payments from different incentive programs for edge-of-field practices. State and non-governmental organization programs may be able to provide additional cost-share dollars for practices implemented through federal programs. Local NRCS field offices can determine applicant and land eligibility and assist you in determining which program (or programs) are best suited for addressing your natural resource concerns.

	EQIP	CSP	ACEP-WRE	CRP	CREP (FEDERAL)	CREP (STATE)	PFQF	USFWS PFW	TWI Smart Wetlands
EQIP		X	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓
CSP	X		X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X
ACEP-WRE	X	X		X	X	X	✓	X	X
CRP	X	X	X		X	✓*	✓	X	✓
CREP (FEDERAL)	X	X	X	X		✓	✓	X	✓
CREP (STATE)	✓	✓	X	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
PFQF	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
USFWS PFW	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓		✓
TWI Smart Wetlands	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

\* Existing CRP can be taken into the state additional acres but only if the CRP acres are enrolled before or at the time of the easement.