

Are you a farmer interested in being paid to protect water quality? The [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP) works with farmers to convert low-yield cropland and marginal pastureland into riparian forests that protect water quality, create wildlife habitat and provide an additional source of income for farmers.

Participating farmers enroll eligible fields into conservation easements- written agreements between the landowner and the state of North Carolina. The landowner agrees to carry out conservation practices (such as tree planting) and to restrict future cropping and development on the land but retains private ownership. In return, the farmer receives 15 years of per-acre payments, a one-time bonus (\$250 per acre for 30-year easements or \$1,000 per acre for permanent easements), and cost shares to reimburse the farmer for the cost of establishing conservation practices. Conservation easements last 30-years or permanently, depending on the landowner's choice.

CREP is accepting enrollments in the eastern third of the state. To be eligible, the land must have been owned for 1 year, have been farmed for at least four years between 2012 and 2018, and be adjacent to a qualifying water body. See if your land is eligible and contact CREP staff using our [interactive map](#).