

# Newsletter

Vol 3 Spring 2022



OVER 20 YEARS OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION

For over 20 years, CREP has been a successful partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Illinois Soil and Water Districts (SWCD). The program goals are to reduce sediment & nutrient runoff, improve water quality, and create and enhance critical habitat for fish and wildlife populations on private lands within the Illinois and Kaskaskia River Watersheds. Currently, there are more than 1,300 CREP easements protecting over 90,000 acres.

## What's New with CREP?

The new CREP Wildlife Food Plot Request and Guidelines form is here!  
Visit our website for more info.  
[Click Here](#)

### CREP IDNR/CREP Conservation Management Plan (CMP) Request

Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702 (217) 557-6498

#### Wildlife Food Plot (Non-CRP)

##### CREP CONSERVATION PRACTICE:

**Wildlife Food Plot (Non-CRP)** – Optional conservation cover comprised of annual or perennial vegetation established to provide suitable food and habitat support for wildlife in the area. Annual food plot acres typically require annual disturbance and seeding to maintain the conservation cover. Perennial food plot acres do not require annual disturbance and seeding to maintain the conservation cover.

##### IDNR/CREP PRACTICE GUIDELINES (Section C):

Wildlife Food Plot (Non-CRP) establishment and maintenance on CREP easement acres shall follow current IDNR/CREP guidelines. Practice guidelines are subject to periodic updates at the discretion of IDNR/CREP. Please reference Section C of this document for information on applicable practice guidelines.

## SWCD Shout-Out!

Gearing up for the Spring season, IDNR CREP wants to thank our SWCD partners for all the hard work performed in the field, but especially the admin stuff!!  
Lorraine in Bureau converted our easement KMZ file to a GIS shapefile and shared the instructions with other districts. Thad in Iroquois and Stephanie in Morgan have worked extra hard, including Saturdays to bring their CREP ownership files up to date. The work you all do keeps this program moving forward!! Have a good planting season

## Photos of the Season



Photos credit: CRS Kristen Ragusa

## Landowner Spotlight

Ted and Linda Krauskopf of Madison Co. decided to enroll the highly erodible floodplain acres on their property into a permanent CREP easement. This provided some income on once unproductive land while transforming their backyard into a wildlife habitat.

"the permanent easement is the best use for these acres...the open space will only become more important as our county becomes more densely populated" - Ted Krauskopf



Photos courtesy of Ted Krauskopf



Do you have a great photo from a trail cam or hunt on your CREP property? Let's see who has the biggest bucks, tallest turkeys and most photogenic pheasants.  
Email your pics to [dnr.crep@illinois.gov](mailto:dnr.crep@illinois.gov)

## Critter Corner

As temperatures rise, so are our hibernating species. Reptiles and amphibians emerge early spring, just in time to take advantage of the spring ephemerals and emerging insects.



Photo credit: CRS Kristen Ragusa

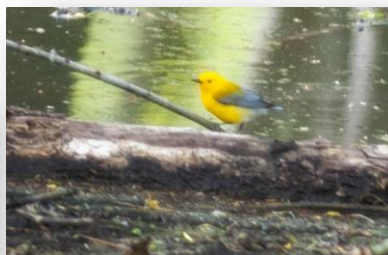


Photo credit: CRS Kristen Ragusa

CREP would also like to give a big welcome back to our migrating bird species. Many neotropical birds will be returning to their breeding grounds. Be on the look out for their vibrant plumage.



## The More You Know...

Managing CREP forest stands with practices like woody invasive removals, canopy thinnings, and prescribed burns help promote growth of spring ephemerals. These plants are the earliest flowers to bloom in native Illinois ecosystems. Along with creating a beautiful forest floor, these flowers are valuable food and cover sources for pollinators, deer, box turtles, and other critters!



Photo credit: CRS Allison Bryant

Warm season grass stands have extensive root systems that help control sediment and nutrient loss. These grasses' bunched growth structures also provide ideal nesting habitat for a variety of birds. Contact your local Conservation Resource Specialist for more information.

[Learn more about CREP goals](#)

## Conservation Resource Specialists

Did you know CREP has 6 field specialists to support the program? They would be happy to visit with you on your property to address any CREP related question.

[Look up the staff for your area](#)

Don't forget, you can find a ton of info and answers to frequently asked questions on [the CREP website](#).

<https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/CREP>

If you would like to be added to our email list or have other questions contact

[DNR.CREP@illinois.gov](mailto:DNR.CREP@illinois.gov)

217 557-6498

## DIY Management

*Did you know?... You can manage your own CREP easement.*

Are you interested in enhancing your grassland? Or perhaps adding a few beneficial trees to your tree planting? CREP encourages projects that enhance your easement. Plants can be purchased at many locations, including IDNR's Mason State Tree Nursery. Please note that large projects will require an updated conservation management plan.



Photo credit: CRS Anne Hughes



Photo credit: CRS Anne Hughes

### Planting tips:

- Planting grasses and forbs in bunches will improve their success rate.
- Cool Season grasses are ideal for areas with major erosion.
- Native wildflowers and forbs create excellent food sources for pollinators.
- Increasing plant diversity will create a more resilient vegetative cover.

The addition of beneficial plants can really increase the ecological value of your easement. Forest stand enhancement may be utilized on CREP acres with a management plan from your local IDNR forester.

[Click here for more information](#)

## Seasonal Considerations

- ✓ As it gets warmer, remember that conservation mowing can be done outside of the primary nesting season:  
**April 15<sup>th</sup> – August 1<sup>st</sup>**
- ✓ April showers bring May... mushrooms! Did you know CREP easements can be great spots for morels, chanterelles, and other tasty finds? Happy foraging!



Photo credit: CRS Allison Bryant

With spring flowers comes spring pollinators!

*Keep an eye out for early spring pollinators! Illinois' native bees start buzzing about as early as March. Warm season grass and forb mixes provide great pollinator habitat.*



Photo credit: CRS Allison Bryant