



# CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

## ENROLLMENT PROCESS

To be enrolled into the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) you must complete the following tasks:

*Submit an application and associated documentation for consideration. The documents needed for examination are:*

- 1. The official application form completely executed.*
- 2. Provide an Assessor's Map. 8 ½" x 11" full color aerial map (blown up full page without parcel data image) of all parcels included in enrollment. (If you must, roll the page). Obtainable from your Assessor's office in the county where the property resides or oftentimes online. It is an outline map of your property, with the PIN (Property I.D. #) attached to it.*
- 3. Provide also require a second full color 8 ½" x 11" Aerial Stand Map of all parcels included in enrollment. (If you must, ORIENT the page to allow the entire parcel to fill the page). Please identify (outline) the manicured lawn and buildings on the property. Also identify the CRP (if applicable). Also identify any Pastures and row crop production on the property. Divide your property into sections and identify each section as Stand 1, Stand 2 and so on. Outline the type of management practices prescribed for each stand.*
- 4. Provide a Copy of the most recent tax bill (With current landowner contact information) for each parcel submitted, or if the property is a new purchase, we require a Full copy of the deed for each parcel containing acreage being submitted for enrollment.*

*Once we are in receipt of this information our office will review your application.*

- After review of your application an inspection of your property may be required.*
- Approval of your management plan.*
- Upon approval of your management plan, we will mail you a Certification to sign, date and return to our office. This will complete the enrollment process.*

*Upon our receipt of the Certification your County Assessor will be informed of your enrollment into the program by the Illinois Department of Revenue. The Conservation Stewardship Assessment begins January 1 of the following year after the plan is certified by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (regardless of the date it is approved). Assessments are not pro-rated.*

*Mail your information to:*  
Conservation Stewardship Program  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
One Natural Resources Way  
Springfield, IL. 62702



# CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP) FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)



**Is there a fee associated with enrolling my land in the Conservation Stewardship Program?** No. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) will review your plan and provide notification to the Department of Revenue when your plan is approved. There is no charge for this processing.

**Am I required to hire a professional to write a management plan for my land?** No. However, IDNR recommends landowners consult with a wildlife or forestry professional to establish their management plan. There are many qualified consultants available throughout the state.

**What is the deadline for sending my conservation management plan to the Department of Natural Resources?** There is no deadline established in the Conservation Stewardship Law or in the rules prepared by IDNR. However, to improve the likelihood that CSP valuation has been put on your property before January 1<sup>st</sup> annually, applications must be submitted no later than November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Should I send a copy of my conservation management plan to the assessor in my county?** It is not necessary to send your conservation management plan to anyone other than DNR. DNR is responsible for reviewing and approving plans and then providing information on approved plans to the Department of Revenue. The Department of Revenue will notify your county assessor that you have an approved plan, enabling the assessor to make the appropriate adjustment in your valuation.

**How can I be sure that I am getting the best available tax rate on my property?** There are some situations in which a landowner is already paying less tax on their property than they would under the Conservation Stewardship Program. Your county assessor is the best source of information on how your current taxes compare to what you would pay in the Conservation Stewardship Program.

**When will the special valuation under the Conservation Stewardship Law take effect?** The soonest that your taxes can be affected is for the next calendar year's valuation. This valuation will be reflected on the tax bill that you receive the following year. Enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program is for 10 years, at that time you will need to re-enroll.

**What is the special valuation rate for land enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program?** Land accepted into the Conservation Stewardship Program will be valued at 5% of the fair market value for property tax purposes.

**How will I know if my conservation management plan has been approved?** You will receive certification from the Department of Natural Resources when your plan has been approved. DNR will also notify the Department of Revenue.

**What if my plan is not approved by DNR?** If your plan does not satisfy the requirements of the Conservation Stewardship Law, DNR will notify you and tell you what is lacking. You will have an opportunity to re-submit the plan with the needed information added. If your plan is rejected by DNR a second time, you can appeal that decision to a 3-member DNR committee.

**If my land is already enrolled in another conservation program, should I apply to the Conservation Stewardship Program?** The decision to withdraw from another program that provides a property tax reduction to enroll in the Conservation Stewardship Program may be complicated and will depend on your individual circumstances. It is best to consult your county assessor, tax consultant or attorney to determine if changing programs will give you the most favorable property tax rate. You could also talk with the DNR, Nature Preserves Commission, or USDA resource manager who helped prepare your existing management plan to determine which program best fits your plans for your land. With information on management options and tax benefits, you can choose the program that is best for you.

**What lands are eligible for enrollment in CSP?**

- Five or more contiguous acres of unimproved land - unimproved land means woodlands, prairie, wetlands or other vacant and undeveloped land that is not used for any residential or commercial purpose that materially disturbs the land.
- Land in a Forestry Development Program Plan (also known as a Forest Stewardship Plan) under Section 10-150 of the Property Tax Code. (Be aware that switching from FDA to CSP will increase your taxes. The same acre cannot be enrolled in both programs.)
- Land registered or encumbered by conservation rights under Section 10-166 of the Property Tax Code

**What lands are not eligible for enrollment?**

- Any land in Cook County
- Land assessed as farmland under Sections 10-110 through 10-145 of the Property Tax Code and any land used for agricultural purposes
- Land valued under Section 10-152 (vegetated filter strips) or 10-153 (non clear-cut along navigable waters) of the Property Tax Code
- Land valued as open space under Section 10-155 of the Property Tax Code
- Land certified under Section 10-167 of the Property Tax Code
- Any property dedicated as a nature preserve or nature preserve buffer under the Natural Areas Preservation Act - the assessed value of a dedicated nature preserve or buffer is one dollar per acre for the calculation of property taxes

If you are not certain of the current valuation status of your property, please consult your county assessor.

**If I sell my land, does the Conservation Stewardship Program's valuation and management plan remain in effect?** Yes, the special valuation can carry over to the new owner if the new owner submits a 'Change of Ownership' form, updated Schedule of Practices, and updated Deed or Tax Bill proving ownership. This must be completed within six months of the sale close.

**If I enroll in the Conservation Stewardship Program, will I be required to allow public access to my land?** No. Access must be granted to IDNR staff for initial CSP approval and any compliance inspections. IDNR staff may contact you about potential research opportunities involving your property, but your involvement is not mandatory.

For more information go to: <https://dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/csp.html>  
Or email [DNR.CSP@illinois.gov](mailto:DNR.CSP@illinois.gov)