

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT EASEMENTS ON CRP LAND

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Memorandum of Agreement between USDA and the State of Maryland authorizes the continuation of a “voluntary program for the purchase of perpetual easements for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land.” The following are some of the most frequently asked questions regarding this type of perpetual conservation easement.

What is a perpetual CREP easement?

A perpetual CREP easement is a written legal agreement between a landowner and the State of Maryland in which there is an acquired permanent interest in the land to install or maintain conservation practices that protect water quality and natural resources. The easement option is available only to landowners who have an existing federal CREP contract and who have installed the prescribed CREP conservation practice(s).

Who administers the CREP easement program in Maryland?

Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers the CREP easement program. DNR is also assisted by a number of local government and non-government organization sponsors. A list of contacts with phone numbers is included at the end of this FAQ sheet.

Are all landowners who have a current federal CREP contract eligible for a CREP easement?

Yes. However, DNR and its sponsors will initially target easement requests from Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Wicomico, Caroline, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, Washington, and Worcester Counties.

Why should I consider a CREP easement?

A CREP Easement ensures that your decisions about wise use of your land remain unchanged. Easements pass with ownership, so efforts to protect water quality & wildlife habitat continue even if you don’t control the land. There also may be tax advantages to an easement.

What amount of money can I expect if I sell a perpetual easement?

Values are determined by an easement valuation system, which takes into account the county where the land is located, the size of the buffers, and the amount of land going into the easement.

How many acres can I enroll?

Landowners can enroll all the acres they have in a current CREP federal contract. Additionally, they can match these acres on a 1:1 ratio with adjoining lands that contribute to the objectives of protecting water quality and natural resources.

What type of adjoining land qualifies for the program’s match?

Only croplands, marginal pasturelands, and forestlands can be used for the 1:1 match. The matching acreage must be included in either a conservation plan or a forest stewardship plan which must be in effect the date the easement contract is approved or within one year of the date thereof.