



Natural Resources Conservation Service
204 West 5th Street
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Programs aimed at Native/Natural Areas and Their Management

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP): State of Iowa

Cost-share on this program is set at 75% and you have one year to complete these practices. Money is given to each Soil & Water Conservation District, and dollars are spent on a first-come, first-served basis in Mills County. This program has a 20-year maintenance agreement. Practices eligible through this program are as follows:

- **Brush Removal (314):** Clear cedars, locust, sumac, and other brush from Native prairie remnants. Soil & Water Conservation District makes decisions as to cost/acre allowed for clearing, and the projects viability as prairie restoration.
- **Conservation Cover (327):** Plant native prairie mix for wildlife habitat. Can be used for grazing livestock once established in a rotation system. Seeding mix must be approved prior to seeding to ensure it meets specification as set forth in NRCS's Conservation Cover Practice Standard.
- **Forest/Tree Planting (612):** The site will be assessed by Mills SWCD, NRCS, and Iowa DNR District Forester Jeremy Cochran. Cochran will develop tree planting and establishment plan for the site. Rate is set between \$500-600/acre.
- **Timber/Forest Stand Improvement (666):** The timbered area is assessed by Jeremy Cochran prior to allocation of funds. Jeremy will formulate a plan for the property, as well as help with any timber sales. Cost-share rate on this practice is set at \$75/acre (\$100 total cost per acre), unless otherwise stated.

Loess Hills Stewardship Initiative: Funded by Fish & Wildlife Federation (Federal Dollars)

This program could cost-share on cedar removal on the same cost-basis; cost-share is 60%. The main difference is prescribed burning, if your application is accepted. This has a 10-year maintenance agreement and applications are ranked and accepted as allowed by funding.

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- **Timber/Forest Stand Improvement (666):** This program pays for opening areas described as Oak Savannas, or open grown bur & white oak and/or hickory.
- **Prescribed Fire (338):** Cost-share is set up based on estimates by The Nature Conservancy's Burn Crew (Matt Graeve). Cost-share is allowed on fire-break preparation and the burn itself.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) – USDA Funds

Cost share is available on **all practices listed above** through this program, at 60% cost-share. I believe that it has a 10-year maintenance agreement. This program allows up to five years for completion of contract items. It can be difficult to get a contract, though, as applications are ranked through the Iowa State NRCS Office. Sign-up for 2006 applications ends January 27.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – USDA Funds

EQIP is usually based on working lands, but Mills County NRCS has developed a prairie buffer practice to use in protection of native prairie remnants. Through this program, a landowner who has a remnant native prairie can apply for funds to manage (burn, brush removal, etc.) the existing area, plus implement a buffer of reconstructed prairie. NRCS would pay for the harvest, cleaning, and planting of seed from the original prairie to the buffer. This is best fit for cropped or pasture areas that are not otherwise eligible for the Conservation Reserve Program.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) – USDA Funds

To be eligible for this program, you must have crop history on the land: at least four crops in six years between 1996 and 2001. There are many different practices that land may be eligible for. Contact your local USDA office to determine which practices you could implement on your farm.

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