



# Mills

## Soil and Water Conservation District

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### News Release

#### CRP Offers Producers Protection from Trees While Ensuring Income

Farmers know that along their fence rows and close to the streams, they are going to lose a few, if not more, rows of corn and soybeans. Even if they do try to get those few measly ears picked or pods harvested, the wear and tear on their equipment adds up quick. Scraping tractors and hitting fence posts & trees, running branches and debris through a combine are all common fates, not to mention the ever-popular removal of rear-view mirrors and antennas.

However, Producers also know the benefits of those same trees and fencerows. A solid fencerow or stream buffer stops the wind from knocking over crops, and keeps the summer breeze from drying-out the soil during the hot months when yields are affected by low soil moisture. There are also increased water-filtering benefits, wildlife habitat, and possible timber harvest income.

So what is a farmer who likes trees and habitat - but needs the most income from his land - to do? Alternatives are available through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Buffers are available for along creeks and/or field boundaries from as little as 20-feet (30 feet on field boundaries) to 120-feet wide. Producers can choose their width based on their needs.

“But what about the costs?” you ask. The practices offered by USDA through CRP usually have a sign-up incentive, so you can get \$100 to \$150 per acre, up front, for a 10 or 15-year contract, respectively. Cost of implementation is cost-shared up to 90%, so you can figure on spending below \$20/acre out of your pocket. Lastly, you get the average rental rate for the soils on which your contract is located; usually better than Cash Rent (\$70-172/acre/year).

Rumors abound that you can't mow weeds or control trees once you are in CRP, but that is false; the USDA allows landowners to control woody plant encroachment, and does not want or allow noxious weeds in CRP areas. We have also analyzed the cost of implementation of CRP practices versus planting corn and soybeans for 10 years. For more information, call the Mills Soil & Water Conservation District at 712.624.8606 extension 3 or check out [www.mills-swcd.org](http://www.mills-swcd.org) on the Farmland Info page.

The following web-page compares crop production & CRP:  
[http://www.mills-swcd.org/Farm\\_Efficiency/CRoP.html](http://www.mills-swcd.org/Farm_Efficiency/CRoP.html)

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