

Conservation Stewardship Program

Is CSP Right for My Woodlands?



Can You Answer 'Yes' to the Following?

Then CSP may be a good fit for your operation.

- ☐ I own or rent, and manage land for forest production.
- ☐ I have already been doing conservation work on my operation.
- ☐ I want to expand my existing conservation efforts to achieve a higher level of environmental stewardship.
- ☐ I intend or plan to maintain control of the land for at least five years.
- ☐ My land complies with highly erodible land and wetland conservation determination provisions (if unsure, ask your local USDA Service Center)
- ☐ I have a social security number or employer identification number issued by the IRS.
- ☐ My adjusted gross income is less than \$900,000 (not applicable to Indian Tribes).
- ☐ As a member of an entity or joint operation, I have authority to make management decisions for the property.

What is CSP?

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers technical and financial assistance to help woodland owners take their conservation efforts to the next level.

The program is designed to compensate

agricultural and forest producers who agree to increase their level of conservation by adopting additional conservation activities and maintaining their baseline level of conservation. CSP is for producers passionate about conservation and environmental stewardship.

What are the Benefits?

CSP provides many benefits, including increased native biodiversity, increased timber production, wildlife habitat improvements and increased resilience to weather extremes. CSP also encourages adoption of new technologies and management techniques.

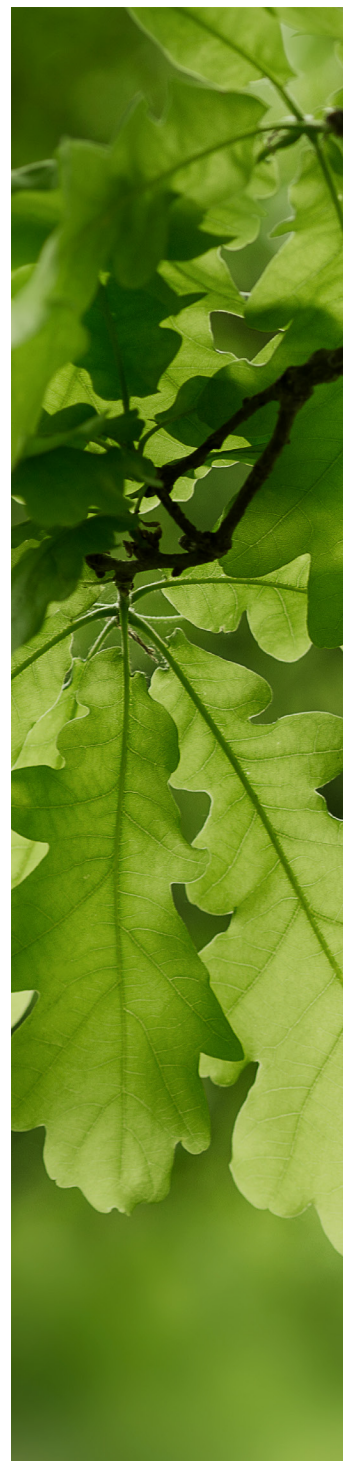
For example, CSP can help you:

- Reduce invasive species and promote native plant communities
- Improve tree growth with high timber potential
- Manage forested areas to benefit wildlife habitat

If you are already taking steps to improve the condition of the land, CSP can help you find new ways to meet your goals.

How Does CSP Work?

CSP offers opportunities for producers to expand on existing conservation efforts by applying new conservation practices, enhancements, and bundles. These new activities will help enhance natural resources and improve the operation.



For example, if you are working to control non-native invasive plants, you may decide to try an enhancement to conduct a crop tree release to increase native mast production for wildlife.

If you apply for CSP, the local NRCS conservation planner will have a one-on-one consultation with you to evaluate your current management system and the natural resources on your land. You will work with the NRCS conservation planner and the Ohio Department of Natural Resource's Division of Forestry state service forester to select new CSP conservation activities based on your woodland management objectives.

Once you choose the conservation practices or activities that best fit, and if your application is selected for funding, CSP offers annual payments for implementing these practices on your land, and operating and maintaining existing conservation efforts.

CSP also offers bundles where you can select a suite of enhancements and receive a higher payment rate.

How Long is a CSP Contract?

Five years, with the potential to renew for another five-year period if you successfully complete your first contract term, and if your renewal application ranks high enough (CSP renewals are competitive).

CSP Eligibility

What Lands are Eligible for CSP?

Eligible lands include nonindustrial private forest land, farmstead, associated agricultural lands and public land that is under the control of the applicant and part of their operation. There is no minimum acreage requirement. CSP enrolls your entire operation into the program, not just

one specific field or tract. All land must be in compliance with USDA highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions to be eligible for CSP.

Who is Eligible to Apply for CSP?

Applicants may include individuals, legal entities, joint operations or Indian Tribes that own or rent and currently manage land for agricultural or forest production. The applicant must have a social security number or employer identification number issued by the IRS and maintain control of the land for the entirety of the 5-year CSP contract. The applicant must have an adjusted gross income of less than \$900,000 (not applicable to Indian Tribes).

What is the Stewardship Threshold?

Stewardship threshold is used by NRCS to determine if a CSP applicant currently meets or exceeds an adequate level of conservation criteria for a particular natural resource concern. CSP applicants must currently meet the stewardship threshold for at least two natural resource concerns within the operation. They must agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one additional resource concern by the end of the contract on at least one land use. An NRCS planner will assist you if you are unsure of your threshold.

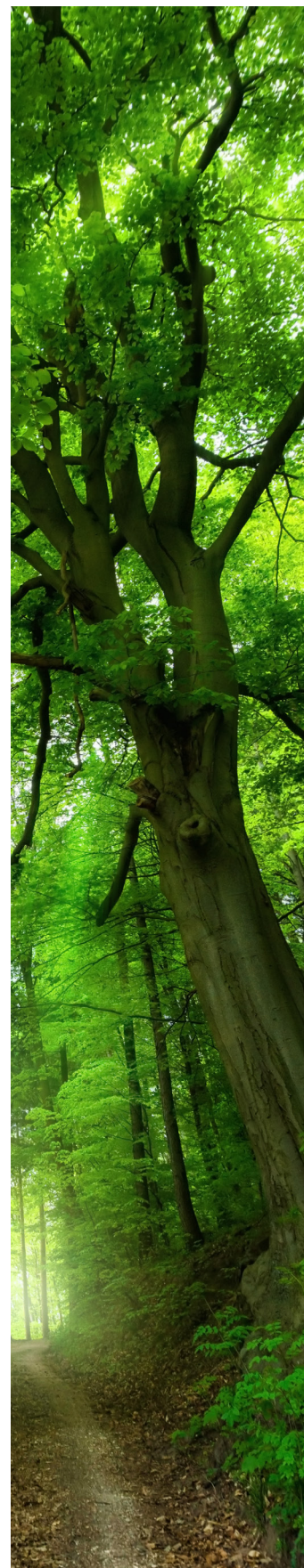
Practice Enhancements and Bundles

What is a Conservation Practice?

Conservation practices can improve soil, water, plants, air, wildlife habitat, and related natural resources. Each conservation practice must be performed using Ohio NRCS practice standards.

What is an Enhancement?

Enhancements are conservation activities used to treat resource concerns and improve conservation performance.



What is a Bundle?

Bundles are land-use specific and consist of at least three enhancements, for which implementation as a group improves conservation performance and addresses multiple resource concerns.

Each bundle has three or more required enhancements, and for some bundles, the applicant has the option to pick additional enhancements from a select list that addresses specific resource concerns.

Producers interested in implementing enhancements or bundles on their property can visit with their local NRCS conservation planner to learn more.

CSP Payments

What Types of Payments are Offered?

1. Annual contract payments which are based on two components:

- Payments to maintain existing level of conservation based on the land uses included in the contract.
- Payments to implement additional conservation practices and activities.

2. Minimum contract payments for most contracts.

When are Payments Made?

NRCS makes payments as soon as practical after October 1 of each fiscal year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous fiscal year and completed before September 30.

Do I Pay Income Taxes on Payments?

Yes. All payments made to you by NRCS are reported to the Internal Revenue Service and should be reported as income on your tax return for the applicable tax

year. You will receive a Form 1099 to report CSP payments on your tax return.

CSP Application and Evaluation

How do I apply for CSP?

Contact your local NRCS field office and let them know you are interested in CSP. A conservation planner will work with you to determine your stewardship threshold eligibility.

If you are new to working with USDA, you will need to establish a Farm Record with the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Establishing a Farm Record requires several forms and documents, so make an appointment with your FSA office.

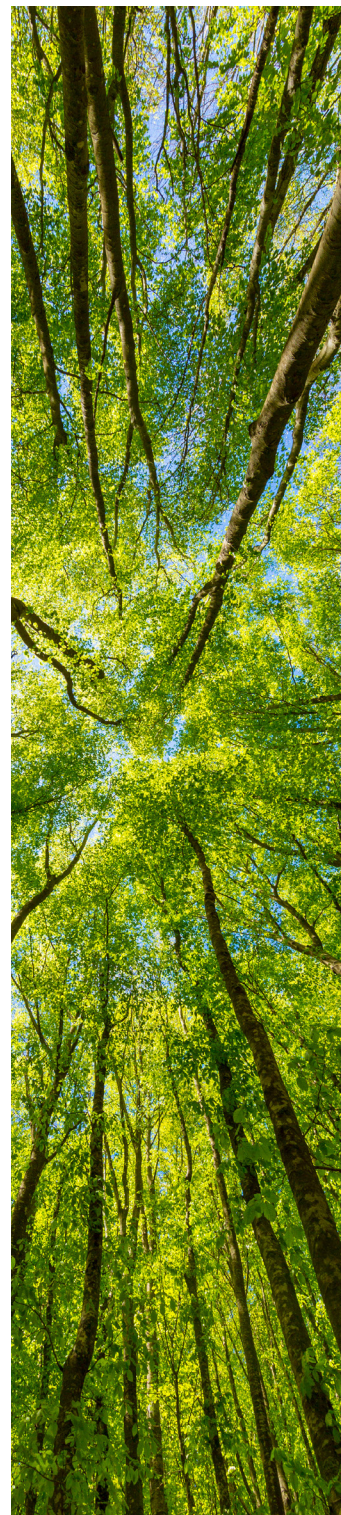
In addition, you will also need to submit:

1. NRCS CPA-1200- Conservation Program Application
2. A map showing all land uses and acres in the operation.
3. A map or other documentation identifying any known ineligible land and associated acreage amounts.

How are CSP applications evaluated?

Once NRCS and the Division of Forestry complete an assessment of your operation and you choose the conservation practices or activities that you want to implement, NRCS will rank your application to determine how well your current and future management system will address national, state, and local natural resource priorities.

NRCS will rank your application against other eligible applications in the same ranking pool, with the highest scoring applications receiving contract offers first.



Ohio

**Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service**

nrcs.usda.gov/



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. [OH.-2023]