

RRWCD Partners with CO to Provide Additional CREP Incentives for Irrigators near the South Fork

The Republican River Water Conservation District (RRWCD) through its Water Activity Enterprise has received funding from the State of Colorado to provide additional non-federal one-time bonus payments to CREP participants who enroll land into a CREP contract within an area described as the South Fork Focus Zone.

The RRWCD and the state have partnered through an inter-agency agreement to provide an additional two hundred dollars (\$200.00) per irrigated acre within the South Fork Focus Zone (map). This one time per irrigated acre payment incentive is in addition to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and RRWCD-WAE CREP annual payments.

Funding for this new non-federal bonus payment is limited, so producers within this South Fork Focus Zone are encouraged to initiate their enrollment through their local FSA office as soon as possible.

The original Republican River CREP Agreement was implemented in 2006. A 2018 revision to the original RR-CREP made some significant improvements by simplifying non-federal payments, increasing the boundary to include portions of Washington and Lincoln counties, and restructuring federal annual incentive payments to reflect current agricultural conditions in all counties within the RRWCD boundary.

The revision identified the South Fork of the Republican River was as a high priority. The RRWCD-WAE implemented higher non-federal annual incentives to encourage additional participation in this area.

With the new federal and non-federal incentives, new eligible irrigated land in Washington and Lincoln counties, and now an additional one time non-federal payment for eligible irrigated lands in the South Fork Focus Zone, CREP may be an economical alternative to enhance your operation and contribute to the effort to improve the Ogallala Aquifer.

As an example, a producer who enrolls qualified irrigated land within 1 mile of the South Fork River in Kit Carson County may receive as much as three thousand seven hundred twenty-five dollars (\$3,725.00) per acre from FSA and the RRWCD-WAE over the 15 year term of the contract with these increased rental payments and the new one-time bonus payment.

Payments in other portions of the basin may be slightly lower depending on the location of the land and the irrigation well.

FSA set a CREP sign-up deadline of August 23, 2019, for contracts to be effective October 1, 2019. To start the process of applying for a CREP contract as soon as this program opens up for new applications, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office or the RRWCD office (970-332-3552) to learn more about how the changes in the program may benefit you and your operation.