



Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program 2007 Annual Report

Submitted by the
Indiana State Department of Agriculture
Division of Soil Conservation

I. Executive Summary

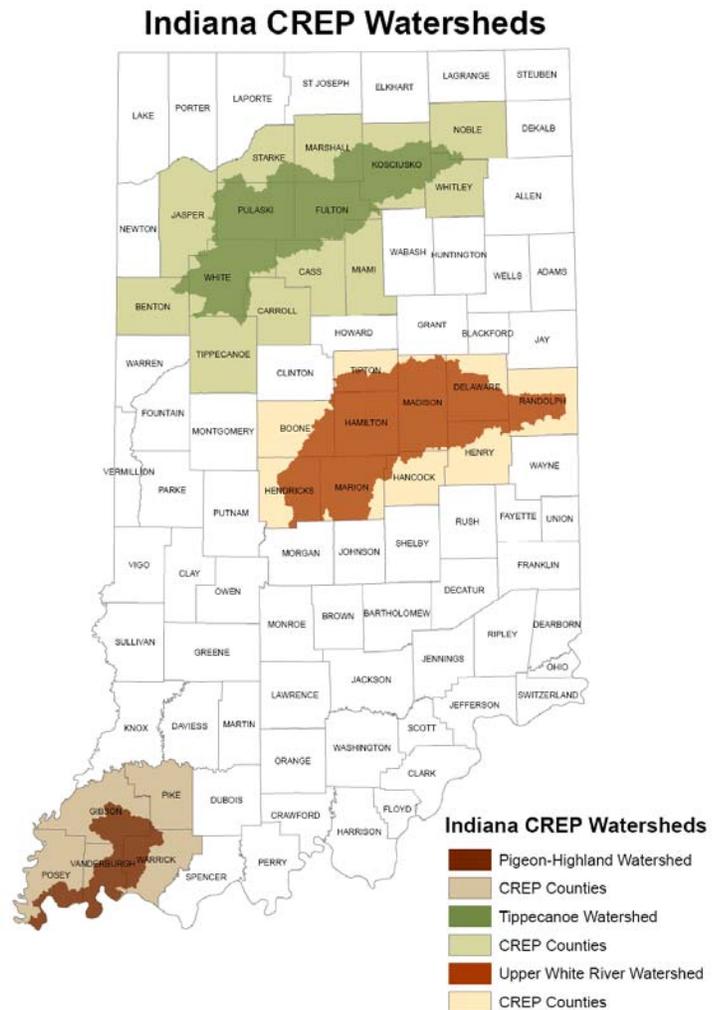
In July of 2005, the State of Indiana contracted with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to begin a new program for Indiana landowners and farmers. This new program, the Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), focuses on the installation of conservation buffers and restoring wetlands within the Tippecanoe, Upper White and Pigeon/Highland River Watersheds (Map 1). Runoff within these three watersheds contributes high non-point source sediment, nutrient, pesticide and herbicide losses from agricultural lands. This agreement was designed to help Indiana landowners address water quality. As of October 2007, Indiana landowners have committed to install conservation buffers and wetlands on more than 3,500 acres of Indiana's most environmentally sensitive lands.

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), through the Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) maintains four full-time CREP Coordinators in the field to assist landowners, create Conservation Plans and oversee the daily CREP activities. Additionally, ISDA supplements the core staff with 10 Resource Specialists to accommodate seasonal workload and marketing opportunities. To complement the ISDA staff, there are many partners involved with the promotions, administration and funding of the CREP. The links below are examples of just a few of the websites that have Indiana CREP information posted for promotions to landowners. Websites as well as numerous newsletter articles and flyers regarding CREP have been directly mailed to individuals within these targeted watersheds.

<http://www.in.gov/isda/2368.htm> - CREP website

http://www.in.gov/isda/pubs/cultivating_connections/issue%202.11/Cultivating%20Connections.htm - Cultivating Connections Volume 2, Issue 11

<http://vandswcd.org/IDNR.htm> - Vanderburgh SWCD



Map 1

The current Indiana CREP Agreement is for 7,000 acres. The first CREP participants began signing up for the program in January of 2006. Within less than 10 months nearly 1/3 of the acres under this agreement had been obligated (Table 1). Now more than 19 months into CREP more than 3,500 acres are committed. The 15 year contractual investment by USDA and ISDA totals more than \$2,900 per acre with a maximum return on Indiana funds at an 11 to 1 ratio. The Indiana legislature, recognizing the importance of CREP, invested an additional \$1,000,000 in the 2007-2009 Biennial Budget. This new investment has generated much discussion as the first major allocation of taxpayer funds to conservation in more than a decade. Now with available funding leading a lagging CREP commitment pace, ISDA is pursuing discussions with partners, such as USDA-Farm Service Agency (USDA-FSA), to amend the current agreement and to develop an additional CREP agreement that will grow the program to over 50% of Indiana's working lands.

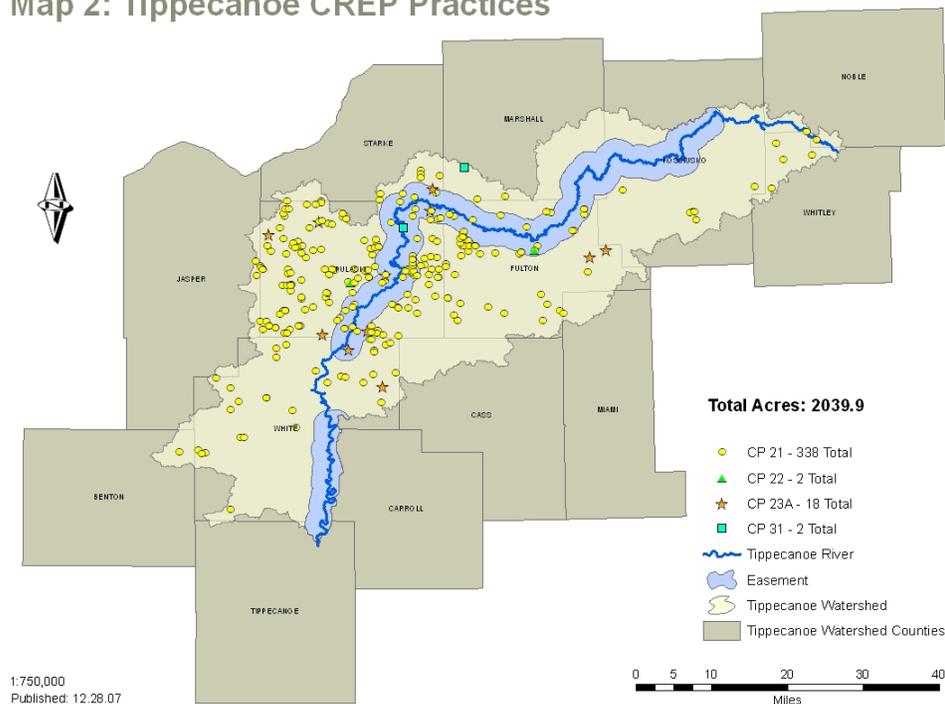
Table 1

Indiana CREP Obligated Acres and Dollars

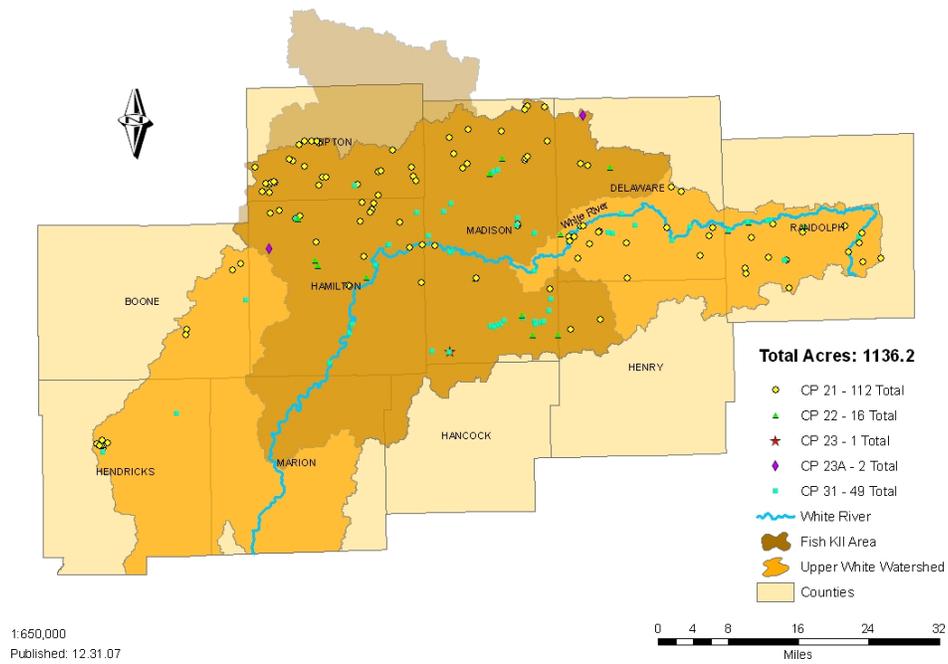
Oct-07	Letters of Intent	Obligated Acres	Obligated Funds
Tippecanoe River	346	2039.9	\$295,830.00
Upper White River	132	1136.2	\$566,845.00
Pigeon/Highland Rivers	92	333.5	\$38,310.00
TOTAL	570	3509.6	\$900,985.00

Refer to Maps 2, 3, and 4.

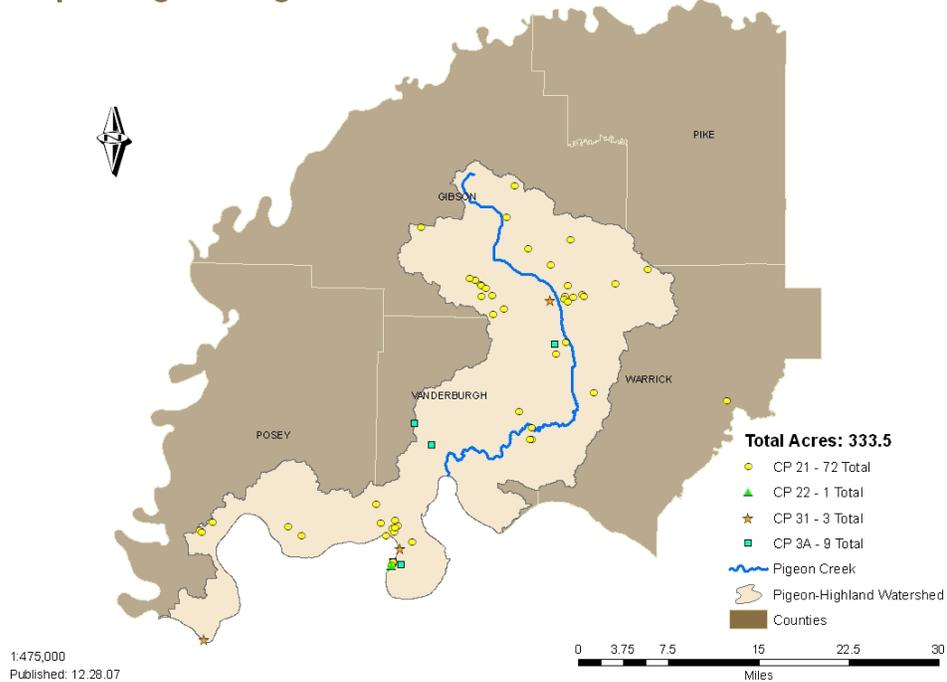
Map 2: Tippecanoe CREP Practices



Map 3: Upper White River CREP Practices



Map 4: Pigeon-Highland CREP Practices



Eligible Practices

The Indiana CREP offers a menu of conservation practices to address non-point source pollution runoff issues. The following is a list of practices offered through this program.

For riparian areas, the following practices are available provided the land is adjacent to an eligible stream, river or water body, and:

- has a minimum average width of 50 feet and a maximum average width of 120 feet (up to 300 feet in alluvial soils) or,
- has a minimum average width of 35 feet and a maximum average width of 180 feet (up to an average width of 300 feet in alluvial soils) or,
- practices include CP2 – Establishment of Permanent Native Grass, CP3A – Hardwood Tree Planting, CP4D – Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement CP22 – Riparian Buffer

For buffer areas, the following practices are available provided the land is adjacent to an eligible stream, river or water body, and:

- has a minimum average width of 35 feet and a maximum average width of 120 feet (up to 300 feet average width in alluvial soils)
- practices include CP21 – Filter Strips

For wetland areas, the following practices are available:

- CP23 – Wetland Restoration is available within the 100-year floodplain
- CP23a – Wetland Restoration – Non-floodplain
- CP31 – Bottom Timber Establishment on Wetland

Obligated Acres for Federal Fiscal Year 2007

In Federal Fiscal Year 2007, landowners signed up for a variety of the Conservation Practices offered through CREP. Between the three watersheds, Filter Strips has been the most popular practice among landowners comprising of 65.59% of the sign-up thus far (Table 2 & Chart 1). Tables 3, 4 and 5 below illustrate the total number of acres obligated for each practice within each watershed and Table 2 displays the summary totals.

Table 2

Indiana CREP Totals - Obligated Acres by Conservation Practice

Conservation Practice	Acres	%
Permanent Native Grass(CP2)	0.00	0.00%
Hardwood Tree Planting(CP3A)	47.9	1.36%
Permanant Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement(CP4D)	0.00	0.00%
Riparian Buffer(CP22)	95.7	2.73%
Filter Strips(CP21)	2301.8	65.59%
Wetland Restoration(CP23)	23.8	0.68%
Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain(CP23A)	315.9	9.00%
Bottomland Timber Establishment(CP31)	724.5	20.64%
	3509.6	100.00%

Chart 1

Indiana CREP Totals - Obligated Acres by Conservation Practice

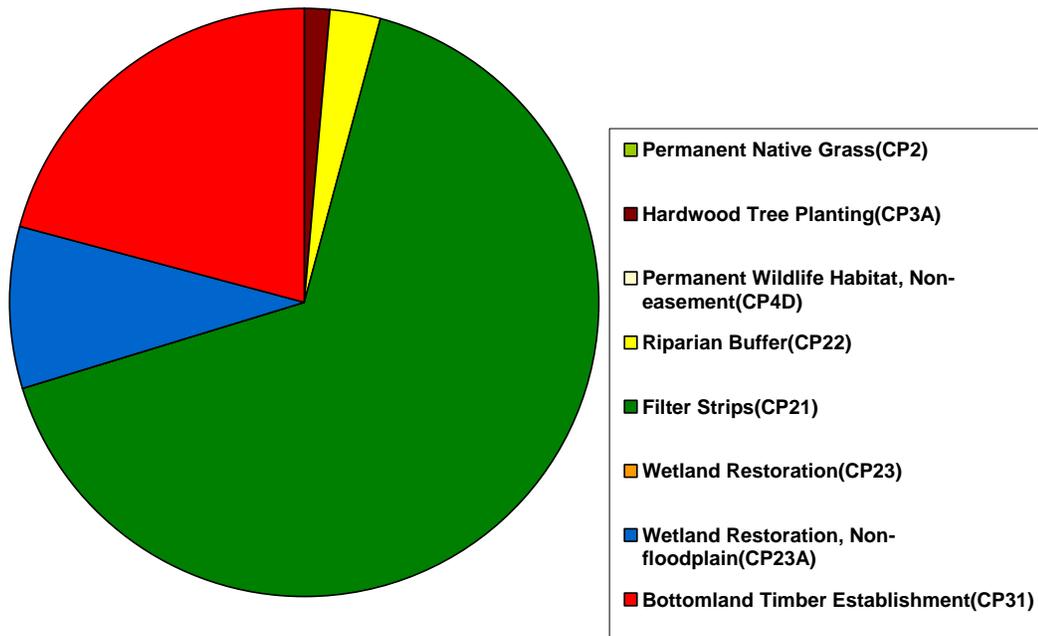


Table 3**Tippecanoe River Watershed – Obligated Acres by Conservation Practice**

Conservation Practice	Acres
Permanent Native Grass(CP2)	0.00
Hardwood Tree Planting(CP3A)	0.00
Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement(CP4D)	0.00
Riparian Buffer(CP22)	7.8
Filter Strips(CP21)	1721.1
Wetland Restoration(CP23)	0.00
Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain(CP23A)	295.5
Bottomland Timber Establishment(CP31)	15.5
	2039.9

Table 4**Upper White River Watershed – Obligated Acres by Conservation Practice**

Conservation Practice	Acres
Permanent Native Grass(CP2)	0.00
Hardwood Tree Planting(CP3A)	0.00
Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement(CP4D)	0.00
Riparian Buffer(CP22)	86.3
Filter Strips(CP21)	400.3
Wetland Restoration(CP23)	23.8
Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain(CP23A)	20.4
Bottomland Timber Establishment(CP31)	877.9
	1136.2

Table 5**Pigeon/Highland River Watershed – Obligated Acres by Conservation Practice**

Conservation Practice	Acres
Permanent Native Grass(CP2)	0.00
Hardwood Tree Planting(CP3A)	47.9
Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement(CP4D)	0.00
Riparian Buffer(CP22)	1.60
Filter Strips(CP21)	222.9
Wetland Restoration(CP23)	0.00
Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain(CP23A)	0.00
Bottomland Timber Establishment(CP31)	61.1
	333.5

II. Financial Contribution

The Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program provides incentives to landowners through both state and federal contributions. Through the CREP, eligible Indiana participants who establish one of the prescribed conservation practices shall receive incentive, cost-share and rental payments as outlined below.

Federal Incentives:

- **Signing Incentive Payment:** A one-time payment of \$100 per acre for land enrolled in CP21, CP22 or CP 31. This payment may be made after the contract has been signed and is approved for 14-15 year contracts.
- **Practice Incentive Payment:** A one-time payment equal to 40% of the eligible reimbursable cost to establish CP21, CP22 or CP31.
- **Wetland Restoration Practice Incentive Payment:** A one-time incentive payment that is equal to 25% of the eligible reimbursable hydrology restoration costs for CP23 and CP23A.
- **Cost-share Assistance:** Cost-share of up to 50% to install approved conservation practices.
- **Annual Rental Payment:** An annual payment for the life of the contract. The payment consists of the sum of three components:

Base Soil Rental Rate: Determined by calculating the normal CREP weighted average soil rental rate for the three predominant soil types using the current posted applicable local soil rental rates for cropland.

Incentive Payment of 40% of the base rental rate without regard to other incentive payments for all practices offered and eligible for CREP.

Annual Maintenance Payment according to regular continuous CREP enrollments.

State Incentives:

- **Pay to participants a one-time** Clean Water Incentive Payment (CWIP) to participants of \$400 per acre for land enrolled in CP3A, CP22, CP23, CP23A or CP31.
- **Pay to participants a one-time** CWIP to participants of \$100 per acre for land enrolled in CP2, CP4D or CP21.
- **Make direct, one-time payments** of \$500 for CP3A, CP22 and CP31 acres voluntarily enrolled in permanent easements in a priority area within the Upper White River Watershed.
- **Make direct, one-time payments** of \$500 per acre for CP3A, CP22 and CP31 acres voluntarily enrolled in state permanent easements in a priority area within the Tippecanoe Watershed; or \$250 per acre for CP3A, CP4D, CP22, CP23, CP23a and CP31 acres voluntarily enrolled in 10-year contract extensions in a priority area within the Tippecanoe Watershed.

The provisions within the Indiana CREP agreement states:

“The State of Indiana will **contribute at least 20%** of the overall costs of implementing the CREP through a combination of annual in-kind services and direct program costs.” As of October 2007, Indiana contributions are right on track with just over half the acres committed and more than 50% of the cash contribution obligated. In-kind match is also on track with nearly \$900,000 in ISDA staffing alone focused on CREP consultation and implementation.

Incentive Payments – Obligated for Payment

Of the state’s 20% contribution, 10% shall be in the form of incentive payments to landowners for practice installation. According to their records, as of October 2007 the Indiana FSA has contractually obligated 2,359.7 acres to the sum of \$7,145,086. As of October 2007 the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation (ISDA-DSC) has obligated 3,509.6 acres to the sum of \$900,985 on 570 contracts. The difference in obligated acres simply occurs due to the difference in the application process. Acres are obligated through Indiana’s CREP sign-up process earlier than the federal process. Conversely the federal contracts are typically finalized before the state’s contracting process is finished. The state payments are not issued until the conservation practice has been installed which triggers the finalization of the contract.

Incentive Payments – Finalized

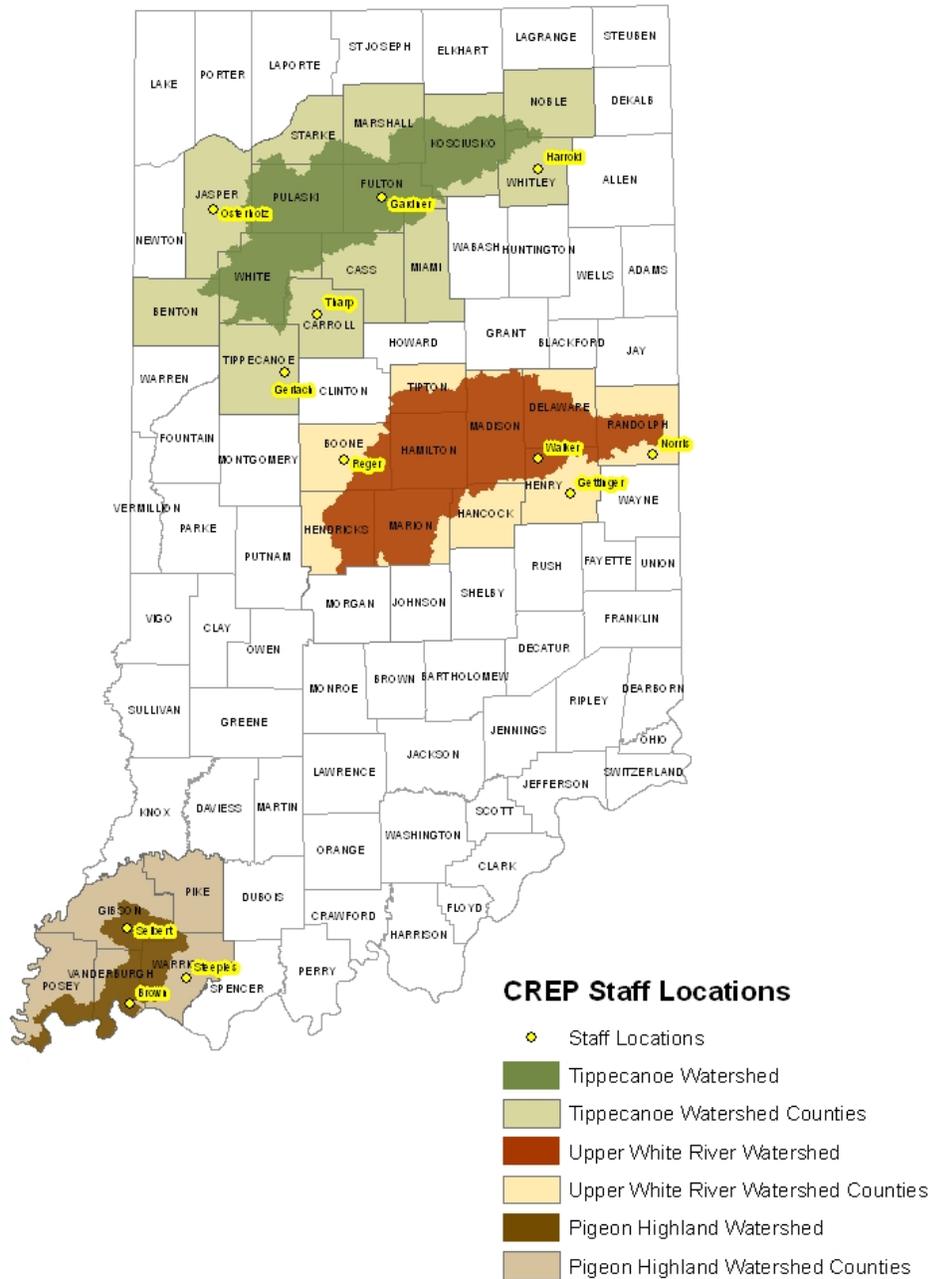
The number of completed contracts received by the state office for payment processing has been increasing weekly. The administration and systems for making payments is now effectively in place. As of October 2007, \$57,015 has been paid to Indiana landowners on a total of 61 contracts for 114.8 acres.

ISDA In-kind Services

The ISDA-DSC implements the state’s portion of the CREP responsibilities. The CREP responsibilities include working directly with interested landowners to develop conservation plans, as well as sign-up, tracking and promotions. To accomplish these tasks the ISDA-DSC and State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) has allocated funds and grants to Soil and Water Conservation Districts and ISDA-DSC staffing. The ISDA-DSC investment for staff resources to administer and provide technical assistance for the CREP is well in excess of \$400,000 annually.

Within the ISDA-DSC, four full-time Resource Specialists stationed within the watersheds have been directly assigned to implement the CREP. Through the months of January to July 2007, as many as 10 additional Resource Specialists have been working one on one with landowners to encourage sign-up. (Refer to Map 5) Progress has been made with a large influx of contracts expected throughout the harvest/construction season. Participation has been slow since many Indiana landowners are unfamiliar with these types of opportunities.

Map 5: CREP Staff Locations



The ISDA-DSC has also assigned supporting staff to aid in tracking, payments, mapping and statewide coordination. (Refer to Map 6) The SSCB directs the use of Clean Water Indiana (CWI) funds which are not only used for the direct payments to CREP landowners, but also for granting funds to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). These districts receiving CWI Grants utilize the funds to market conservation programs such as CREP or perhaps hire additional staff for technical assistance. Refer to Table 6.

The purpose of the CWI Grants Program is to provide financial assistance to SWCDs to implement conservation practices to reduce non-point sources of water pollution through education, technical assistance, training and cost sharing programs.

Map 6: Indiana CREP Watersheds *2007 District Support Specialist Impact*

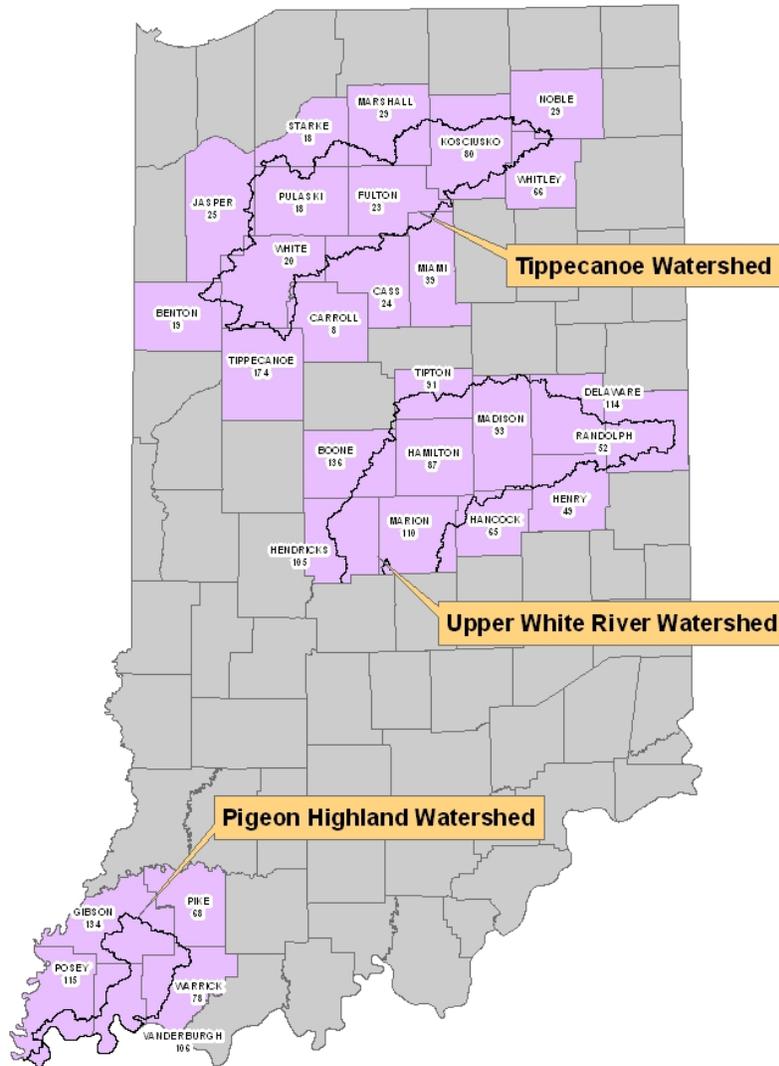
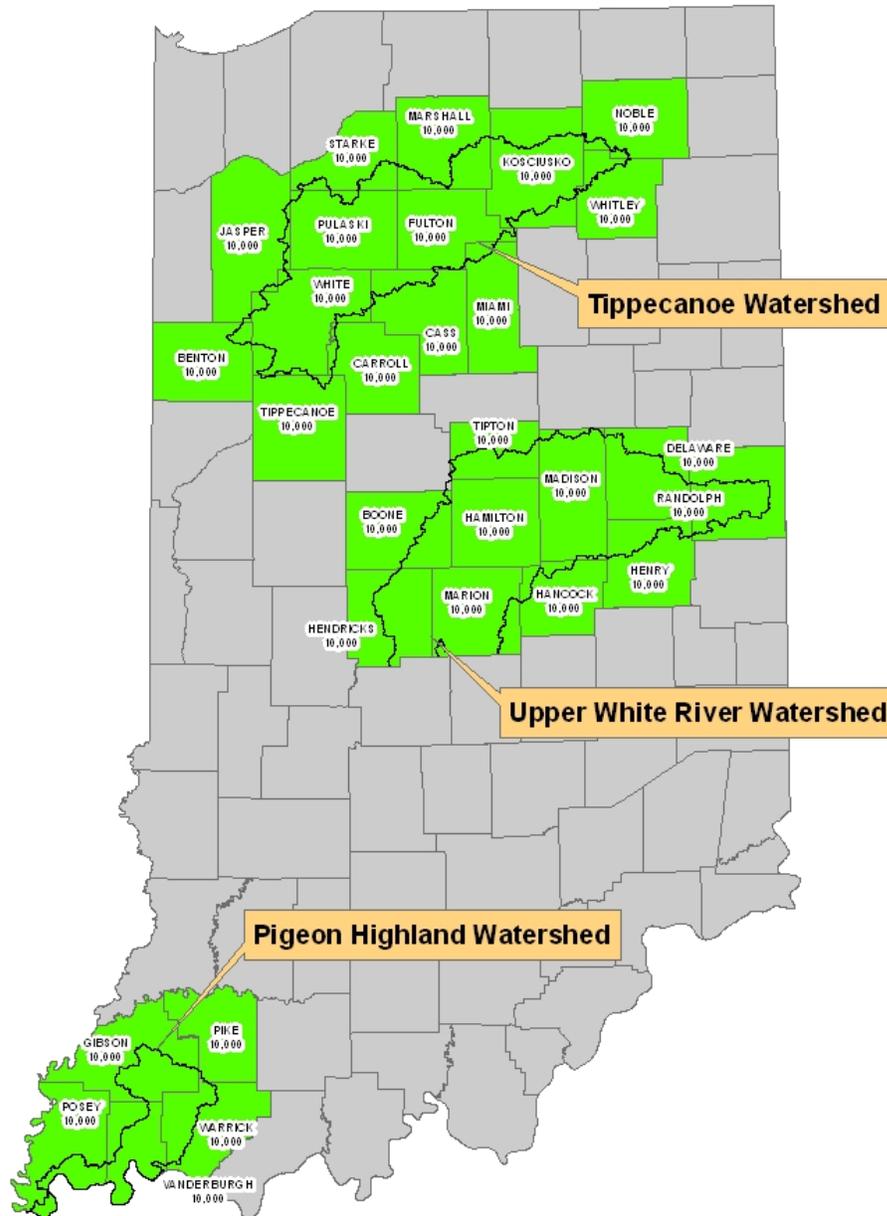


Table 6

COUNTY	Match	Training	Grants	Total
TIPPECANOE WATERSHED				
BENTON	10,000	750	0	10,750
CARROLL	10,000	483	3,657	14,140
CASS	10,000	548	0	10,548
FULTON	10,000	0	0	10,000
JASPER	10,000	445	13,800	24,245
KOSCIUSKO	10,000	750	15,000	25,750
MARSHALL	10,000	750	0	10,750
MIAMI	10,000	750	0	10,750
NOBLE	10,000	750	0	10,750
PULASKI	10,000	750	0	10,750
STARKE	10,000	0	0	10,000
TIPPECANOE	10,000	750	12,477	23,226
WHITE	10,000	750	17,000	27,750
WHITLEY	10,000	750	16,000	26,750
				\$226,159
UPPER WHITE RIVER WATERSHED				
BOONE	10,000	750	0	10,750
DELAWARE	10,000	750	0	10,750
HAMILTON	10,000	685	22,631	33,316
HANCOCK	10,000	750	0	10,750
HENDRICKS	10,000	0	0	10,000
HENRY	10,000	750	0	10,750
MADISON	10,000	750	0	10,750
MARION	10,000	750	20,000	30,750
RANDOLPH	10,000	750	0	10,750
TIPTON	10,000	0	2,950	12,950
				\$151,516
HIGHLAND PIGEON WATERSHED				
PIKE	10,000	0	5,413	15,413
GIBSON	10,000	750	4,879	15,629
VANDEBURGH	10,000	750	6,763	17,513
POSEY	10,000	0	4,649	14,649
WARRICK	10,000	750	0	10,750
				\$73,954
Refer to Maps 7, 8, and 9		Grand Total		\$451,629

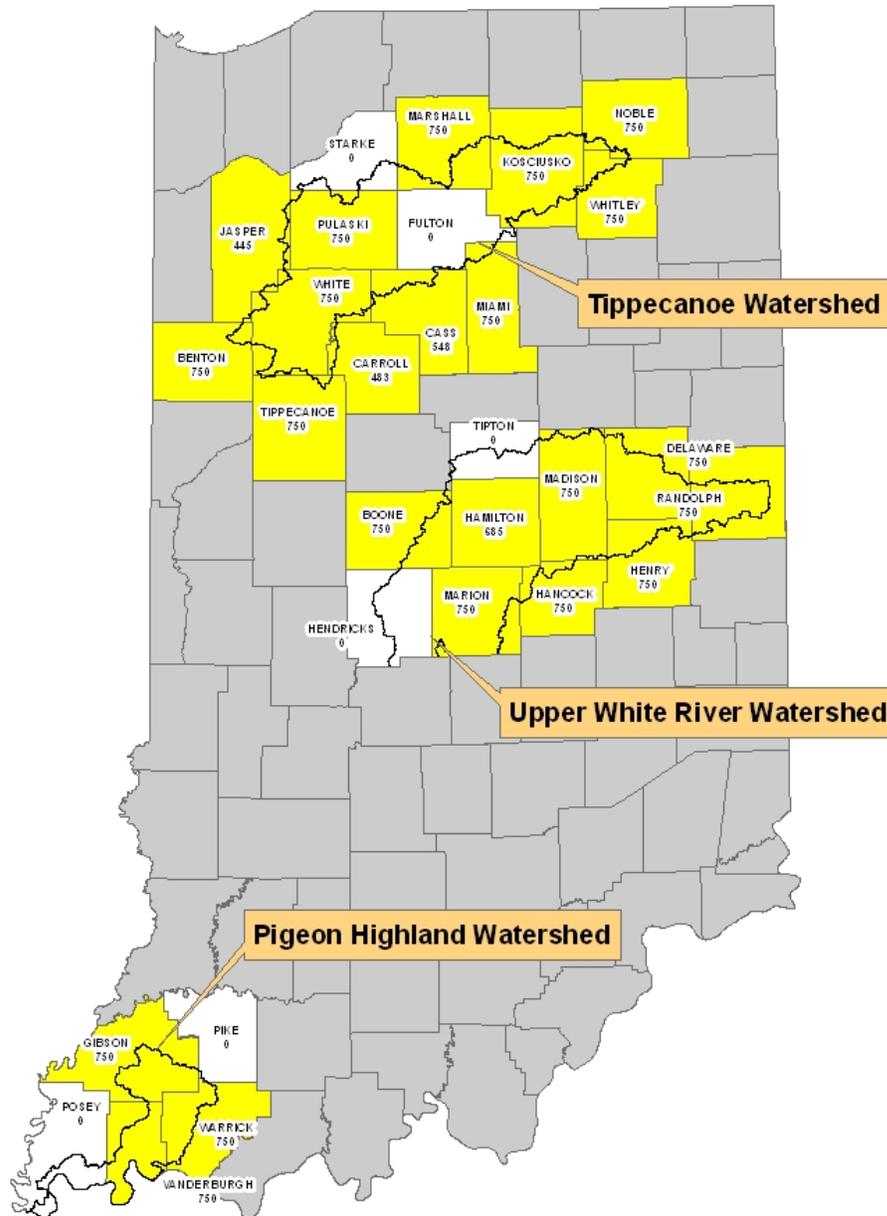
Map 7: Indiana CREP Watersheds

2007 Clean Water Indiana Match



Map 8: Indiana CREP Watersheds

2007 Clean Water Indiana Training Incentive



Partnering State Funded Conservation

Aside from the funds and administrative assistance issued through the ISDA-DSC, Indiana is fortunate to have a significant amount of additional conservation activities occurring within the three watersheds which enhances the environmental goals outlined in the Indiana CREP agreement. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, administers the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program. This is a state funded program focused on ensuring the continued viability of public-access lakes and streams by utilizing a watershed approach to reduce non-point source sediment and nutrient pollution of Indiana's surface waters to a level that meets or surpasses state water quality standards.

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/lare/index.html>

To accomplish this goal, the LARE Program provides technical and financial assistance for qualifying projects. Approved grant funding may be used for one or more of the following purposes:

- Investigations to determine what problems are affecting a lake/lakes or a stream segment.
- Evaluation of identified problems and effective action recommendations to resolve those problems.
- Cost-sharing with land users in a watershed above upstream from a project lake or stream for installation or application of sediment and nutrient reducing practices on their land.
- Matching federal funds for qualifying projects.
- Watershed management plan development.
- Feasibility studies to define appropriate lake and stream remediation measures.
- Engineering designs and construction of remedial measures.
- Water monitoring of public lakes.

Another state agency that administers a grant program which has been beneficial to conservation within the Pigeon/Highland, Upper White and Tippecanoe Watersheds is the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). IDEM is responsible for administering 319 funds within Indiana.

The Federal Clean Water Act Section 319(h) provides funding for various types of projects that work to reduce non-point source water pollution. Funds may be used to conduct assessments, develop and implement TMDLs and watershed management plans, provide technical assistance, demonstrate new technology and provide education and outreach. Organizations eligible for funding include nonprofit organizations, universities and local, State or Federal government agencies. A 40% (non-federal) in-kind or cash match of the total project cost must be provided.

[http://www.in.gov/idem/resources/grants_loans/index.html#Section%20319\(h\)%20Grants](http://www.in.gov/idem/resources/grants_loans/index.html#Section%20319(h)%20Grants)

III. Monitoring and Evaluation

In Indiana, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management samples streams throughout the state on a revolving continuum. This data will be accessed and evaluated for measurable results as the Indiana CREP matures.

<http://www.in.gov/idem/programs/water/quality/>

Another avenue for monitoring the success of this program that will be researched is the data collected by Indiana volunteers and logged through Indiana Riverwatch.

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/riverwatch/>

IV. Success Stories and Recommendations

The first signups for the Indiana CREP began in January 2006. As of October 2007, more than 3,500 acres have been obligated, establishing the beginning of a successful Indiana conservation initiative. Indiana's taxpayers and legislators are seeing the potential for improved environmental quality around the state and the additional \$1,000,000 communicates that commitment. To build on the opportunities through CREP, ISDA-DSC produced a video to capture the visual story of the conservation practices being installed and the personal stories of the benefits to landowners from their CREP experience. The CREP video can be viewed at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2368.htm>.

It has been evident that the SWCD who have utilized Clean Water Indiana Grants to send direct mailings to landowners have reaped the rewards of having more landowner inquiries and signups. Since direct mailings to landowners have been effective, SWCDs are being encouraged to follow a similar model to encourage more participation from landowners throughout the eligible CREP watersheds. The CREP will continue to grow and be more successful as others realize the financial and environmental benefits of this program.

While the past 19 months have been fruitful, the Division of Soil Conservation, with the support of the Indiana State Soil Conservation Board, will be pursuing two fronts over the next few months. The first initiative will be to submit an amendment to USDA to improve or build on this current CREP agreement. Secondly, the DSC will be considering, researching and planning a new CREP agreement to be submitted to USDA at the approval of the 2008 Farm Bill. These two opportunities should help to increase CREP opportunities statewide and will build on Indiana's conservation awareness and effectiveness. With Indiana landowners still losing more than 3.2 tons of soil per acre, annually aggressive actions and investments in programs such as CREP will be critical to Indiana's agricultural and environmental future.