

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency
Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment and Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Proposed Expansion of Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA), in coordination with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, announces the availability of a Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) and Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) evaluating the potential effects from the Proposed Action to expand the existing Indiana Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to a targeted enrollment of up to 100,000 acres in 38 watersheds and all or portions of 92 counties in the State of Indiana. The Proposed Action would also add FSA Conservation Practice (CP) 9, Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife, to the inventory of eight CPs currently available to eligible landowners under the existing Indiana CREP. The expanded CREP, if implemented, would continue to be administered by the FSA. The 11 watersheds and 8 CPs currently included in the Indiana CREP would continue to be included in the expanded program. Landowners participating in the CREP would receive support for the costs of installing and maintaining CPs, as well as annual rental and incentive payments for those specific lands enrolled in the program.

The Draft PEA evaluates two alternatives for implementing the Proposed Action: the Proposed Action Alternative, under which the Indiana CREP would be expanded as described above; and the No Action Alternative, under which the existing Indiana CREP would not be expanded and would continue to be administered as it currently is. Based on the analysis presented in the Draft PEA and Proposed FONSI, FSA has determined that the Proposed Action would have no significant effects on the environment.

The Draft PEA is available for a 30-day public review period that ends on June 27, 2024. The Draft PEA can be reviewed online at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Indiana/index> and <https://www.in.gov/isda/divisions/soil-conservation/conservation-reserve-enhancement-program/>. Printed copies of the Draft PEA are available for review upon request at local county USDA Service Centers. Comments on the Draft PEA or requests to view the Draft PEA at a USDA Service Center should be submitted to Samantha Garrison, Agricultural Program Specialist, USDA Farm Service Agency, 5981 Lakeside Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46278 or via email to samantha.garrison@usda.gov. Comments sent via U.S. Mail should be postmarked no later than June 27, 2024.