







Rangeland Cost Share  
Programs


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- Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
  - Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)
  - Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)
  - Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
  - Continuous Conservation Reserve Program – Riparian Buffers


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- All cost share programs have a continuous signup period.
  - Can have several funding periods. Actual contracts are dependent on available funding.
  - **Must have your farm records up to date with the Farm Service Agency.**  
Highly Erodible Land (HEL), Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), entity agreements, ownership, etc.

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- For some programs priority will be given to producers who have current conservation plans with the NRCS.
    - Producers who are carrying out Resource Management System conservation plans will receive high priority
    - Producers with Progressive Plans are medium priority
    - Producers without plans will be low priority

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- Most conservation practices that are in our Field Office Technical guide are available for cost share assistance.
    - EX: Brush Control, Water Development, Cross fencing, pipelines, etc.
  - There maybe some exceptions depending on location of ranch or program. Ex: North/South Llano WS vs County Base

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- Pay schedules (costs) are developed using statewide averages from actual jobs and contractor quotes.
  - Cost share assistance is based on no more than 75% of the cost to do a job.
  - Beginning rancher/farmer and historically underserved producers can receive 90%

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- EQIP and WHIP are the most common in our immediate area.
  - EQIP is geared toward the livestock producer.
  - WHIP is geared more toward rangeland restoration for those producers who do not run livestock.


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- Applications are screened and then ranked.
    - Screening is determined by what kind of Conservation Plan you have.
    - Ranking score is based on what conservation practice(s) you are going to do. Does application meet national, state and local priorities.






■ *EQIP:*


- \$300,000.00 limitation during the 2008 Farm Bill
- Contracts expire one year following the completion and certification of last practice.
- The number of applications funded is dependent on available funds. Funds are allocated each year.
- Signups are year round


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- Funding for EQIP is based on state's allocation. County and Special Emphasis areas receive funding based on State allocation also.
    - *2009 FY EQIP* Texas received 57.6 million, of which Sutton County received \$137,000 for County base and the North/South Llano received \$533,000.00


# North/South Llano Watershed




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- *WHIP:*
  - Signups are year round
  - Applications Compete statewide for funding
  - Each state is given a funding allocation for WHIP
    - 2009 FY – 2.7 million for Texas
    - Contracts last one year following completion of last practice

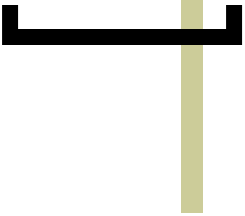
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- Annual payments limited to \$50,000.00/ year/person or entity
  - No limit on total dollar amount at this time

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- *Grassland Reserve Program (GRP):*
  - Purpose is to maintain healthy grazing lands and protect them from development
  - Initially for those areas around fast growing urban areas.

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- 2009 FY:
  - State allocation is \$4.2 million
  - Enrollment Options:
    - Rental Agreements 10,15, 20 years
    - Permanent Easement

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- For 2009 it was decided to establish three priority areas:

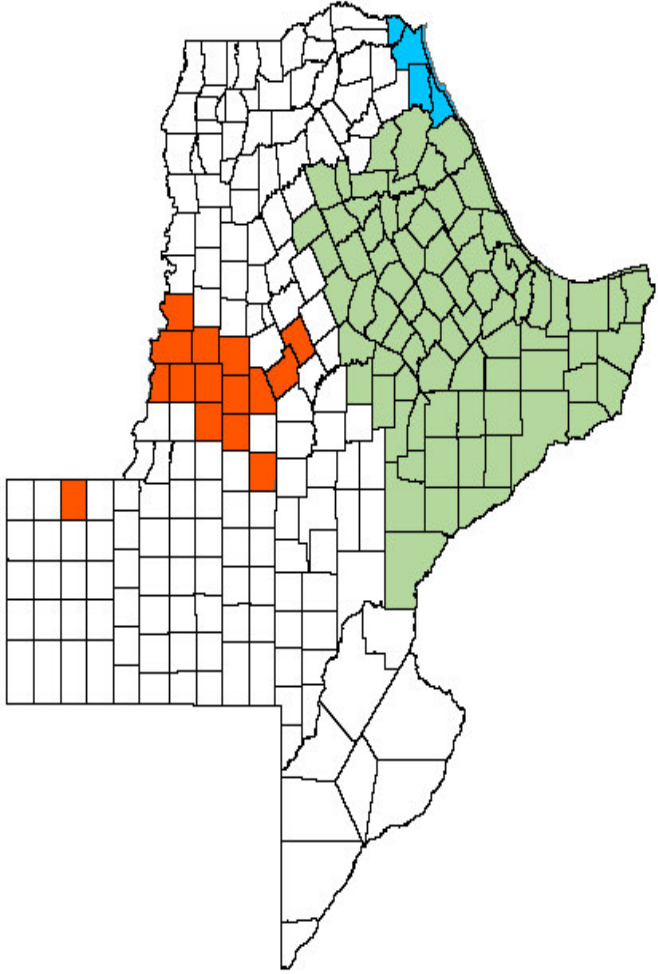






# Grassland Reserve Program Texas Enrollment Priorities





-  Wildfire Counties
-  Hurricane Impacted Counties
-  D3-D4 Drought Counties



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- Applications taken year round
  - NRCS handles the Permanent Easements
  - FSA handles Rental Agreements
  - There is a 1.22 million acre nationwide limit
  - Rental payments limited to \$50,000/yr
  - Rental rate is based on 75% of grazing value

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- Focus is on grazing lands, not on wildlife land.
  - Cannot have other cost share programs on same acreage that is in GRP.


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- *Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP):*
  - Part of the EQIP Program
  - AWEP promotes ground and surface water conservation and improves water quality
  - \$10.4 Million Dollars for Texas


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- Five water conservation and water quality projects will receive highest priority:
    - Water enhancement projects for drought mitigation and water conservation on University lands owned and managed by the University of Texas System
  - Deadline for signup is August 28th




■ *Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)*

- CSP is a five-year program
- Continuous Signup funding announced throughout year.
- Agreement has to cover entire operation.
- Application has to be in operators name.

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- Applicant must account for stewardship operations for entire agricultural operation.
  - 12 million acres nationwide
  - 1 million acres for Texas

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- Applications are ranked on present and proposed conservation practices,
  - Number and extent of resource concerns addressed, and
  - Cost effectiveness of expected environmental benefits





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- Program payment cap of \$200,000.00/five years (\$40,000/yr)
  - Will *Not* be eligible to participate in cost share programs such as EQIP, CCRP, GRP, WHIP, etc

# [ Steps to Apply for CSP ]

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- Producer makes application
- Producer completes Self-Screening Checklist. NRCS cannot help with this
- Determination for applicant and land eligibility determined (FSA)

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- Determine if Stewardship threshold is met using Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT)
  - Determine Conservation performance ranking score in CMT
  - Rank Application and then Pre-approve

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- Field Verification- Done by NRCS personnel
    - visit to ranch/farm to verify accuracy of records, practices, etc
  - Approve and Obligate
  - Deadline for 2009 is September 30, 2009




- *Continuous Conservation Reserve Program - Riparian Buffers*


- Purpose is improve water quality and quantity along environmentally sensitive land

Continuous signup

Administered by FSA

Technical assistance through NRCS

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- Perennial or Third Order Streams are eligible.
  - Annual acreage payment based on county rental rate.
  - Will receive Signup Incentive Payment (SIP).
  - Can receive 50% cost assistance to complete needed conservation practices.

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- Will receive Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) once all practices are completed. This is a 40% payment.
  - 10-15 year contracts.
  - Land must be deferred from livestock grazing.
  - All conservation practices have to be completed within first 3 years of contract.



- Texas NRCS Website:
  - <http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov>
  
- Farm Service Agency Website:
  - <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>



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- The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.