



**Clean Michigan Initiative
Nonpoint Source Grant**
2002-0005



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CREP Permanent Conservation Easement Acquisition Program

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The State of Michigan Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) was created to help address nonpoint source pollution. CREP encourages farmers to implement conservation practices, such as creating and maintaining natural vegetated corridors along rivers and streams. Farmers who agree to participate in one or more of the CREP practices receive funding to implement and maintain the practice for a period of fifteen years, starting in 2001. By working with various partners, the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy purchased or helped coordinate the purchase of 31 permanent conservation easements on CREP practices, protecting the land in perpetuity from any type of development. Located throughout the watershed (and one outside of our watershed), the easements are held by land conservancies serving the area.

The Saginaw Basin is the largest watershed in the state of Michigan. It drains 15% of Michigan's land area and covers 8,000 square miles and touches all or part of twenty-two counties in the central eastern part of the state. Nonpoint source pollution represents a large and pervasive portion of total water quality problems. Many of our drains and streams have been stripped of their vegetation to provide additional land for farming, resulting in increased sediment and nutrient loadings into the water. This project resulted in the acquisition of 27 permanent conservation easements which will protect in perpetuity 166 acres of filter strips, 1,407 acres of restored wetlands and 52 acres of riparian corridor.



Grant Amount: \$ 3,000,000
Match Funds: \$ 1,000,000
Total Amount: \$ 4,000,000



Partners involved:

- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA)
- Little Forks Land Conservancy
- Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
- Raisin Valley Land Trust

Best Management Practices:

- 27 conservation easements secured
- 166 filter strip acres protected
- 1,407 wetland restoration acres protected
- 52 riparian acres protected

Annual Load Reductions:

- 16,437 tons sediment reduced
- 20,492 pounds of phosphorous reduced
- 41,539 pounds of nitrogen reduced



Examples of CREP practices in permanent conservation easements.



Wildflowers are planted with native grass plantings when the practice is established.



The boundary of a permanent conservation easement on a filter strip is marked with a blue CREP easement marker.



Example riparian buffer under permanent conservation easement along the Misteguay Creek.



Push-out ponds are a common feature on wetland restoration practices; this one is under a permanent conservation easement.



Geese enjoy the push-out pond on a wetland restoration practice under permanent conservation easement.



Pond water within this permanent conservation easement is clear and clean.