

**CONSERVATION COST SHARE PROGRAM
AND LANDS FOR CONSERVATION
FY 2025 (July 1st, 2024 thru June 30th, 2025)**

In previous Fiscal Years, the Lower Elkhorn NRD cost share program cooperated with the Natural Resources Conservation Service technical assistance to construct terrace systems including waterways and tile outlets, sediment basins, dams, and planned grazing systems. Incentives were offered to promote improvements on CRP lands, and participation in the federal Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP).

Budget FY2025: Authorize \$313,000 Conservation Cost Share and Lands for Conservation sign up beginning July 1, 2024. Authorize cost share on the practices listed below:

Stipulations on Receiving NRD Conservation Cost Share and Lands for Conservation funds:

1. Applicants for NRD cost sharing (over \$2,500) must also have applied for EQIP funding and gone through the EQIP ranking process and accept a contract if offered, before being eligible for NRD funds.
2. No individual/entity shall receive more than \$20,000 of District funds in any one fiscal year.
3. Structural practices must be on land not already adequately treated.

50% Cost Share on:

Grade Stabilization Dams/Water Impoundment Reservoirs

New Terrace Systems – may include any terrace types with outlets listed in federal and state dockets, but is limited to 5 cubic yards of fill per linear foot of terrace (unless prior approval is given by NRD)

Waterways without Terraces
or on existing terraces

(if operator is in compliance with conservation farm plan and soil loss is at acceptable limits of Nebraska Erosion & Sediment Control Act)

Water & Sediment Control Basins and
Outlets

(if operator is in compliance with conservation farm plan and soil loss is at or less than eight tons per Acre). Cost share is limited to 10 cubic yards of dirt Per linear foot of basins.

Terrace Rebuilds

*Planned Grazing Systems (rotational grazing), 40 ac minimum. Includes wells, tanks, grass seeding, pipelines and interior cross fences, fences around expired CRP fields

*Seeding on highly erodible crop land

Rehabilitating dams (not dredging)

Necessary extension of tile outlets for terraces or water and sediment control basins (if recommended by NRCS to solve an erosion problem).

Irrigation Water Management on existing irrigation systems including re-nozzling pivots, and soil moisture sensors. Limit of \$5,000 of District funds available to any one individual/entity per fiscal year.

Variable Rate Irrigation Conversion and corresponding Variable Frequency Drives are eligible utilizing NSWCP funds and meeting NRCS practice standards.

Cost Share Supplement with EQIP:

EQIP participants receiving cost share may apply for supplemental NRD cost share and receive up to 75% total funding between EQIP and District Funds. Applicants **MUST BE** approved for LENRD cost share prior to beginning construction.

LENRD Supplemental Cost Share will expire, in combination with EQIP, after December 31st of the calendar year after EQIP approval, if the practice is not completed. (Example: A producer is approved for EQIP cost share on terraces in March 2024. He would have until December 31, 2025 (21 months) to complete the project and receive the approved percentage of cost share.) No partial payments will be made.

Conservation projects may not be cost shared with the Lower Elkhorn NRD funds if they are ineligible for EQIP funding because of non-compliance with the Federal Farm Program.

Cost Share Supplement with CSP:

CSP participants receiving cost share may apply for supplemental NRD cost share and receive up to 55% total funding between CSP and District Funds. Applicants **MUST BE** approved for LENRD cost share prior to beginning construction.

LENRD Supplemental Cost Share will expire, in combination with CSP, after December 31st of the calendar year after CSP approval, if the practice is not completed. (Example: A producer is approved for CSP cost share on a waterway in March 2024. He would have until December 31, 2025 (21 months) to complete the project and receive the approved percentage of cost share.) No partial payments will be made.

INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Cover Crop Program:

Only land that is currently in a continuous no-till cropping system is eligible. There are three Cover Crop Seed Mix Alternatives: Single Species - \$25/acre, 3-way Cocktail Mix - \$35/acre and Deluxe Cocktail Mix - \$55/ac. One year contracts may include up to 160 acres. Participants may apply for 2nd and 3rd year of NRD funding, but will be encouraged to switch to EQIP. Annual limit of \$20,000 for the practice (outside of the Groundwater Quality Management Areas). Producer will terminate the cover crop each spring prior to planting the new crop without using inversion tillage.

INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO CONVERT IRRIGATED CROPLAND TO IRRIGATED GRAZING LAND:

Phase 2 and 3 Area Pilot Project under a planned grazing system is \$40 /acre for 5 years and a limit of 160 Acres. Annual program cap is \$25,000.

Incentive Program for Vegetative Practices with CRP continuous signup (Reserve \$20,000 until July 1):

- 1 \$300/acre (one time payment) for grassed waterways or field borders in combination with terraces, contour grass strips or continuous no-till.
- 2 \$400/acre (one time payment) for both grassed waterways and field borders in combination with terraces, contour grass strips or continuous no-till.

Waterways and field borders in 1 and 2 will be standard design widths up to 100' wide.

Nutrient Management Incentive:

50% cost share on deep soil sampling, corn stalk nitrate sampling. The District will utilize the average cost list for deep soil sampling and pay on a per sample basis. The District will limit cost-share to one deep soil sample per every 25 acres.

Chemigation Cost Share:

One-time use, 50% cost share for equipment needed for chemigation for applicants who previously have not done chemigation/fertigation. Maximum payment of \$1,500. Applicants must be approved before purchasing equipment. Refer to Chemigation Cost Share packet for further details.

Domestic Well Treatment System Cost Share:

One-time use, 50% cost share for Reverse Osmosis (or other LENRD approved water treatment system) for registered domestic wells testing greater than 5 ppm for nitrate, or agricultural herbicides/glyphosates exceeding EPA recommendations. Maximum payment of \$800. Must utilize ARPA funding through NDEE's program if eligible. Applicants must be approved before purchasing equipment. Refer to Domestic Well Treatment System Packet for further details.

Policy for use of NSWCP funds:

State cost share funds (NSWCP) will not be obligated until after the legislative session (in case the program is reduced).

Lands for Conservation

This program provides landowners with an incentive to get conservation structures constructed on the land during the growing season. Application period January 1 through April 1.

Practices Eligible – terraces, water and sediment control basins, waterways, and tile outlets as part of erosion control system.

1. The area under contract will be the smallest practical area to encompass the practices, as agreed upon with the cooperator. Payment is \$250 per acre.
2. Construction must be done between April 1 and September 15. The field must be available for construction by August 1. The field may be planted to cover or a crop preceding or after construction. The crop or cover may be harvested or pastured during the contract period.