

## **CRP and FWP - The Past, Present and Future of FWP Collaboration with the Conservation Reserve Program**

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The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is the largest private farmland conservation program in the US, with over 22 million acres currently enrolled nationwide and about \$1.8 billion spent in annual rental payments. Since the program's inception in 1985 the positive impacts of CRP on many wildlife species have been documented in Montana and across the country. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has partnered with CRP since 1990 by providing additional cost-share and lease programs specifically for private landowners enrolled in CRP, with the goal of increasing landowner participation and the resulting wildlife benefits of the program. However, over the last 30 years changing rules and implementation of both CRP and FWP programs have led to varying landowner enrollment and fewer benefits to wildlife over time. Discussion of the challenges and successes of both CRP and FWP programs in Montana may provide insight into improving future FWP programs to help keep CRP providing strong positive impacts on Montana's wildlife and private landowners.