

# Top 10

## Conservation Programs at Work

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**1 Agriculture Resource Development Loan (ARDL):** The Utah ARDL program is a \$27 million revolving fund that provides low interest (3 percent) loans for projects with a conservation benefit. The goal of this state program is to help landowners conserve soil and water, increase yields, maintain and improve water quality, conserve and improve wildlife habitat, prevent flooding, develop on-farm energy projects and mitigate damages caused by natural disasters. A one-time 4 percent administrative fee is charged.

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[ag.utah.gov/conservation/agloans.html](http://ag.utah.gov/conservation/agloans.html)

**2 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** EQIP, a federal Farm Bill program, offers financial, educational and technical assistance to help install or implement conservation practices in 1- to 10-year contracts. Cost sharing will pay from 50 to 75 percent of the costs. EQIP is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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**3 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):** CRP, a federal Farm Bill program, encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, such as native grasses and wildlife plantings. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multi-year contract. Cost-sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices. CRP is administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency.

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**4 Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants, Section 319 (319 Program):** The 319 Program provides formula grants to the states to implement nonpoint source projects and programs in accordance with Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. Formula grants are awarded to a lead agency in each state. States and local organizations are required to provide 40 percent of the total project or program cost. This EPA program is administered by the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

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**5 Landowner Incentive Program (LIP):** The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources administers this voluntary program available to landowners to improve habitat conditions for sensitive wildlife species. The program provides financial and technical assistance for the protection and restoration of habitat. The program's two main focus areas include sagebrush steppe uplands and low-to-mid elevation riparian corridors and associated wetlands.

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**6 Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP):** WHIP, a federal Farm Bill program, provides financial incentives to develop habitat for fish and wildlife on private lands. Participants agree to implement a wildlife habitat development plan. Participants enter into a 5- to 10-year cost-share agreement for wildlife habitat development. Cost sharing will pay 75 percent of the costs. WHIP is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**7 Ground and Surface Water Conservation (GSW):** The Ground and Surface Water Conservation section of the EQIP program provides cost-share payments, incentive payments and loans to producers to carry out eligible activities to improve or enhance irrigation efficiencies, convert to production of less water-intensive agricultural commodities, such as dryland farming, improving storage water through water banking and groundwater recharge. This program is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. To qualify, the assistance must facilitate a conservation measure resulting in net savings in ground or surface water.

**8 Grassland Reserve Program (GRP):** The Grassland Reserve Program is established to assist owners, through long-term contracts or easements, in restoring grassland and conserving virgin grassland. Eligible grassland can be enrolled under contracts of 10, 15, 20 or 30 years or under 30-year or permanent easements. Not more than 60 percent of funds can be used for 30-year contracts or 30-year and permanent easements. The program is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**9 Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP):** FRPP is a voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture by providing matching funds to purchase conservation easements. The land must contain prime, unique or other productive soil or historical or archaeological resources, be privately owned and be large enough to sustain agricultural production. This program is administered by the NRCS.

**10 Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP):** WRP, a federal Farm Bill program, is a voluntary program to restore wetlands. Landowners can establish conservation easements of either permanent or 30-year duration or can enter into restoration cost-share agreements where no easement is involved. In exchange, the landowner receives a percentage of payment or cost of restoring the wetlands, depending on the agreement. The program is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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