

Program Overview

Direct-seed or No-till Cost Share Program calendar years 2022-2026
Rock Lake Conservation District and Pine Creek Conservation District

Who?

This agreement is between Rock Lake/Pine Creek Conservation District and _____.

What?

Conservation-based tillage systems that are consistent with Ecology's Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture are eligible for financial assistance. Conservation based tillage systems are a source control practice that minimizes surface soil disturbance to the maximum extent while maintaining protective surface and subsurface crop residue, and it eliminates full width tillage for seedbed preparation. Conservation-based tillage system practices are eligible for two types of funding: Equipment rental cost reimbursement and cost of custom application fee reimbursement.

Why?

Residue coverage of 60% can provide an effective erosion protection of approximately 90% as compared to conventional tillage. Conservation-based systems significantly reduce erosion, improve soil quality, reduce fuel consumption, and are a viable alternative to traditional, full tillage systems. In general, while a wider variety of tillage options are available to producers who grow higher residue crops, this residue level is best achieved through no-till or direct seed tillage systems. Both systems minimize tillage and provide a higher retention of surface residues, while protecting surface soils, thereby fostering the building of soil organic matter.

When?

This program is available starting Fall of 2022 through Fall of 2026.

Where?

This program is available for acres in the Pine Creek watershed or the larger Palouse watershed. Acres within the Pine Creek watershed are given priority.

How?

The residue management & conservation tillage requirements are:

- A residue coverage of 60% or more throughout the year. The residue coverage expectation is based on the minimum residue coverage observed from harvest through the next planting; OR
- A STIR of 30 or less based on NRCS guidance and calculation tools. In some areas of the state higher residue crops, because of site specific factors (e.g. soils, annual rainfall, etc.), cannot achieve the recommended residue levels. In those cases, producers should utilize conservation tillage systems that meet the STIR recommendation. Mowing stubble is acceptable and heavy harrow on heavy stubble in the fall is acceptable.

Your planned tillage operations will be documented on this agreement. Contact the Conservation District before conducting any field operations that are not in the plan.

The conservation tillage guidance can be found in Appendix G of the [FY 23 Funding Guidelines](#) and in Chapter I of the [Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture](#)

Eligibility requirements and guidelines

Cost share is available for only a first-time, full three-year conservation-tillage rotation. Reimbursement payments will be made for eligible expenses during each year of the three year rotation. Cost share must not exceed \$30 dollar per acre, up to 250 acres, per producer. Total eligible cost cannot exceed \$7,500 per producer, per rotation for up to three rotations. Installing riparian plantings adjacent to enrolled field(s) increases the maximum eligible acres to 500.

All cost share is made on a reimbursement basis. This means that cost share reimbursement checks will be provided only after the producer provides the Conservation District with paid invoices that demonstrate vendors/contractors have completed the work required for the conservation tillage plan and have been paid in full.

If the producer becomes ineligible (see guidelines below) during the three year trial, the producer must reimburse all previous cost share payments back to the Conservation District, who will reimburse Ecology.

To be eligible you will be required to:

- Use a conservation-based tillage system for three full years, or four years if using fallow in your rotation.
- Sign an agreement between the Conservation District and the landowner prior to renting conservation-based tillage system equipment or contracting with a custom applicator to plant with a conservation-based tillage system.
- Provide the location of acres enrolled including county, farm number, tract number, and field number. The conservation district will create GIS layers and other relevant spatial reference information if needed.
- Permit the Conservation District to access the enrolled land with prior notice for verification of the number of acres planted, residue measurements, and/or photo documentation before reimbursement is provided.
- In the case of a change in ownership of the property, provide a copy of this agreement to succeeding owner prior to transfer, notify the district in writing within 30 days of transfer including the name of the succeeding owner, work with the district to ensure the new landowner agrees to the requirements of this agreement and to not compromise the integrity of this project.

You are ineligible or become ineligible if you:

- Previously implemented a single pass, direct seeding system on the acres enrolled or participated in an Ecology funded conservation tillage cost share program.
- Own a single pass, low disturbance direct seed drill.
- Burn crop residue on the enrolled acres.
- Use any post-harvest or pre-planting tillage on the enrolled acres. This includes the use of tillage equipment such as moldboard plows, chisel plows, rod weeders, and disks.
- Use conventional summer fallow in your rotation.

Certify you understand the program requirements and that you are eligible for this program:

Producer Name and Signature

District Staff Name and Signature

Date

Date

Supporting information and documentation

Contact the Conservation District before conducting any field operations that are not in the plan to ensure continuing eligibility.

	Name	Phone	Email
Conservation District			
Operator			

Attach a map with location description of the acres enrolled in the program.

FSA Farm #: _____

FSA Tract #: _____

FSA Field #: _____

Planned rotation and field operations:

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Year 1				
Year 2				
Year 3				
Year 4*				

*if using fallow in your rotation, may be dependent on success of future grant applications.

Conservation District Board of Supervisors review and approval

The Rock Lake Conservation District Board of Supervisors reviewed and approved this agreement on the date below.

Board of Supervisors Name and Signature

District Staff Name and Signature

Date

Date