



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

ENROLLMENT PROCESS CHECKLIST

To be enrolled into the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) you must complete the following tasks:

- Submit an application and associated documentation for consideration. The documents needed for examination are:*
 - 1. The official application form completely executed.*
 - 2. Two aerial maps printed on 8.5" x 11" paper or larger. An aerial stand map identifying areas designated for native species management (a stand map) and a County Assessor's Property Index Number map.*
 - 3. Provide a Property Tax Record Card for each parcel containing acreage being submitted for enrollment.*
 - 4. Provide a location map indicating where your property is located within the county.*

The aerial maps, property tax record card and location map may be obtained at your County Assessor's office. Once we are in receipt of this information our office will review your application.

- After review of your application an inspection of your property may be required.*
- If your application is approved, you must submit a written management plan based on the conservation management practices you indicated in your application and/ or identified in the inspection of your acreage. In some cases we may require a professional consultant write your plan.*
- Upon approval of your written management plan we will mail you a Certification to sign, date and return to our office. This will complete the enrollment process.*

Upon our receipt of the Certification form your County Assessor will be informed of your enrollment into the program. The Conservation Stewardship Assessment begins January 1 of the following year after the plan is certified by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Assessments are not pro-rated.

FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) ABOUT THE CSP

Is there a fee associated with enrolling my land in the Conservation Stewardship Program?

No. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will review your plan and provide notification to the Department of Revenue when your plan is approved. There is no charge for this processing.

Am I required to hire a professional to write a management plan for my land?

No. However, IDNR recommends landowners consult with a wildlife or forestry professional to establish their management plan. There are a number of qualified consultants available throughout the state. Here is a [link](#) to the Consulting Foresters in Illinois.

What is the deadline for sending my conservation management plan to the Department of Natural Resources?

There is no deadline established in the Conservation Stewardship Law or in the rules prepared by DNR. However, to improve the likelihood that CSP valuation has been put on your property before January 1st annually, applications must be submitted by November 1st annually.

Should I send a copy of my conservation management plan to the assessor in my county?

It is not necessary to send your conservation management plan to anyone other than DNR. DNR is responsible for reviewing and approving plans and then providing information on approved plans to the Department of Revenue. The Department of Revenue will notify your county assessor that you have an approved plan so the assessor can make the appropriate adjustment in your valuation.

How can I be sure that I am getting the best available tax rate on my property?

There are some situations in which a landowner is already paying less tax on their property than they would under the Conservation Stewardship Program. Your county assessor is the best source of information on how your current taxes compare to what you would pay in the Conservation Stewardship Program.

When will the special valuation under the Conservation Stewardship Law take effect?

The soonest that your taxes can be affected is for the next calendar year's valuation. This valuation will be reflected on the tax bill that you receive the following year. Enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program will remain open as long as the Conservation Stewardship Law remains in effect.

What is the special valuation rate for land enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program?

Land accepted into the Conservation Stewardship Program will be valued at 5% of the fair market value for property tax purposes.

If my land is already enrolled in another conservation program, should I apply to the Conservation Stewardship Program?

The decision to withdraw from another program that provides a property tax reduction to enroll in the Conservation Stewardship Program may be complicated and will depend on your individual circumstances. It is best to consult your county assessor, tax consultant or attorney to determine if changing programs will give you the most favorable property tax rate. You should also talk with the DNR, Nature Preserves Commission, or USDA resource manager who helped prepare your existing management plan to determine which program best fits your plans for your land. With information on management options and tax benefits, you can choose the program that is best for you.

What lands are eligible for enrollment?

- Five or more contiguous acres of unimproved land - unimproved land means woodlands, prairie, wetlands or other vacant and undeveloped land that is not used for any residential or commercial purpose that materially disturbs the land.
- Land in a Forestry Development Program Plan (also known as a Forest Stewardship Plan) under Section 10-150 of the Property Tax Code. (Be aware that switching from FDA to CSP will increase your taxes. The same acre cannot be enrolled in both programs.)
- Land registered or encumbered by conservation rights under Section 10-166 of the Property Tax Code

What lands are not eligible for enrollment?

- Any land in Cook County
- Land assessed as farmland under Sections 10-110 through 10-145 of the Property Tax Code and any land used for agricultural purposes
- Land valued under Section 10-152 (vegetated filter strips) or 10-153 (non clear-cut along navigable waters) of the Property Tax Code
- Land valued as open space under Section 10-155 of the Property Tax Code
- Land certified under Section 10-167 of the Property Tax Code
- Any property dedicated as a nature preserve or nature preserve buffer under the Natural Areas Preservation Act - the assessed value of dedicated nature preserves and buffer is one dollar per acre for the calculation of property taxes

If you are not certain of the current valuation status of your property, please consult your county assessor.

How will I know if my conservation management plan has been approved?

You will receive certification from the Department of Natural Resources when your plan has been approved. DNR will also notify the Department of Revenue.

What if my plan is not approved by DNR?

If your plan does not satisfy the requirements of the Conservation Stewardship Law, DNR will notify you and tell you what is lacking. You will have an opportunity to re-submit the plan with the needed information added. If your plan is rejected by DNR a second time, you can appeal that decision to a 3-member DNR committee.

If I sell my land, do the Conservation Management Plan and the special valuation remain in effect?

No, the special valuation does not carry over to the new owner. The new owner has the option of submitting a new application and plan if they wish to enroll into the CSP.

If I enroll in the Conservation Stewardship Program, will I be required to allow public access to my land?

No.