ARCHER REALTY

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

IS YOUR GROUND A FIT FOR CSP?

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Illinois has a program for landowners who manage unimproved ground for habitat: timber, prairie, wetland. It is run by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Here is how it works, and how to tell if your ground might fit.

General education, not tax or legal advice. IDNR decides who qualifies, and your county assessment office applies it. This is the state program, not the federal NRCS program with the same name.

01 HOW IT WORKS

- **You write a habitat management plan** for your ground and commit to doing the work in it.
- **IDNR reviews and approves the plan.** Once it is certified, the state notifies the county.
- **Enrolled land gets a special valuation.** Unimproved land is normally valued at 33.3% of its fair market value for tax purposes. Land with a certified CSP plan is valued at 5%.
- **Enrollment runs 10 years.** To stay in, you reapply before it expires.

02 DOES YOUR GROUND FIT?

- [ ] **5 or more contiguous acres** of unimproved land: timber, prairie, wetland, or other undeveloped ground not used for a home or a business
- [ ] **Not assessed as farmland or used for agriculture.** If the ground already gets the farmland rate, CSP will not lower it.
- [ ] **Legal access.** The land cannot be landlocked.
- [ ] **Outside Cook County.** Every other Illinois county is eligible.
- [ ] **You will do the work yourself.** CSP does not pay for habitat work. There is no cost share.

03 HOW TO ENROLL

01 Write the plan
You can write it yourself or with a wildlife or forestry professional. It lays out the practices and when you will do them.

02 Send it to IDNR
The CSP office reviews it. Staff may visit the property before approving it.

03 Get certified
IDNR sends a certification letter, then notifies the Illinois Department of Revenue, which notifies your county assessment office.

04 Do the work
Follow your schedule of practices for the 10 years.

04 WORK THAT USUALLY GOES IN A PLAN

- Timber stand improvement
- Removing invasives like bush honeysuckle and autumn olive
- Planting trees or native grasses and wildflowers
- Wildlife structures and habitat edges

05 WHAT KEEPS YOU IN

- [ ] Doing the practices in your plan, on schedule
- [ ] Keeping the property taxes paid. Unpaid taxes or a foreclosure removes the land from the program.
- [ ] Keeping 5 or more acres enrolled
- [ ] Buying ground that is already enrolled? Ask about it early. A new owner applies in their own name.

WANT A SECOND SET OF EYES?

IS YOUR GROUND A FIT?

Text me the county and acres. I will tell you how your ground lines up with the program and what I would put in a management plan on your place.

TEXT **217.673.0306**

CALL **217.741.5234**

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General education about a state program, not tax or legal advice. IDNR decides eligibility.

Sources: 17 Ill. Adm. Code 2580 (Conservation Stewardship Program); Lake County, IL Conservation Stewardship Program page; Outdoor Illinois Journal, IDNR. Checked October 2026.

ALWAYS UPWARD.