

A Private Landowner's Guide to Indiana's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy

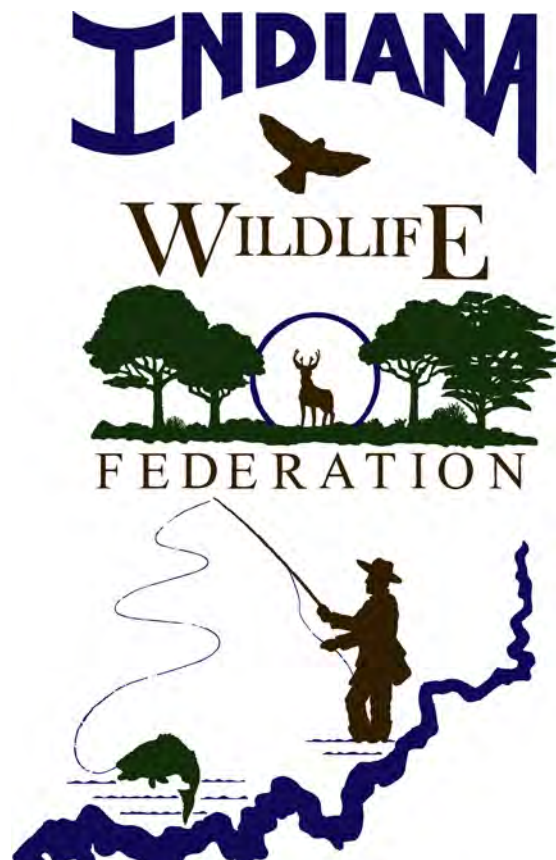


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Indiana's *Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy*

Indiana hosts an amazing diversity of fish and wildlife resources stretching from the dunes of Lake Michigan to the banks of the Ohio River. These resources offer Hoosiers many benefits and services from recreational opportunities to food and a source of income. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources is charged with managing the state's fish and wildlife resources, often with limited funding and staff. Because of this it is extremely important that we are able to identify leading threats and take a proactive approach to conservation. In 2000, Congress created the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program and the State Wildlife Grants Program to provide federal support to state fish and wildlife agencies. The programs charged each state to develop a comprehensive wildlife action plan. This plan would help prioritize threats and identify ways to conserve wildlife and their habitats before they became threatened. Indiana's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy was approved in August of 2006 and has provided an outline for local, regional, and state partners to participate in collaborative conservation efforts to protect our Hoosier fish and wildlife.

Indiana's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy was developed through a habitat-based approach since little information is known about many rare and endangered fish and wildlife species, and habitat loss is often regarded as the greatest threat to wildlife. This approach is based on the assumption that if we can protect and restore healthy

wildlife habitat across the state, then the species associated with those habitats will also be protected. With the help of many experts, conservation organizations, and the public, IDNR collected information on a variety of wildlife species and documented more than 60 habitat types where those species occur across the state. This information allowed them to identify representative species for each habitat type, prioritize threats, and rank conservation actions to provide protection for our most threatened species and their respective habitats. This method takes advantage of available knowledge to develop conservation efforts for the species of greatest conservation need.

In addition to identifying threats and conservation actions to help protect Indiana's wildlife, IDNR collected information regarding current conservation efforts and funding opportunities in an effort to leverage available resources and make the most cost-effective improvements. This extremely valuable research will help identify potential partnerships between local, state, and federal organizations as well as provide a network for monitoring and evaluation of current methods and practices. Indiana's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy represents the first time in Indiana's history that we have strategically evaluated our fish and wildlife resources and identified the state's conservation partners. In order to effectively implement this strategy and protect Hoosier fish and wildlife, both public and private partners will need to join together for Indiana conservation.

The Role of Private Landowners

The information compiled and analyzed as part of Indiana's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy represents an extremely valuable tool for the conservation of Indiana's fish and wildlife resources, one that IDNR will continue to use to monitor the health and stability of those populations. With over 90% of the land in Indiana under private ownership, almost all fish and wildlife species rely in some way on private landowners, arguably the most important link in the strategy to protect Indiana's fish and wildlife. IDNR, and other public and private organizations, realize the importance of private landowners in Indiana and employ a variety of biologists who work primarily with private landowners to protect wildlife and their habitats. Many of the priority conservation actions identified in

the Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy call for increased technical and financial assistance for private lands. But even with increased support, private landowners must understand how to access and work within established programs while maintaining a living. This publication outlines many of Indiana's conservation programs providing private landowners technical and financial assistance as well as recommends a few land management practices that will help ensure the future of Indiana's fish and wildlife. Hoosier wildlife rely heavily on private lands, and if we want our children to experience the flight of a Bald Eagle soaring overhead or the tug of their line at a favorite fishing hole, both the public and private sectors will need to work together to protect our wildlife and their habitats.

Managing Your Lands for Indiana Wildlife

Forest Management

Recommendations

Maintaining Forest Health

One great way to improve your property for wildlife is to maintain the health and diversity of your forests. Ideally, your forested lands should contain all stages of growth; young, middle-aged, and mature. This type of structure will support greater numbers and a greater diversity of wildlife in your forests. To promote this type of habitat and ensure your forests are reaching their full potential, you should consult a professional, trained in forestry or wildlife biology, to determine what forestry practices, or timber harvesting techniques, can be used to help you achieve your goals for your property.



Multiple age classes in a forest support a greater diversity of wildlife.

Retain the Special Features of Your Forests

A very important part of forest management for wildlife includes conserving the parts of your forest that provide special services to wildlife. Trees containing cavities and dead snags are great places for many forest birds and mammals to nest and raise their young. Retaining these trees is an easy way to improve habitat in your forest. Other features you should try to conserve are select, mature crop trees that are exposed to light. These trees have potential to yield large amounts of hard mast (such as acorns, hickory nuts, and walnuts), while other species can produce soft mast (such as persimmons, black cherries, and wild crabapples) which are important foods for a variety of wildlife in Indiana forests.

Managing Forest Edges and Corridors

Management of your forest should include managing its edges. Avoid straight edges with abrupt changes in vegetation. A good forest edge meanders, with an uneven gradient of small trees, shrubs, and grasses extending from the mature trees to the adjacent habitat type; which could be a hayfield, pasture, or row crop field. These “soft edges” can be created and maintained through thinning trees, planting extended rows of shrubs, and/or utilizing prescribed fire along your forest edges. In addition to the edges of your forest, you need to consider its arrangement as it relates to the landscape as well. When possible, maintain or create connective corridors between woodlots. This provides a means of travel between forest blocks in a broken landscape, and will maximize the amount of wildlife using your property.

Landowner Assistance Programs

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)
Indiana Classified Forest and Wildlands Program (CF&W)
Indiana Woodland Restoration Program (IWRP)
Forest Legacy
Environmental Quality Enhancement Program (EQIP)
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
Emergency Forestry Conservation Program (EFCP)
Wildlife Habitat Cost-Share Program
Game Bird Habitat Development Program

Species That Benefit

Indiana Bat
Wild Turkey
Southern Flying Squirrel
Eastern Box Turtle
Northern Bobwhite
Ovenbird
Cerulean Warbler

Grassland Management

Recommendations

Promote Diverse Habitats

Grasslands host a wide range of habitat types. Some areas may include mostly warm-season grasses; broad-leaved plants and wildflowers may dominate some grasslands; while others might include annuals or even a mix of shrubs. Each habitat type has different characteristics that serve a variety of grassland wildlife. Promoting a mix of these habitats is key to ensuring your grassland areas are productive and reach their full potential for wildlife use. To create habitat diversity, you should use different management techniques in different areas and at different times. Strip disking, strip spraying, and rotational prescribed fires all promote a mix of habitat types in grasslands. Each area treated differently will yield its own cover type, which will contribute uniquely to the whole plant and animal community within your grassland areas.



Regular maintenance of grasslands can be accomplished with prescribed fire, mowing, or baling.

Keep Up with Maintenance

Proper grassland habitat management requires regular maintenance. Grasslands can be maintained in various ways. One of the most common methods used today is prescribed fire. Other methods include mowing, baling, disking, or any combination of the above, depending on your desired result. The most important point is that you continue maintain your grassland through regular disturbances. Without these disturbances your grassland will accumulate excessive dead plant material and advance into later stages of plant succession, resulting in a less suitable habitat for a large proportion of grassland wildlife.

Landowner Assistance Programs

- Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
- Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Game Bird Habitat Development Program
- Tall Fescue Conversion Program
- Pheasant Habitat Incentive Program
- Quail Habitat Incentives Program
- Wildlife Habitat Cost-Share Program

Species That Benefit

- Henslow's Sparrow
- Northern Bobwhite
- Eastern Cottontail
- Short-eared Owl
- Grasshopper Sparrow
- Sedge Wren
- Ring-necked Pheasant

Wetland Management

Recommendations

Protect Current Wetland Habitats

Few wetlands remain on Indiana's private lands, and they demand as much protection as possible. These wetlands support a myriad of species, many of which have declining populations. Most wetland habitat on your land should not require much management. By simply avoiding potentially damaging disturbances, such as draining and soil erosion, along with preventing overall loss of wet areas, you will provide a tremendous service to the wildlife on your land.

Identify and Restore Historical Wetlands

The majority of Indiana's wetlands were drained and converted to farmland long ago, but you can easily find evidence of old wetland areas. Soil maps, aerial photos, and remnant wetland plants indicate historical wetlands for landowners. If you have located an area like this on your property, you can contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) or USDA-NRCS. They will help you form a plan to restore this unique area and help reduce the costs at the same time. Often, restoration is much easier than you might think. Depending on your management goals, a variety of steps can be taken for restoration--from simply removing tile drains and shifting land use activities, to making shallow pools and replenishing the native plants. Most restoration projects will incorporate many of these management actions to achieve the best results.



Much of Indiana previously contained productive wetland areas that were drained.

Landowner Assistance Programs

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)
Wildlife Habitat Cost-Share Program
Northeast Indiana Wetland/Grassland Restoration Program

Species That Benefit

Sedge Wren
Northern Pintail
Sandhill Crane
Four-toed Salamander
Hooded Merganser
Wood Duck

Young Forests, Shrublands, and Old Fields

Recommendations

Maintain Quality Habitat with Disturbances

Young forest stands, shrubby areas, and retired fields are highly productive areas that can support a tremendous amount of wildlife. When managing these areas, it is important for you recall what that area used to look like and how quickly it changed. That change is still happening. To retain high quality, early growth you will need to interrupt the process of plant succession with regular disturbances. This can be achieved in many different ways depending on what you want out of the area. Tree thinning, prescribed fire, and strip disking encourage new growth of beneficial plants on your property. Talk to your local District Conservationist or District Wildlife Biologist for recommendations on maintaining early-successional habitat.



Scrub forests and openings are extremely important to many species in Indiana.

Control Invasive Plant Species

Invasive exotic plants often appear in places of early plant succession that have been disturbed. These aggressive plants take over natural systems and will degrade wildlife habitat on your property. Pay special attention to young forests and clearings to make sure invasive plants are not showing up and causing a problem. Information on these species is available through the Midwest Invasive Plant Network (MIPN.org). It is not uncommon to find these plants growing on your property. You should be prepared to remove, or at least control, invasions as they appear using methods recommended by professionals.

Landowner Assistance Programs

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)
Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
Game Bird Habitat Development Program
Indiana Rights of Way for Wildlife Program
Indiana Classified Forest and Wildlands Program (CF&W)
Wildlife Cost-Share Program

Species That Benefit

Ruffed Grouse
Bobcat
Hooded Warbler
Carolina Wren
Whip-poor-will
Chuck-will's-widow
American Woodcock
Blue-winged Warbler

Farmland Management

Recommendations

Promote Soft Edges

Some of the most productive areas of wildlife habitat in agricultural lands are found along field edges. Edges often provide the required cover adjacent to food sources where farmland wildlife can thrive. Good structure for a field edge includes several stages of plant succession arranged in a mixed gradient between the field and its adjacent area. These stages of succession may include a strip of grasses mown once a year, followed by a strip of vegetation not mown, then a band of brambles mixed with small shrubs leading into some mature shrubs and small trees. Not only do these “soft” edges provide great habitat for many species found around farms, they can also boost the productivity of fields by increasing light availability.



Field borders and feathered edges boost yields and provide great habitat for quail, songbirds, and rabbits.

Connect Habitat Patches

Creating and maintaining connectivity between patches of habitat is one of the most effective ways to improve the habitat on your land and increase the amount of wildlife on your property. Fencerows, windbreaks, shelterbelts, and stream buffers can all act as connective corridors that will allow wildlife to travel between existing patches of cover. Corridors should be as wide as possible and need to contain areas of dense cover in order to be effective. The creation of these corridors will increase the amount of resources available to farmland wildlife, resulting in a much more diverse and productive wildlife community.

Landowner Assistance Programs

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Certified Livestock Producer Program
- Game Bird Habitat Development Program
- Pheasant Habitat Incentive Program
- Quail Habitat Incentive Program
- Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program
- Lake and River Enhancement Program (LARE)

Species That Benefit

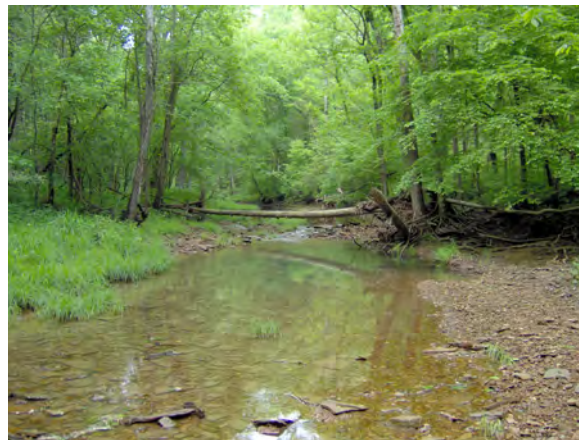
- Barn Owl
- Northern Bobwhite
- Eastern Cottontail
- Song Sparrow

Aquatic Systems and Riparian Areas

Recommendations

Minimize Human Impacts

Aquatic systems such as lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams, are very sensitive habitats, easily disrupted and damaged by human activity. Always try to avoid development, or any ground-disturbing activities, in close proximity to aquatic systems. Landowners and property managers should minimize their influence at a broader scale as well. Reductions in pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizer applications, in addition to preventing erosion, will help keep your water resources healthy. Riparian zones, or bottomland areas near rivers and streams, are especially susceptible to human impacts. Landowners in riparian areas should maintain vegetation near any bodies of water to prevent soil loss and sedimentation. Strips of vegetation, or buffers, along rivers and streams not only help with water quality but also provide excellent wildlife habitat on land and in the water.



Allowing natural vegetation to grow adjacent to aquatic habitats will improve water quality on your land.

Address Sources of Contamination

Private landowners need to reduce the various sources of contamination on their properties. Agricultural lands often have many features that can negatively affect aquatic systems, but you can easily address these problems with some adjustments to current practices. Crop-producing farms should use conservation tillage practices and no-till drilling whenever possible; this technique will help conserve your soil and reduce sedimentation in aquatic systems. Farms containing livestock should never allow their animals to come in contact with a flowing body of water or a naturally wet area in order to prevent severe damage to your land and natural areas. Owners of non-agricultural land need to be aware of water quality on their property as well. Always consider how the placement of driveways, logging roads, houses, and other structures will impact the water on, or near, your land. These simple considerations will make a big difference in water quality conservation and aquatic habitat enhancement.

Landowner Assistance Programs

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)
- Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
- Lake and River Enhancement Program (LARE)
- Clean Water Indiana Funding (CWI)

Species That Benefit

- Hellbender
- Wood Duck
- River Otter
- Alligator Snapping Turtle

Conclusion

Indiana's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy marks a big step forward in the management of our state's natural resources. Private landowners play an especially important role in this strategy. Since most of the land in Indiana is privately owned, your land management actions and decisions offer among the highest potential to influence the status of our wildlife.

Providing private landowners with information and helping them to actively manage their land are some of the primary goals for many natural resource managers in Indiana. This guide highlights some of the basic information and recommendations you should consider for your property. If you have the desire to improve your land, explore your resources and ask a professional trained in natural resource management to

help you form a plan to achieve your goals. Forming and implementing these plans improves your property and its wildlife habitats, ultimately benefiting wildlife and providing you a deserved sense of satisfaction.

As stewards of the land, we must do our best to practice sound management and learn new ways to effectively manage our natural resources. Take the first step by seeking out information and contacting local professionals to make a difference on your land. Once you have started management at home, talk to your friends and neighbors to let them know what you have done and how they can do the same. Encouraging a network of landowners to implement a plan for managing their lands and improving habitat, is a great step forward in providing more quality habitat for Indiana wildlife.

Thank You to Our Sponsors and Contributors

Wildlife Conservation Society
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation



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Indiana Conservation Programs for Private Lands

Program	Lead Agency/ Contact	Eligibility	Resources Addressed	What is Offered	Participant Obligations
MULTIPLE RESOURCES PROGRAMS					
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	USDA-NRCS	Private land in ag production (cropland, grassland, pastureland & non-industrial forestland)	Water quality, soil quality, air quality, erosion, wildlife habitat, managing forest lands	Payment per unit of practice installed	Work with NRCS to develop and follow a conservation plan and assist with practice installation costs
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)	USDA-NRCS	Private ag land and forested land incidental to an ag operation (cropland, hayland, and pastureland)	Establishing wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity	Easement purchase, payment per unit of practice installed for restoration & maintenance activities	Work with NRCS to develop and follow a restoration and an operation & maintenance plan; if necessary, assist with restoration cost
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	USDA-NRCS	Private land in ag production (cropland, grassland, pastureland & non-industrial forestland)	Conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources	Payment per unit of practice installed	Follow a conservation plan, adopt additional activities, and improve, maintain, and manage existing activities
Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)	USDA – NRCS and USDA - FSA	Private grasslands	Management of grazing lands and protection from threat of conversion	Annual rental payment for an agreement or a one time payment for an easement	Work with NRCS to develop and comply with easement or restoration agreement
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	USDA – FSA	FSA determined cropland that has certified cropping history 4 out of 6 base years	Management of lands for soil, water and wildlife resources	Payment per unit of practice installed, annual rental payments, and annual maintenance payment; incentive payments eligible for certain practices	Agree to comply with terms and conditions of CRP-1 contract which includes CRP-1, CRP-1 (appendix) and Conservation Plan for a period of 10 to 15 years

Indiana Conservation Programs for Private Lands

Program	Lead Agency/ Contact	Eligibility	Resources Addressed	What is Offered	Participant Obligations
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	USDA – FSA, ISDA – Division of Soil Conservation	FSA determined cropland that has certified cropping history 4 out of 6 base years and located within an approved CREP priority watershed	Management of soil, water and wildlife resources	Payment per unit of practice installed, annual rental payments, and annual maintenance payment; incentive payments eligible for some practices; Clean Water Indiana incentive payment of \$400 or \$100 depending on practice	Agree to comply with terms and conditions of CRP-1 contract which includes CRP-1, CRP-1 (appendix) and Conservation Plan for a period of 14 -15 years
Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)	USDA – FSA	To be Determined	Energy	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Certified Livestock Producer Program	ISDA	Livestock Farms	Water Quality, animal welfare, wildlife habitat, bio-security, good neighbor	Publicly recognized certification for 5 major components; insurance discounts	Multiple requirements, see program details

Indiana Conservation Programs for Private Lands

Program	Lead Agency/ Contact	Eligibility	Resources Addressed	What is Offered	Participant Obligations
WILDLIFE PROGRAMS					
Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)	USDA-NRCS	Private land in ag production (cropland, grassland, pastureland & non-industrial private forest land)	Establish, restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat, reduce invasive species	Payment per unit of practice installed	Work with NRCS to prepare and follow a wildlife habitat development plan, assist with installation costs
Wildlife Habitat Cost-Share Program	IDNR – Division of Fish and Wildlife	Private land 10 or more acres	Establish and maintain wildlife habitat/wetlands	Up to \$1,000 not to exceed established rates	Agree to maintain practices according to mgmt. plan for a minimum of 5 years
Game Bird Habitat Development Program	IDNR – Division of Fish and Wildlife	Private land 10 or more acres	Establish and maintain pheasant, quail, turkey or grouse habitat	Up to 100 % of actual cost, not to exceed \$100/acre	Agree to maintain practices according to mgmt. plan for a minimum of 3 years
Tall Fescue Conversion Program	IDNR – Division of Fish and Wildlife	Private land	Convert tall fescue to wildlife friendly grass/legume mixes	Up to 75 % of actual cost, additional cost-share may be available	Agree to maintain practices according to mgmt. plan for a minimum of 10 years
Pheasant Habitat Incentive Program	IDNR – Division of Fish and Wildlife	Private land in a State Pheasant Habitat Priority Area	Establish and maintain pheasant habitat	Incentives for CRP enrollment & mid-contract mgmt activities; enhanced cost-share for pheasant habitat establishment and maintenance	Agree to maintain practices according to mgmt. plan for a minimum of 3 years
Indiana Rights of Way for Wildlife Program	IDNR – Division of Fish and Wildlife	Must own property having a Cinery (Duke Energy) power line right of way	Establishment of wildlife friendly grasses/legumes and perennial food plots	Plantings are established free of charge by Cinery contracted crews	Agree to maintain right of way according to mgmt. plan prepared by District Wildlife Biologist

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Indiana Conservation Programs for Private Lands

Program	Lead Agency/ Contact	Eligibility	Resources Addressed	What is Offered	Participant Obligations
Quail Habitat Incentive Program	IDNR – Division of Fish and Wildlife	Private land in a State Quail Habitat Priority Area	Establishment and maintenance of quail habitat	Incentive payments for CRP enrollment and Mid Contract Management Activities; enhanced cost-share for quail habitat establishment and maintenance	Agree to maintain practices according to mgmt. plan for a minimum of 3 years
Northeastern Indiana Wetland/Grassland Restoration Program	IDNR – Division of Fish and Wildlife	Must own restorable grasslands or wetlands in Allen, DeKalb, Elkhart, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, or Whitley counties	Restoration of wetlands and native grassland habitat	Up to 100% cost-share for wetland restorations; up to 100% cost-share for native grassland restorations in association with existing or restored wetlands	Agree to maintain restored habitat for 10 years according to agreement/mgmt. plan
Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program	IDNR – Division of Fish and Wildlife	Private land 10 or more acres	Preparation of wildlife management plan to meet landowner's wildlife objectives	On-site visit, technical assistance and mgmt. plan developed at no charge	None
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Private lands statewide, higher priority for targeted Focus Areas	Restoration or enhancement of wetland, native grassland, and forest habitats for migratory birds or threatened/endangered species	Cost-share: Wetlands: up to 100%; Native Grassland & Reforestation: up to 80% (up to 100% in priority endangered species areas)	Agree to maintain restored or enhanced habitat according to landowner agreement and project plan for a minimum of 10 years (15 years for reforestation projects)

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Indiana Conservation Programs for Private Lands

Program	Lead Agency/ Contact	Eligibility	Resources Addressed	What is Offered	Participant Obligations
FORESTRY PROGRAMS					
Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)	USDA - NRCS	Non-industrial private forest landowners in targeted geographic areas	Restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems to: recover threatened and endangered species, improve biodiversity; and enhance carbon sequestration	Easement purchase, payment per unit of practice installed	Work with NRCS to develop and follow a restoration and an operation & maintenance plan; if necessary, assist with restoration cost
Indiana Woodland Restoration Program (IWRP) (limited availability)	IDNR-Forestry	Non-industrial private forest landowners (minimum of 10 acres)	Managing forest lands, water quality, soil erosion	Cost-share dollars for forest restoration and enhancement	Follow a prescribed practice plan and assist with practice installation costs
Indiana Classified Forest and Wildlands Program (CF&W)	IDNR-Forestry	Privately owned with a minimum of 10 contiguous acres and support a growth of native or planted trees, grass, or wetlands	Managing forest lands, water quality, soil erosion, wildlife habitat	Property tax reduction and written management plan; Green certification available on eligible forested tracts	Enrolled lands must be protected from development, livestock grazing, and wildfire; landowners must also follow the management plan provided
Forest Legacy	IDNR-Forestry	Forest and compatible lands within designated priority areas	Managing forest lands, water quality, soil erosion, wildlife habitat	Conservation agreements (easements) to restrict development and retain forest for traditional forest uses	

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Indiana Conservation Programs for Private Lands

Program	Lead Agency/ Contact	Eligibility	Resources Addressed	What is Offered	Participant Obligations
WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS					
Lake and River Enhancement Program (LARE)	IDNR – Division of Fish and Wildlife	Generally private land in ag production watersheds	Soil erosion, nutrient runoff	Cost-share for conservation practices	Agree to prepare and follow a whole-farm plan, assist with implementation costs
Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Funding	ISDA and SSCB, program is administered locally by SWCDs	Determined by the local SWCD	Water quality and likely many others determined by the local SWCD	Contact local SWCD for details	Determined by the local SWCD
§ 319(h) Nonpoint Source Water Pollution Program	IDEM	Nonprofit groups, universities, and local, State or Federal government agencies	Watersheds in areas with waterbodies on the State 303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies or in areas with approved TMDLs; lands and areas contributing to NPS water pollution	60% grant funding for projects that reduce documented NPS water quality impairments	40% (non-federal) in-kind or cash match of the total project cost. Develop or implement watershed management plans, TMDLs, provide technical assistance, demonstrate new technology & provide education & outreach
§ 205(j) Water Quality Management Planning	IDEM	Regional planning organizations and Interstate Commissions, nonprofit groups, and local, State or Federal government	Water quality	100 % grant	Water quality management planning; to determine nature, extent and causes of point and NPS water pollution problems

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Indiana Conservation Programs for Private Lands

Program	Lead Agency/ Contact	Eligibility	Resources Addressed	What is Offered	Participant Obligations
EMERGENCY PROGRAMS					
Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)	USDA - NRCS	Private and public land affected by a sudden watershed impairment. A project must be sponsored by a local unit of government	Provides emergency measures for run-off retardation and erosion control to areas where life or property are threatened	75% cost share for construction costs of emergency measures	Obtain necessary land rights and permits. Administer local contracts. Provide local share of installation costs. Perform operation and management on repaired work
Floodplain Easement Program (FEP)	USDA - NRCS	Private and public land subject to frequent flooding	Water quality, flood reduction, and groundwater recharge	A permanent easement is purchased on the land enrolled in the program	Implement an NRCS restoration plan
Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)	USDA – FSA	Cropland acreage damaged by a natural disaster	Rehabilitation of damaged cropland	Cost-share not to exceed 75% as determined by the FSA County Committee	Must perform activities to restore cropland as required by FSA
Emergency Forestry Conservation Program (EFCP)	USDA – FSA	Non-Industrial Private Forest Lands damaged by natural disaster	Rehabilitation of damaged forest land	Cost-share not to exceed 75% as determined by FSA County Committee	Must perform activities to restore forestland as required by FSA

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Contact Information:

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service – Contact your local District Conservationist at your local USDA Service Center. USDA Service Center locations can be found at: <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/directory/dclist.html>. Additional Indiana NRCS program information is available at <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>.

USDA-Farm Service Agency – Contact your local County Executive Director at your local USDA Service Center. Contact information can be found at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=in&agency=fsa>. Additional Indiana FSA program information is available at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateoffapp?mystate=in&area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>.

Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) – Contact the Indiana State Department of Agriculture at 317-232-8770 or find additional information at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2346.htm>.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) – you can find contact information for any of the 92 Soil and Water Conservation Districts around Indiana at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2408.htm>.

Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) – Contact the Watershed Planning Branch at 317-233-8488 or find additional information at <http://www.in.gov/idem/4381.htm>. A wide-ranging (beyond the ICP) funding matrix may be found at: <http://www.in.gov/idem/4103.htm>

Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) - Division of Forestry – Contact your local District Forester at their regional office. An office listing can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/4750.htm>. Additional Division of Forestry program information is available at: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/2845.htm>.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) - Division of Fish and Wildlife – Contact your local District Wildlife Biologist. District Wildlife Biologist contact information can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/2716.htm>. Additional Division of Fish and Wildlife program information can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/3024.htm>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Contact the State Private Lands Coordinator at 812-334-4261, x.212 or visit <http://www.fws.gov/partners/>

Additional Information:

Some programs may have **permit requirements**, such as construction permits prior to installing conservation practices, wetland permits, construction along navigable waters permits, etc. Check with individual program contacts to find out more about potential permit requirements for a given program.

Many Soil and Water Conservation Districts and non-profit groups offer additional local conservation program opportunities, such as Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, RC&Ds, etc. Opportunities vary by location. Check with your local Soil and Water Conservation District (contact information listed above) for information on programs in your area.

All programs are subject to changes in eligibility or scope, please use the web links for the most current program information.

This document is intended for internal use by Indiana Conservation Partnership staff.

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Updated July, 2009

Indiana's Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Also available online at www.endangeredwildlife.in.gov

STATE

STATE ENDANGERED: Any animal species whose prospects for survival or recruitment within the state are in immediate jeopardy and are in danger of disappearing from the state. This includes all species classified as endangered by the federal government that occur in Indiana.

SPECIAL CONCERN: Any animal species requiring monitoring because of known/suspected limited abundance or distribution or because of a recent change in legal status or required habitat.

FEDERAL

FEDERALLY ENDANGERED: Any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. Designated with (FE).

FEDERALLY THREATENED: Any species that is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. Designated with (FT).

FEDERAL CANDIDATE: These species have been submitted for review for protection under the Federal Endangered Species Act. If added to the federal list, they will automatically be considered a state endangered species. Designated with (FC).

M A M M A L S

State Endangered

Gray Myotis (FE)	<i>Myotis grisescens</i>
Indiana Myotis (FE)	<i>Myotis sodalis</i>
Evening Bat	<i>Nycticeius humeralis</i>
Swamp Rabbit	<i>Sylvilagus aquaticus</i>
Franklin's Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus franklinii</i>
Allegheny Woodrat	<i>Neotoma magister</i>



Special Concern

Smoky Shrew	<i>Sorex fumeus</i>
Pygmy Shrew	<i>Sorex hoyi</i>
Star-nosed Mole	<i>Condylura cristata</i>
Southeastern Myotis	<i>Myotis austroriparius</i>
Little Brown Myotis	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>
Northern Myotis	<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>
Silver-haired Bat	<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>
Eastern Pipistrelle	<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>
Red Bat	<i>Lasiurus borealis</i>
Hoary Bat	<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>
Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat	<i>Corynorhinus rafinesquii</i>
Plains Pocket Gopher	<i>Geomys bursarius</i>
River Otter	<i>Lontra canadensis</i>
Least Weasel	<i>Mustela nivalis</i>
Badger	<i>Taxidea taxus</i>
Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>

B I R D S

State Endangered

Trumpeter Swan	<i>Cygnus buccinator</i>
American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Black Rail	<i>Laterallus jamaicensis</i>
King Rail	<i>Rallus elegans</i>
Virginia Rail	<i>Rallus limicola</i>
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Whooping Crane (FE)	<i>Grus americana</i>
Piping Plover (FE)	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>
Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>
Least Tern (FE)	<i>Sternula antillarum</i>
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>
Golden-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>
Kirtland's Warbler (FE)	<i>Dendroica kirtlandii</i>
Cerulean Warbler	<i>Dendroica cerulea</i>
Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>
Yellow-headed Blackbird	<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>

Special Concern

Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Mississippi Kite	<i>Ictinia mississippiensis</i>
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>
Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis</i>
American Golden-Plover	<i>Pluvialis dominica</i>
Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	<i>Tryngites subruficollis</i>
Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>
Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>
Common Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>
Whip-poor-will	<i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i>
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>
Worm-eating Warbler	<i>Helminthos vermivorum</i>
Hooded Warbler	<i>Wilsonia citrina</i>
Western Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>



Revised 7/2009

FISH

State Endangered

Northern Brook Lamprey	<i>Ichthyomyzon fossor</i>
Lake Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser fulvescens</i>
Redside Dace	<i>Clinostomus elongatus</i>
Pallid Shiner	<i>Hybopsis amnis</i>
Greater Redhorse	<i>Moxostoma valenciennesi</i>
Northern Cavefish	<i>Amblyopsis spelaea</i>
Bantam Sunfish	<i>Lepomis symmetricus</i>
Variagate Darter	<i>Etheostoma variatum</i>
Channel Darter	<i>Percina copelandi</i>
Gilt Darter	<i>Percina evides</i>



Special Concern

Pugnose Shiner	<i>Notropis anogenus</i>
Bigmouth Shiner	<i>Notropis dorsalis</i>
Longnose Dace	<i>Rhinichthys cataractae</i>
Longnose Sucker	<i>Catostomus catostomus</i>
Northern Madtom	<i>Noturus stigmosus</i>
Ohio River Muskellunge	<i>Esox masquinongy ohioensis</i>
Cisco	<i>Coregonus artedii</i>
Lake Whitefish	<i>Coregonus clupeaformis</i>
Trout-perch	<i>Percopsis omiscomaycus</i>
Slimy Sculpin	<i>Cottus cognatus</i>
Western Sand Darter	<i>Ammocrypta clara</i>
Spotted Darter	<i>Etheostoma maculatum</i>
Cypress Darter	<i>Etheostoma proeliare</i>
Tippecanoe Darter	<i>Etheostoma tippecanoe</i>
Banded Pygmy Sunfish	<i>Elassoma zonatum</i>

MOLLUSKS*

State Endangered

Fanshell (FE)	<i>Cyprogenia stegaria</i>
White Catpaw (FE)	<i>Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua</i>
Northern Riffleshell (FE)	<i>Epioblasma torulosa rangiana</i>
Tubercled Blossom (FE)	<i>Epioblasma torulosa torulosa</i>
Snuffbox	<i>Epioblasma triquetra</i>
Longsolid	<i>Fusconaia subrotunda</i>
Pink Mucket (FE)	<i>Lampsilis abrupta</i>
White Wartyback (FE)	<i>Plethobasus cicatricosus</i>
Orangefoot Pimpleback (FE)	<i>Plethobasus cooperianus</i>
Sheepnose (FC)	<i>Plethobasus cyphus</i>
Clubshell (FE)	<i>Pleurobema clava</i>
Rough Pigtoe (FE)	<i>Pleurobema plenum</i>
Pyramid Pigtoe	<i>Pleurobema rubrum</i>
Fat Pocketbook (FE)	<i>Potamilus capax</i>
Rabbitsfoot	<i>Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica</i>

Special Concern

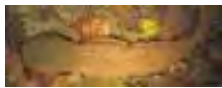
Wavyrayed Lampmussel	<i>Lampsilis fasciola</i>
Round Hickorynut	<i>Obovaria subrotunda</i>
Ohio Pigtoe	<i>Pleurobema cordatum</i>
Kidneyshell	<i>Ptychobranchus fasciolaris</i>
Salamander Mussel	<i>Simpsonaias ambigua</i>
Purple Lilliput	<i>Toxolasma lividus</i>
Ellipse	<i>Venustaconcha ellipsiformis</i>
Rayed Bean (FC)	<i>Villosa fabalis</i>
Little Spectaclecase	<i>Villosa lienosa</i>
Pointed Campeloma	<i>Campeloma decusum</i>
Swamp Lymnaea	<i>Lymnaea stagnalis</i>

* It is illegal to take or possess live mussels and mussel shells of any species of native mussel from the waters of Indiana.

AMPHIBIANS

State Endangered

Hellbender	<i>Cryptobranchus alleganiensis</i>
Green Salamander	<i>Aneides aeneus</i>
Four-toed Salamander	<i>Hemidactylium scutatum</i>
Red Salamander	<i>Pseudotriton ruber</i>
Crawfish Frog	<i>Lithobates areolatus</i>



Special Concern

Common Mudpuppy	<i>Necturus maculosus</i>
Streamside Salamander	<i>Ambystoma barbouri</i>
Blue-spotted Salamander	<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>
Northern Cricket Frog	<i>Acris crepitans</i>
Plains Leopard Frog	<i>Lithobates blairi</i>
Northern Leopard Frog	<i>Lithobates pipiens</i>

REPTILES

State Endangered

Alligator Snapping Turtle	<i>Macrochelys temminckii</i>
Eastern Mud Turtle	<i>Kinosternon subrubrum</i>
Spotted Turtle	<i>Clemmys guttata</i>
Blanding's Turtle	<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>
Hieroglyphic River Cooter	<i>Pseudemys concinna</i>
Ornate Box Turtle	<i>Terrapene ornate</i>
Scarlet Snake	<i>Cemophora coccinea</i>
Kirtland's Snake	<i>Clonophis kirtlandii</i>
Copperbelly Water Snake (FT†)	<i>Nerodia erythrogaster</i>
Smooth Green Snake	<i>Ophedrys vernalis</i>
Southeastern Crowned Snake	<i>Tantilla coronata</i>
Butler's Garter Snake	<i>Thamnophis butleri</i>
Cottonmouth	<i>Agkistrodon piscivorus</i>
Timber Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>
Massasauga (FC)	<i>Sistrurus catenatus</i>



Special Concern

Eastern Box Turtle	<i>Terrapene carolina</i>
Mud Snake	<i>Farancia abacura</i>
Rough Green Snake	<i>Ophedrys aestivus</i>
Western Ribbon Snake	<i>Thamnophis proximus</i>

† Only the northern population of copperbelly water snake is federally threatened.

Support the conservation of Indiana's nongame and endangered species by donating to the Nongame Fund. The money you donate goes directly to the protection and management of more than 750 wildlife species in Indiana. Look for the eagle logo on your Indiana state tax form to donate all or part of your refund. Or to donate directly write to:
Nongame Fund, 402 W. Washington St. Rm W273, Indianapolis, IN 46204.





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The *Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program* was established in 1987 with a core group of biologists and a small budget for on-the-ground wetland restoration projects on private lands. This successful, results-oriented program has garnered support through the years and has grown into a larger and more diversified habitat restoration program assisting thousands of private landowners across the Nation. Click [here](#) for a [history](#) of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

At the heart of the Service's mission are the conservation and management of the Federal Trust Species: migratory birds; threatened and endangered species; inter-jurisdictional fish; certain marine mammals; and species of international concern. It is estimated that 73% of our Nation's land is privately owned and that the majority of our fish and wildlife resources occur on those lands. Consequently, the conservation lands held by Federal and state agencies and other conservation groups cannot completely provide for fish and wildlife needs. Because the habitat needs of all Trust Species cannot be met solely on public lands, public funds are also expended on private lands to accomplish habitat improvements through cooperative conservation programs such as the Partners Program.

The Partners Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and Tribes who are willing to work with us and other partners on a voluntary basis to help meet the habitat needs of our Federal Trust Species.



The Partners Program can assist with projects in all habitat types which conserve or restore native vegetation, hydrology, and soils associated with imperiled ecosystems such as longleaf pine, bottomland hardwoods, tropical forests, native prairies, marshes, rivers and streams, or otherwise provide an important habitat requisite for a rare, declining or protected species.

Locally-based field biologists work one-on-one with private landowners and other partners to plan, implement, and monitor their projects. Partners Program field staff help landowners find other sources of funding and help them through the permitting process, as necessary. This level of personal attention and follow-through is a significant strength of the Program that has led to national recognition and wide support.

Fact Sheet: Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

March 2009

Overview

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for developing or improving high quality habitat that supports fish and wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to private and Tribal landowners for the development of upland, wetland, aquatic, and other types of wildlife habitat.

WHIP is reauthorized under Section 1240N of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839bb-1) as amended by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill). The 2008 Farm Bill extends the authority to the Secretary for carrying out the program during fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

Eligibility

Land eligible for WHIP includes:

- Private agricultural land including cropland, grassland, rangeland, pasture, and other land determined by NRCS to be suitable for fish and wildlife habitat development;
- Non-industrial private forest land including rural land that has existing tree cover or is suitable for growing trees; and
- Tribal land.

Increased cost-share payments are available for eligible socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers in addition to beginning and

limited resource farmers or ranchers and Indian Tribes.

How WHIP Works

The NRCS State Conservationist, with recommendations from the State Technical Committee and other partners, may identify priorities for enrollment in WHIP that complement the goals and objectives of relevant fish and wildlife conservation initiatives at the State, regional, and national levels. The priorities serve as a guide for the development of WHIP ranking criteria in each State.

Applications may be filed at any time. Applicants must own or control land and provide evidence that they will be in control of the land for the duration of the cost-share agreement.

A WHIP plan of operations is required for the area covered in the application and becomes the basis for developing the WHIP cost-share agreement. Cost-share agreements between NRCS and the participant are for a minimum of 1 year after completion of the last conservation practice, up to 10 years. Through reimbursement, NRCS will pay up to 75 percent of the cost to install conservation practices for permanent priority fish and wildlife habitat. Participants are expected to maintain the cost-shared practices for their anticipated lifespans.

Up to 25 percent of WHIP funds will be available for long-term cost-share

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agreements (15 years or longer) to protect and restore essential plant and animal habitat. NRCS can pay up to 90 percent of the cost to install conservation practices in these long-term agreements. Essential plant and animal habitat includes critical habitat designated under Federal and State law, locations of listed or candidate species that can be improved with specific conservation practices, or particularly rare and unique habitats that could support at-risk wildlife species.

Legislative and Regulatory Changes

The 2008 Farm Bill amended Section 1240N by designating eligible land as private agricultural land, nonindustrial private forest land, and Tribal lands. Land ineligible for WHIP is publicly-owned lands (Federal, State, county, or local government owned lands).

Cost-share for long-term agreements for essential plant and animal habitat is increased to 25 percent of funds made available for the fiscal year.

Payments under WHIP made to a person or legal entity directly or indirectly, “shall not exceed, in the aggregate, \$50,000 per year.” Funding for WHIP through 2012 is authorized at \$85 million per fiscal year.

The 2008 Farm Bill allows landowners to receive payments to develop other types of wildlife habitat, including habitat established on pivot corners and irregular areas.

More Information

For more information and updates about WHIP and other Farm Bill topics visit the USDA Web site at <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>, or the NRCS Web site at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/>.

Fact Sheet: **Grassland Reserve Program**

May 2009

Overview

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program for landowners and operators to protect grazing uses and related conservation values by conserving grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, shrubland, and certain other lands. The program emphasizes support for working grazing operations; enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity; and protection of grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under threat of conversion.

GRP is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) jointly administer the program.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include:

- Landowners and operators who have general control of the acreage (for rental contracts);
- Landowners who can provide clear title on privately owned lands (for easements);
- Tribes.

The Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provision of the 2008 Farm Bill impacts eligibility for GRP. Individuals or entities that have an average adjusted gross nonfarm income exceeding \$1 million for the three tax years immediately before the year the contract is approved are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where two-thirds of the

adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations.

Eligible land includes privately owned or Tribal grasslands; land that contains forbs (including improved rangeland and pastureland or shrubland) for which grazing is the predominant use; or land that is located in an area that historically has been dominated by grassland, forbs, or shrubland that has the potential to serve as wildlife habitat of significant ecological value.

Cooperating Entity Eligibility

A unit of State, local, or Tribal government or a non-governmental organization that can demonstrate the following conditions may enroll eligible land under a cooperative agreement through an NRCS State office:

- A commitment to grazing land conservation;
- Capability to acquire, manage, and enforce GRP easements;
- Sufficient staff to monitor easement stewardship; and
- Availability of matching funds.

Non-governmental organizations are required to provide evidence of dedicated funding to ensure long-term management, monitoring, and enforcement.

Landowners working through a cooperating entity must meet program eligibility requirements. The land will be ranked using NRCS State ranking criteria.

How GRP Works

Applications may be filed for a rental contract or an easement with NRCS or FSA.

Participants voluntarily limit future development and cropping uses of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices and operations related to the production of forage and seeding, subject to certain restrictions during nesting seasons of bird species that are in significant decline or are protected under Federal or State law. Participants may conduct fire rehabilitation and construct firebreaks and fences.

GRP rental contracts and easements prohibit crop production (other than hay), fruit trees, and vineyards and any other activity inconsistent with maintaining grazing land. A grazing management plan is required.

Each State establishes ranking criteria to prioritize enrollment of working grasslands. Ranking criteria will consider threats of conversion including cropping, invasive species, urban development, and other activities that threaten plant and animal diversity on grazing lands.

GRP enrollment options include:

Rental Contract. Participants may choose a 10-year, 15-year, or 20-year contract. USDA will provide annual payments in an amount that is not more than 75 percent of the grazing value established by the Farm Service Agency. Payments will not exceed \$50,000 per year per person or legal entity and will be disbursed annually.

Permanent Easement. These conservation easements are perpetual, or the maximum length allowed by State law. Easement compensation will not exceed fair market value, less the grazing value of the land encumbered by the easement. "Grazing value" means the financial worth of the land used for grazing or forage production. Easement compensation will be the lowest of an area-wide market survey or appraisal, a Geographic Area Rate Cap, or the landowner offer.

USDA will provide all administrative costs associated with easement recording, including survey costs, title-insurance, and recording fees. Easement payments may be provided at the participant's request, in lump sum or annual payments (equal or unequal amounts), for up to 10 years.

Restoration Agreement. Certain grassland easements or rental contracts may be eligible for cost-share assistance up to 50 percent of the cost to re-establish grassland functions and values where the land has been degraded or converted to other uses. Participants may contribute to the application of a cost-share practice through in-kind contributions. The combined total cost-share provided by all sources may not exceed 100 percent of the total actual cost of restoration. Payments will not exceed \$50,000 per year per person or legal entity.

Legislative and Regulatory Changes

The 2008 Farm Bill:

- Increases the acreage that may be enrolled in the program by 1,220,000 acres during the years 2009 through 2012.
- Provides priority for enrollment of expiring acreage from the Conservation Reserve Program into the GRP, with a limit of 10 percent of the total acres enrolled that year.
- Authorizes USDA to enter into cooperative agreements with entities to enable them to acquire easements. The Federal government will pay up to 50 percent of the purchase price of the easement. The right to enforce the easement is the responsibility of the cooperating entity; if the entity fails to enforce the terms of the easement, Federal enforcement is required.

More Information

For more information and updates about the Farm Bill, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill, or the NRCS Web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2008/; for more information on GRP, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/grp.

Fact Sheet: Healthy Forests Reserve Program

March 2009

Overview

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) is a voluntary program for restoration and enhancement of forest ecosystems to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, improve biodiversity, and enhance carbon sequestration. Program implementation has been delegated by the Secretary of Agriculture to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

HFRP was authorized under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-148); it was amended by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill), Public Law 110-246, and reauthorized for fiscal years 2009 - 2012.

Eligibility

Eligible HFRP enrollees are individuals or entities that own eligible private land and agree to restore, enhance, or measurably increase the likelihood of recovery of a threatened or endangered species, improve biological diversity, or increase carbon sequestration. Landowners must provide enrollment information to NRCS for determination of program eligibility and other program implementation purposes.

Eligible land is privately-owned land with habitat that supports:

- Federally listed endangered or threatened species;
- Federally identified candidate species;
- State-listed species; or

- Other species identified by the Chief of NRCS.

Land enrolled in HFRP must have a restoration plan. The cost effectiveness of each agreement or easement and associated restoration plan must maximize the environmental benefits of dollars expended. Landowner protections may be made available to HFRP enrollees who agree for a specified period to restore, protect, enhance, maintain, and manage the habitat conditions on their land in a manner that is expected to result in a net conservation benefit contributing to the recovery of listed species under ESA, or other species covered by this regulation. These protections are valid for as long as the landowner is in compliance with the terms and conditions of such assurances, associated permits, the easement, the contract, or the restoration agreement. In exchange, the landowner avoids future regulatory restrictions on the use of that land.

How HFRP Works

HFRP provides financial assistance in the form of easement, contract, and cost-share payments for specific conservation actions completed by the landowner.

As funds are made available, the NRCS Chief will solicit project proposals from State Conservationists. States selected for funding will issue a public sign-up notice.

To apply for enrollment through an easement, 30-year contract, or 10-year cost-share agreement, a landowner must submit an HFRP

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application during the announced sign-up period. NRCS will rank applications based on the specific criteria set forth in sign-up announcements and applications.

Based on the priority ranking, NRCS will notify landowners of tentative acceptance into the program. NRCS presents the landowner with an option agreement to purchase or a restoration cost-share agreement or contract. Once executed by NRCS and the landowner, the land will be considered enrolled in HFRP.

HFRP offers four enrollment options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, 10-year cost-share agreements, and also allows 30-year contracts for Indian Tribes.

- **Permanent easements** or easements for the maximum duration allowed under State law. NRCS shall offer to pay not less than 75 percent and not more than 100 percent of the fair market value of the enrolled land during the period the land is subject to the easement less the fair market value of the land encumbered by the easement.
- **30-year easements and 30-year contracts.** NRCS shall offer to pay not more than 75 percent of the fair market value of the enrolled land less the fair market value of the land encumbered by the easement.

Easements and contract payments may be made in a single payment of no more than 10 annual payments of equal or unequal size, as agreed to between NRCS and the landowner.

- **10-year cost-share agreements.** NRCS shall offer to pay not more than 50 percent of the average cost for conservation practices installed.

Cost-share payments may be made only upon a determination by NRCS that an eligible conservation practice or an identifiable component of the conservation practice has been established in compliance with appropriate standards and specifications.

Legislative and Regulatory Changes

The 2008 Farm Bill authorizes enrollment through permanent easements, 30-year easements, 10-year cost-share agreements, and also allows 30-year contracts for Indian Tribes. The Bill also authorizes \$9,750,000 for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2012. Funds shall remain available until expended.

More Information

For more information and updates about HFRP and other Farm Bill topics, please refer to the USDA Web site www.usda.gov/farmbill or the NRCS Web site www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2008.

At a Glance: Wetlands Reserve Program

May 2008

Overview

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and Tribes to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring eligible land from agriculture. Over 1.9 million acres are currently enrolled in WRP.

Wetlands provide habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species; improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals; reduce flooding; recharge groundwater; protect biological diversity; and provide opportunities for educational, scientific, and limited recreational activities.

The program offers three enrollment options:

1. *Permanent Easement* is a conservation easement in perpetuity. USDA pays 100 percent of the easement value and up to 100 percent of the restoration costs.
2. *30-Year Easement* is an easement that expires after 30 years. USDA pays up to 75 percent of the easement value and up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.

For both permanent and 30-year easements, USDA pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees, and title insurance.

3. *Restoration Cost-Share Agreement* is an agreement to restore or enhance the wetland functions and values without placing an easement on the enrolled acres. USDA pays up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.

Legislative Changes

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) changes the process for determining the easement value, directing the Secretary of Agriculture to pay the lowest of:

- the fair market value of the land according to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices or an area-wide market analysis;
- the geographic area rate cap as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture; or
- the landowner's offer.

Other important legislative changes include:

- The total number of acres that can be enrolled in the program is 3,041,200 – an increase of 766,200 additional acres.
- Payments for easements valued at \$500,000 or more will be made in at least five annual payments.
- For restoration cost-share agreements, annual payments may not exceed \$50,000 per year.
- No easement shall be created on land that has changed ownership during the preceding 7 years.
- Eligible acres are limited to private and Tribal lands.

More Information

For more information and updates about WRP and other Farm Bill topics, please refer to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Web site <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill> or the Natural Resources Conservation Service Web site <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp>

Fact Sheet: **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**

May 2009

Overview

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) develops contracts with agricultural producers to implement conservation practices to address environmental natural resource problems. Payments are made to producers once conservation practices are completed according to NRCS requirements.

Eligibility

Persons engaged in livestock or agricultural production and owners of non-industrial private forestland are eligible for the program. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, private non-industrial forestland, and other farm or ranch lands. Persons interested in entering into a cost-share agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for EQIP assistance may file an application at any time. Applicants must:

- Be an agricultural producer;
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions of the Farm Bill; and
- Develop an EQIP plan of operations, including:
 - The participant's specific conservation and environmental objectives to be achieved;

- One or more conservation practices in the conservation management system to be implemented to achieve the conservation and environmental objectives; and
- The schedule for implementing the conservation practices.

If an EQIP contract includes an animal waste storage or treatment facility, the participant must implement a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP). If an EQIP plan of operations addresses non-industrial private forestland, the participant must implement a forest management plan.

How EQIP Works

NRCS works with the participant to develop the EQIP plan of operations. This plan becomes the basis of the EQIP contract between NRCS and the participant. NRCS provides conservation practice payments to landowners under these contracts that can be up to 10 years in duration.

The EQIP objective to optimize environmental benefits is achieved through a process that begins with National priorities that address:

- Impaired water quality;
- Conservation of ground and surface water resources;
- Improvement of air quality;
- Reduction of soil erosion and sedimentation; and
- Improvement or creation of wildlife habitat for at-risk species.

These priorities are used by the NRCS Chief to allocate available EQIP funds to State Conservationists. The State Conservationist, with advice from the State Technical Committee, identifies the priority natural resource concerns in the State that will be used to help guide which applicants are awarded EQIP assistance. After identifying the priority natural resource concerns, the State Conservationist, with advice from the State Technical Committee, decides how funds will be allocated, what practices will be offered, what the payment rates will be, the ranking process used to prioritize contracts, and which of these authorities will be delegated to the local level. The local designated conservationist, with the advice of local work groups, adapts the State program to local conditions. As a result, EQIP can be different between States and even between counties.

The selection of eligible conservation practices and the development of a ranking process to evaluate applications are the final steps in the optimization process. Applications will be ranked based on a number of factors, including the environmental benefits and cost effectiveness of the proposal. More information regarding State and local EQIP implementation can be found at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip.

Program payments are limited to a person or entity to \$300,000 for all contracts entered into during any 6-year period. This limitation includes unpaid prior year contract obligations as of October 1, 2008, as well as new contract obligations. For the purpose of applying this requirement, the 6-year period will include those payments made in fiscal years 2009-2014. Payments received for technical assistance shall be excluded from this limitation. Payment limitations for organic production may not exceed an aggregate \$20,000 per year or \$80,000 during any 6-year period for installing conservation practices.

Legislative and Regulatory Changes

Forest management and conservation practices related to organic production have been given

stronger emphasis in EQIP. Assistance to producers is authorized for installing and maintaining conservation practices that sustain food and fiber production while enhancing soil, water, and related natural resources including grazing land, forestland, wetland, wildlife, and conserving energy.

Conservation activities now authorize the development of CNMPs and other plans as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Eligibility for an increased payment rate is expanded to include socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in addition to previously authorized beginning and limited resource farmers and ranchers. It further allows these producers to receive advance payment up to 30 percent of the amount determined for the purpose of purchasing materials and services.

For water conservation or irrigation efficiency practices, NRCS will give priority for payment to practices that reduce water use in the operation of a producer who agrees not to use any associated savings to bring new land under irrigation production.

More Information

For more information and updates about EQIP and other Farm Bill topics, please visit the USDA Web site at www.usda.gov/farmbill or the NRCS Web sites at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2008 and www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip.

Fact Sheet: Conservation Stewardship Program

August 2009

Overview

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations. CSP is a new voluntary conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. CSP provides opportunities to both recognize excellent stewards and deliver valuable new conservation.

Eligibility

CSP is available on Tribal and private agricultural lands, as well as nonindustrial private forest lands in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Caribbean and Pacific Islands Areas. The program provides equitable access to all producers, regardless of operation size, crops produced, or geographic location.

Individual producers, legal entities, corporations, and Indian Tribes may be eligible for the program. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land, and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe.

Applicants must:

- Be the operator of record in the USDA farm records management system for the eligible land being offered for enrollment;

- Have documented control of the land for the term of the proposed contract;
- Include the eligible land in their entire operation as represented for other USDA programs;
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions of 7 CFR Part 12, and adjusted gross income provisions of 7 CFR part 1400.

Benefits to Participants

CSP provides participants with two possible types of payments. An annual payment is available for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing activities. A supplemental payment may be earned by participants receiving an annual payment who also adopt a resource-conserving crop rotation.

Through 5-year contracts, payments will be made as soon as practical after October of each year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous year. For all contracts, CSP payments to a person or legal entity may not exceed \$40,000 in any year, and \$200,000 during any 5-year period. Each CSP contract will be limited to \$200,000 over the term of the initial contract period.

How CSP Works

NRCS at the State level, in consultation with the State Technical Committee and local working groups, will focus CSP on natural resources that are of specific concern for a State. Agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land will be ranked separately.

Producers interested in CSP are encouraged to begin the application process by completing a producer self-screening checklist. The self-screening checklist helps potential applicants decide for themselves whether CSP is the right program for them. The level of environmental benefit to be achieved will be estimated to determine eligibility, rank applications, and establish payments.

For a pre-approved applicant, NRCS will request the applicant's conservation activity records and conduct on-site field verification to ensure that information provided by the applicant was accurate prior to contract approval. Once information is verified, NRCS and the applicant proceed to develop the contract.

More Information

For more information and updates about the Farm Bill, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill, or the NRCS Web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill; for more information on CSP, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp.

Fact Sheet:

Conservation opportunities for **Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers** **Beginning Farmers and Ranchers** **Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers**

March 2009

Overview

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) addresses the unique circumstances and concerns of socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers. It offers voluntary participation, incentives, and applies equity in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs and services.

Legislative and Regulatory Changes

Enhancements include streamlined delivery of technical and financial assistance, improved programs and services, and flexibility in decisionmaking (with many decisions made at the Tribal, State, or local level).

The 2008 Farm Bill authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to set aside:

- Five percent of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds for beginning farmers or ranchers and 5 percent for socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers; and
- Five percent of available Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) acres to assist beginning farmers or ranchers and 5 percent to assist socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

The 2008 Farm Bill authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to “repool” unused funds and acres and make them available to all applicants. It

also provides up to 90 percent of costs associated with conservation planning and implementation for socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers or ranchers. Up to 30 percent of such payments may be provided in advance for purchasing materials or contracting.

Definitions

For program participation, the following definitions apply:

Socially Disadvantaged:

A socially disadvantaged group is defined as a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group, without regard to their individual qualities. Gender designation alone does not define a covered group. The groups include:

- American Indians or Alaska Natives
- Asians
- Blacks or African Americans
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics

A socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is defined as a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. For legal entity applicants, the majority of members and stockholders of the legal entity must be socially disadvantaged. Participants should self-certify as belonging to a socially disadvantaged group.

Beginning Farmer or Ranchers:

- Have not operated a farm or ranch, or have operated a farm or ranch for less than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of a legal entity.
- Materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.
- If under contract with an individual, or with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provides substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch, consistent with the practices in the county or State where the farm is located.
- If under contract with a legal entity or joint operation, all members must materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. This requires members to provide some amount of management, or labor and management necessary for day-to-day activities, without which the operation of the farm or ranch would be seriously impaired.

Applicants who self-certify eligibility as a beginning farmer or rancher may be asked to provide documentation. Accurate information is the responsibility of the applicant. False certifications are subject to criminal and civil fraud statutes.

Limited Resource Farmer or Ranchers:

- Have direct or indirect gross farm sales less than the current indexed value in each of the previous 2 years.
- Have a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county's median household income in each of the previous 2 years.

An entity or joint operation can be a limited resource farmer or rancher if all individual members independently qualify.

A Limited Resource Farmer Self-Determination Tool is available online at: <http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/>.

More Information

For more information about these and other Farm Bill topics, please visit the USDA Web site at www.usda.gov/farmland or NRCS Web sites www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs and www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmland/2008/.

WILDLIFE HABITAT COST-SHARE PROGRAM

THE OBJECTIVE

Since 96 percent of the land in Indiana is privately owned, the majority of our wildlife populations are dependent on the availability of habitat on private lands for their survival. Unfortunately, this habitat is in short supply. The main objective of the Wildlife Habitat Cost-Share Program is to encourage landowners to develop wildlife habitat by reducing the cost of its development and management. Landowners may receive reimbursement for up to 90 percent of the cost of the developing and maintaining wildlife habitat, not to exceed \$1,000 .

DO YOU QUALIFY?

You are eligible if:

1. You own or exercise control over 10 or more acres, and
2. The parcel to be developed is not part of a licensed or commercial hunting preserve.

WHAT TYPES OF PRACTICES MAY BE COST-SHARED?

Permanent Herbaceous Cover - the establishment of cool season grasses, warm season grasses, legumes, and forbs (wildflowers) to provide nesting, brood-rearing, and loafing/roosting cover for wildlife. Cost-sharing may be provided for seed, ground preparation, lime, fertilizer, herbicide and the cost of planting, rental of equipment, or contracting for a completed project.

Permanent Woody Cover - the establishment of tree and shrub windbreaks, corridors, and coverts to provide protective nesting, brood-rearing, loafing/roosting, and winter cover for wildlife. Cost-sharing may be provided for planting materials, ground preparation, herbicide and the cost of planting, rental of equipment, or contracting for a completed project.

Vegetation Management - the application of practices that modify succession or the existing vegetation to improve wildlife habitat, such as strip discing, strip spraying, fescue eradication, woodland edge enhancement and the creation of forest regeneration openings. Cost-sharing may be provided for ground preparation, herbicide and the cost of planting, rental of equipment, or contracting for a completed project.

Wetland Restoration, Creation, or Enhancement - cost-sharing may be provided for the construction and materials for dams, levies, dikes, and water control structures used in developing or improving shallow-water wetland areas. No cost-share will be provided for the acquisition or installment of pumping systems. No cost-share will be provided for the development of deep-water ponds (average water depth exceeds 3 feet).

Other Habitat Development and Management Practices - other practices may be cost-shared

if they are determined by the inspecting district wildlife biologist to be of value in improving and maintaining wildlife habitat on private land.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

1. A person wishing to apply for cost-share assistance must first contact their District Wildlife Biologist and make arrangements to discuss the wildlife practices to be developed at an on-site visit.
2. The District Wildlife Biologist will then prepare a cost-share agreement listing the specific practices that both parties agree need to be implemented; including the estimated costs of materials and contracted services; and the cost-share rate. All cost-share payments will be based on prevailing local prices for labor, materials or services and the cost-share rate. The applicant or landowner may be required to show purchase receipts and may be requested to obtain written quotes for materials and services.
3. Upon receipt of the agreement, the applicant should review the practice specifications, estimated costs, cost-share rate, and the dollar amount the Division of Fish and Wildlife agrees to pay the landowner or applicant upon completion of the practices. If the applicant agrees with its contents, the applicant should then sign the agreement and return it to the District Wildlife Biologist.
4. The biologist will then forward the agreement to the Private Lands Program Coordinator for final approval. Upon approval, the Coordinator will send a notification letter and a signed copy of the cost-share agreement to the landowner or applicant, signifying the Division's commitment to provide cost-share assistance.
5. Upon completion of the practices outlined in the agreement, the applicant must contact the District Wildlife Biologist for a final inspection of the completed work. Applicants should retain a copy of all receipts for materials and services for the biologist's review.
6. Payment will be made according to the cost-share rates agreed upon in the contract. The applicant should receive payment within 3 to 4 weeks after the final inspection.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE PROGRAM?

1. All practices must be completed by May 30 of the following year.
2. The Division of Fish and Wildlife will not be liable for any non-payment of charges for materials, labor or services contracted by the landowner or applicant in response to the cost-share agreement.
3. Agreements extending beyond one project year will not be considered; however, cost-share may be approved on the same practice in subsequent years.
4. No payment will be made without final inspection and certification by the District Wildlife Biologist.
5. The maximum cost-share to each landowner or applicant is limited to \$1,000 per year.

- The minimum cost-share is \$50.
6. The maximum cost-share rate for any practice will be 90 percent of the cost of development.
 7. If additional cost-share funding for the same practice development is received from other sources (including other State, Federal, or private sources) cost-share through this program will be reduced so that the total of all cost-share assistance received does not exceed 100 percent of the project's total cost.
 8. The landowner does not relinquish ownership or control of his property.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. *Are private groups and organizations eligible?*
ANSWER: Private groups or organizations are eligible for cost-share if the practice occurs on private land.
2. *What happens if a landowner fails to comply with the cost-share agreement?*
ANSWER: The penalty for failure to comply with the cost-share agreement will be no payment and potential loss of eligibility for future cost-share.
3. *Can cost-share areas be hunted?*
ANSWER: Landowners who receive cost-share do not relinquish ownership or control of their property. According to state law, hunters must obtain the landowner's permission before hunting on private land.
4. *What happens if the actual expenses exceed the estimated practice costs?*
ANSWER: According to the agreement, the Division of Fish and Wildlife will pay the landowner or applicant only the amount equal to the estimated cost of the practice, times the agreed upon cost-share rate. The applicant should obtain written quotes for all estimated costs to reduce the chance of increased costs later on.
5. *What happens if only a portion of the practices specified in the agreement are completed?*
ANSWER: If only a portion of the practices specified in the agreement are completed, then the Division of Fish and Wildlife will pay the applicant an amount equal to the cost-share rate times the estimated cost of the practices that have been completed.
6. *I would like to develop wildlife habitat on my land, but I don't know what is needed. Is there someone who can help me?*
ANSWER: Our District Wildlife Biologists are competent, technically trained biologists. One of their duties is to assist landowners with wildlife management. They will be able to make helpful suggestions for improving the wildlife habitat on your property.

GAME BIRD HABITAT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

THE OBJECTIVE

Since 96 percent of the land in Indiana is privately owned, the majority of our game bird populations are dependent on the availability of habitat on private lands for their survival. Unfortunately, this habitat is in short supply. The main objective of the Game Bird Habitat Development Program is to encourage landowners to develop game bird habitat by reducing the cost of its development and management. Landowners may receive reimbursement for up to \$100 per acre for creating and/or maintaining game bird habitat.

DO YOU QUALIFY?

You are eligible if:

1. You own or exercise control over 10 or more acres; and
2. You are willing to protect and maintain the habitat improvement for a period of 3 or more years; and
3. The parcel to be developed is a minimum of five acres and a maximum of 40 acres in size; and
4. The habitat created through this program is designed to improve habitat for bobwhite quail, ring-necked pheasant, ruffed grouse or wild turkey; and
5. The parcel to be developed is not part of a licensed or commercial hunting preserve.

WHAT TYPES OF PRACTICES ARE ELIGIBLE?

Permanent Herbaceous Cover - the establishment of cool season grasses, warm season grasses, legumes, and forbs (wildflowers) to provide nesting, brood-rearing, and loafing/roosting cover. Payment may be provided for seed, ground preparation, lime, fertilizer, herbicide and the cost of planting, rental of equipment, or contracting for a completed project.

Permanent Woody Cover - the establishment of tree and shrub windbreaks, corridors, and coverts to provide protective nesting, brood-rearing, loafing/roosting, and winter cover. Payment may be provided for planting materials, ground preparation, herbicide and the cost of planting, rental of equipment, or contracting for a completed project.

Vegetation Management - the application of practices that modify succession or the existing vegetation to improve game bird habitat, such as strip discing, strip spraying, fescue eradication, woodland edge enhancement and the creation of forest regeneration openings. Cost-sharing may be provided for ground preparation, herbicide and the cost of planting, rental of equipment, or contracting for a completed project.

Fencing - Payment may be provided for fencing where the exclusion of livestock will substantially improve game bird habitat.

Other Practices - Payment may be provided for other practices if they are determined by the inspecting district wildlife biologist to be of value in improving and maintaining game bird habitat on private land.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

1. A person wishing to apply funding must first contact their District Wildlife Biologist and make arrangements to discuss the wildlife practices to be developed at an on-site visit.
2. The District Wildlife Biologist will then prepare a development agreement listing the specific practices that both parties agree need to be implemented; including the estimated costs of materials and contracted services. All payments will be based on prevailing local prices for labor, materials or services. The applicant or landowner may be required to show purchase receipts and may be requested to obtain written quotes for materials and services.
3. Upon receipt of the agreement, the applicant should review the practice specifications, estimated costs, and the dollar amount the Division of Fish and Wildlife agrees to pay the landowner or applicant upon completion of the practices. If the applicant agrees with its contents, the applicant should then sign the development agreement and return it to the District Wildlife Biologist.
4. The biologist will then forward the agreement to the Private Lands Program Coordinator for final approval. Upon approval, the Coordinator will send a notification letter and a signed copy of the development agreement to the landowner or applicant, signifying the Division's commitment to provide game bird habitat development funding.
5. Upon completion of the practices outlined in the agreement, the applicant must contact the District Wildlife Biologist for a final inspection of the completed work. Applicants should retain a copy of all receipts for materials and services for the biologist's review.
6. Payment will be made according to the amount agreed upon in the contract. The applicant should receive payment within 3 to 4 weeks after the final inspection.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE PROGRAM?

1. All practices must be completed by December 15 of the following year.
2. The Division of Fish and Wildlife will not be liable for any non-payment of charges for materials, labor or services contracted by the landowner or applicant in response to the game bird habitat development agreement.
3. Agreements extending beyond one project year will be considered; however, the extension beyond one year will be subject to a yearly review and approval by both parties.
4. No payment will be made without final inspection and certification by the District Wildlife Biologist.
5. The maximum payment for any practice will not exceed \$100 per acre per year.

6. The practice lifespan must be a minimum of three years.
7. If additional cost-share funding for the same practice development is received from other sources (including other State, Federal, or private sources) payment through this program will be reduced so that the total of all cost-share assistance received does not exceed 100 percent of the project's total cost.
8. Practice sites must be a minimum size of 5 acres and a maximum size of 40 acres.
9. The landowner does not relinquish ownership or control of his property.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. *Are private groups and organizations eligible?*
ANSWER: Private groups or organizations are eligible for the program if the practice occurs on private land.
2. *What happens if a landowner fails to comply with the cost-share agreement?*
ANSWER: The penalty for failure to comply with the development agreement will be no payment and potential loss of eligibility for future financial habitat development assistance.
3. *Can areas developed with game bird habitat development funds be hunted?*
ANSWER: Landowners taking part in the Game Bird Habitat Development Program do not relinquish ownership or control of their property. According to state law, hunters must obtain the landowner's permission before hunting on private land.
4. *What happens if the actual expenses exceed the estimated practice costs?*
ANSWER: According to the agreement, the Division of Fish and Wildlife will pay the landowner or applicant only the amount equal to the estimated cost of the practice or the actual cost, whichever is less. The applicant should obtain written quotes for all estimated costs to reduce the chance of increased costs later on.
5. *What happens if only a portion of the practices specified in the agreement are completed?*
ANSWER: If only a portion of the practices specified in the agreement are completed, then the Division of Fish and Wildlife will pay the applicant an amount equal to the estimated cost of the practices that have been completed.
6. *I would like to develop game bird habitat on my land, but I don't know what is needed. Is there someone who can help me?*
ANSWER: Our District Wildlife Biologists are competent, technically trained biologists. One of their duties is to assist landowners with wildlife management. They will be able to make helpful suggestions for improving game bird habitat on your property.



The objectives of the Indiana Classified Forest and Wildlands and Wildlands Act (the Act, hereafter) are to encourage better woodland and wildlife stewardship, and protection of Indiana watersheds. Incentives for landowners to classify their lands and practice management

include significant property tax reductions, periodic land inspection by a professional forester, "green" certification for forest products, and access to DNR forest and wildlife management advice and assistance.

WHAT ARE CLASSIFIED FOREST AND WILDLANDS?

Classified Forest and Wildlands contain a minimum of 10 contiguous acres supporting a growth of native or planted trees, native or planted grasslands, wetlands or other acceptable types of land cover that have been set aside and managed for the production of timber, wildlife habitat and watershed protection. Lands designated as such by the state forester are eligible for property tax assessment at \$1 per acre.

The landowner does not relinquish control of classified areas, nor does the Division of Forestry become connected with ownership of the land. The program requires that the land be protected from development, livestock grazing, fires that are not part of a management plan, destructive timber harvesting practices and other inappropriate activities that threaten natural resource sustainability.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING AND NON-PREScribed FIRES

Acreage in this program must be protected from domestic livestock. Fencing may be required if livestock are present on adjoining land. All burning on classified land must be approved through the district forester as part of the management plan for the classified area.

MANAGEMENT OF CLASSIFIED FOREST AND WILDLAND AREAS

The Act requires participating landowners to implement minimum resource-management standards prescribed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. A written management plan is required on all tracts. The plan can be prepared by any public or private professional forester or wildlife biologist but must be approved by the district forester prior to classification. Each plan must contain the management objectives of the owner and adequately describe

the present conditions of the parcel. The management plan must also describe a plan of action that meets the owner's objectives and satisfies the minimum requirements of the program. This plan can be reviewed with each five-year inspection or upon the owner's request when the conditions of the parcel or the owner's objectives change.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Classified lands must be posted with signs supplied by the Division of Forestry. These signs identify the area as Classified Forest and Wildlands and private property. The Act also requires that the landowner complete an annual report form and return it to the state forester. The form, along with a newsletter and other information, is sent to each owner annually. These reports provide information regarding the progress of forestry and wildlife management, focus attention on natural resource management issues, and advise the Division of Forestry of changes in ownership and acreage. The report also allows owners to ask for assistance.

The DNR will arrange a no-cost inspection of enrolled land at least once every five years, when the owner and forester can walk the property together, assess the growth and development of the wooded and open areas, and discuss changes in strategies.

HOW TO APPLY

First, contact the district forester for the county where the land is located (see map on back). The forester will visit the property to see what areas qualify. Prior to enrollment, a management plan must be prepared for each parcel and agreed to by both parties. The owner must agree to follow the plan and that changes be approved by the district forester. An application and complete, follow-up instructions will then be given to the owner, who should use those instructions, rather than those summarized in this pamphlet, thereafter.

The application requires a legal description of the area prepared by a registered surveyor. A description developed from an aerial photo and property deed will suffice. No "on-the-ground" survey is required.

The owner(s), county assessor, and, finally, the state forester must sign the application. The application must be recorded at the courthouse. The stamped, recorded copy must then be returned to the district forester.

The enrollment process can take a few weeks to several months depending on the project's complexity. The landowner may accelerate the process by hand-carrying the paperwork to the various entities.

To receive the tax benefits for the next year's tax bill, the owner must complete the process before March 1.

ENROLLED OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Complete and mail the annual report to the district forester.
- Post at least four of the provided signs on the property.
- If ownership changes, notify the district forester.
- If boundaries change, file a revised application.

- If land is sold or conveyed, disclose to buyer that it is in the program, plus any related violations, tax liabilities or penalties.
- Allow Division of Forestry to inspect the parcel every five years.
- Follow the approved management plan and the program's minimum management standards.

HOW TO WITHDRAW LAND

Land can be withdrawn by completing and recording the forms available from the district forester. When only a portion is withdrawn, the remaining classified area must be at least 10 acres. The state forester may withdraw land when requirements are not met.

The withdrawal application includes the county assessor's report on the real property taxes that would have been paid had the property not been classified. The owner must pay the difference between the property tax paid while classified and what the owner would have paid if the land were not classified, plus 10 percent simple interest, for the land withdrawn. Back taxes can be collected for only the most recent 10 years. If land was classified for less than 10 years, taxes are due only for years classified.

In addition, lands may be subject to an additional penalty of \$100 per withdrawal, and another penalty of \$50 per acre withdrawn.

FOREST OWNERS ELIGIBLE FOR AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM CERTIFICATION

The Classified Forest and Wildlands Program has been recognized by the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) as meeting their rigorous set of forest sustainability standards. As a result, all Classified Forest and Wildlands owners with at least a 10-acre block of forestland are automatically qualified for ATFS certification

benefits including marketing their timber and wood products as "green certified." There is no additional cost for this benefit. Owners can opt out the ATFS certification at anytime without penalty. Participants must manage their lands in a manner consistent with the Classified Forest & Wildlands Program requirements and the ATFS standards. ATFS standards can be found at www.treefarmssystem.org.



CLASSIFIED FOREST AND WILDLANDS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- 1. Must the land be fenced?** Only if it is necessary to keep out livestock.
- 2. How long does the land remain in classification?** Indefinitely, unless an owner chooses to declassify the land or the state forester removes the classification because of non-compliance. If land is declassified, the current owner may incur penalties.
- 3. How does sale or inheritance of land affect classified land?** The land remains under classification unless legally withdrawn. Owners must disclose the land's classification when conveying the land to a new owner. The new owner assumes the program's benefits and responsibilities. If a classified tract is divided, a revised application for each parcel must be filed with the district forester.
- 4. What is the purpose of the annual report?** It allows for dialogue between the owner and the Division of Forestry. The owner can make requests for assistance, ask for signs, and report changes in address or ownership.
- 5. Does the landowner have to obtain permission from the Division of Forestry to cut or sell timber?** If the timber harvest is consistent with the approved management plan, owners can sell timber from classified land without further permission from the Division of Forestry; however, owners must include timber harvest information on their next annual report form. The landowner must ensure that the harvest maintains forest productivity and required tree stocking. Harvest roads, trails, stream crossings and log yards must be stabilized to minimize erosion. Best Management Practices (BMPs) must be followed to ensure that harvesting is performed correctly. The district forester can provide the Indiana Forestry and Woodland Owners Association's (IFWOA) Directory of Professional Foresters. Professional foresters provide forest management services including timber marking and timber sale administration.
- 6. Is timber harvesting required?** No; however, timber management is encouraged and land management must be compatible with timber production. A properly handled timber harvest can help maintain and improve the health and productivity of the forest for timber and for wildlife habitat. Owners who do not want to harvest timber may use other cultural tools to manipulate the forest to achieve property and program goals. Contact a professional forester for advice and assistance when harvesting timber.
- 7. What types of land can be classified?** Native forests, forest

INDIANA CLASSIFIED FOREST AND WILDLANDS PROGRAM

Enjoy these benefits:

- significant property tax reductions
- periodic land inspection by a professional forester
- access to DNR forest and wildlife management advice and assistance
- Green certification for forest products.

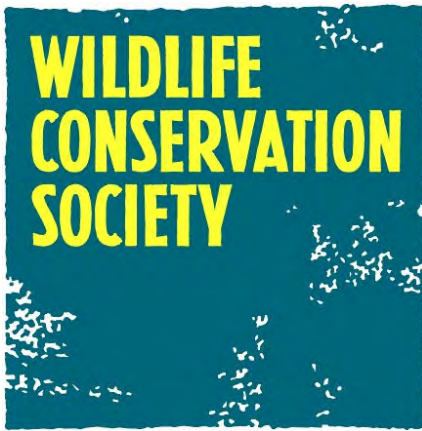


plantations, wetlands, areas of native grass and herbaceous plants, or native woody vegetation, and areas of water less than 2 acres in size or less than 4 feet in average water depth. Your district forester or district wildlife biologist will help you determine eligible areas.

- 8. What are some types of land that may not be classified?** Land that is being grazed by domestic livestock or other confined animals is not eligible. Land that is primarily populated by exotic, invasive plant species, or is being actively cultivated for non-timber agricultural crops is not eligible; however, if a cultivated crop is intended solely for wildlife food or cover, that crop is allowed.
- 9. Where can I get management advice?** District foresters can provide land management advice and assistance. If you have specific wildlife management questions, contact a district wildlife biologist through your district forester or the Web site included in this publication. Private consultant foresters are available for a fee for more detailed service or to implement management activities, such as timber sales and forest restoration projects. Industry foresters can also provide management services.
- 10. Does program enrollment mean my property is now open for public access?** No. The landowner retains sole ownership. Anyone who does not receive permission for access is trespassing. Access must be granted to the Division of Forestry for regular inspections.
- 11. Can I have trails through my classified land?** Trails for hiking, horses and off-road vehicles are acceptable as long as the activity does not destroy the health and productivity of the area, compromise watershed protection or cause significant erosion.
- 12. Do I have to do anything each year to keep up my classification?** With the exception of the annual report, there are no new papers to file each year. Program signs must remain posted as long as the land is classified.
- 13. Will enrollment in the program protect my land from future development?** Only to a small degree. A landowner can withdraw from the program at any time if they are willing to pay the back taxes and associated withdrawal penalties. Conservation easement agreements offered by DNR in certain circumstances, as well as private land trusts can provide permanent protection from development.
- 14. How is the money from withdrawal penalties used?** Withdrawal penalties reimburse counties for up to 10 years of property tax not paid while the land was classified. A portion of the penalty fees are deposited in the Natural Resources Foundation's Forest Restoration Fund to assist with the restoration and conservation of private forests and wildlands.

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