

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. Through WHIP USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP agreements between NRCS and the participant generally last from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed.

WHIP has proven to be a highly effective and widely accepted program across the country. By targeting wildlife habitat projects on all lands and aquatic areas, WHIP provides assistance to conservation minded landowners who are unable to meet the specific eligibility requirements of other USDA conservation programs.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 reauthorized WHIP as a voluntary approach to improving wildlife habitat in our Nation. Program administration of WHIP is provided under the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The deadline for consideration of Fiscal Year 2008 applications is November 2, 2007. Sign-ups will be conducted at USDA Service Centers.

There is no maximum funding cap. Applications are funded on a competitive basis, statewide, and are dependent upon available funding.

What Type of Areas Qualify?

- Grasslands
Streams and Rivers
- Wetlands (tidal and non-tidal)
- State Identified Imperiled Habitats
- Shallow and Deep Water Habitats
- Old Fields
- Early Successional Woodlands
- Riparian Areas

Applicants are required to:

- Sign up using Conservation Agreement Form CCC-1200
- Work with NRCS and Farm Service Agency (FSA) personnel to identify property
- Work with NRCS and FSA to determine participant eligibility
- Work with NRCS field staff to evaluate the property and develop a Wildlife Habitat Development Plan (WHDP)

Application Considerations:

- Minimum acreage: 1 acre upland; ¼ acre wetland or riparian, or imperiled habitat of any size
- Compliance with USDA Farm Bill provisions required
- A certified Forest Stewardship Plan must be in place for all woodland clearing applications
- Average Adjusted Gross Income compliance required
- Funds cannot be used for mitigation

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