

WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM

Agency/Organization: Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Program: **Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)**

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Website: www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/WHIP/

Program Description:

WHIP is a voluntary program that encourages creation of high quality wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, the NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to landowners to restore and/or manage upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas on their property. Examples include: early successional management; mast tree and apple tree release; fish passage; riparian forest buffers; invasive plant management; fencing to protect sensitive areas. 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. Examples of habitats & wildlife targeted by NRCS include: grasslands for bobolinks, eastern meadowlark, upland sandpipers, butterflies, green snakes, etc.; old fields, shrub land and young forest habitats for golden-winged warblers, woodcock, grouse, bobcat, black bear, rat snakes, etc.; aquatic habitats for brook trout, native mussels, salamanders, mayflies, etc.; riparian and wetland habitats for wood turtles, mink, waterfowl, otters, bats, dragonflies, etc.; rare natural communities such as clayplain forest.

Assistance Type: Financial, Technical

Financial Assistance: Provides both technical assistance and cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat under agreements that are up to 10 years in duration, depending upon the practices to be installed.

ELIGIBILITY

Landscape Type: Riparian, Wetlands, Woodlands

Resource Type: Wildlife Habitat

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Criteria:

Eligible lands under the program are: Private non-industrial lands including agricultural and forestland; Federal land when the primary benefit is on private or Tribal land; State and local government land on a limited basis; and Tribal land.

To be eligible, an entity must own or have control of the land to be enrolled in the program for the duration of the agreement period.

Land already enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Water Bank Program, Grassland Reserve Program, or Emergency Watershed Protection Program floodplain easement component is not eligible.