CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E612G

Tree/shrub planting for wildlife habitat

CONSERVATION PRACTICE: 612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Forest; Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals, Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 15 years

Enhancement Description

Tree/shrub planting will provide the plant diversity, structure, and composition needed to enhance habitat and forage for identified wildlife species.

Criteria

- States will apply criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612), and any additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.

- Select a minimum of five species of trees and shrubs to be planted, with at least one tree species and one shrub species. (i.e., one tree and four shrubs; two trees and three shrubs; three trees and two shrubs; four trees and one shrub).

- Groupings of trees and shrubs will be managed for best growth, visual appeal, proximity to areas of wildlife use.

- Selection of species should also be chosen according to the site's natural disturbance regime. Species should be selected based on traits, successional status, structure, and composition.

- Build forest resilience by favoring existing species that are better adapted to projected future climate conditions, and by enhancing relative compositional and structural diversity.

- Do not plant species on the Federal or State invasive species or noxious weed lists.

- Only viable, high-quality and site-adapted planting stock or seed will be used.

- A precondition for tree/shrub establishment is appropriately prepared sites. Refer to criteria in NRCS CPS Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (Code 490).

- Implementation and timing of planting will be appropriate for the site and ensure successful establishment.

- Plantings must be protected from unacceptable adverse impacts from insects, disease, wildlife, and/or fire. Apply supporting practices and treatments as necessary to protect establishing trees and shrubs.

- Each site will be evaluated to determine if mulching, supplemental water, or other treatments (e.g., tree protection devices, shade cards, weed mats) will be needed to assure adequate survival and growth.

- The enhancement will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and with States' Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality.

Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

☐ Prior to implementation:
- provide an updated Forest Management Plan that documents intended objectives for wildlife habitat.
- prepare the planned acres for trees and/or shrub establishment. Refer to NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree-Shrub Site Preparation (490).
- select a combination of five trees and shrubs for their importance in providing food for native wildlife, and their adaptability to site conditions.
- select planting technique, arrangement and spacing design, and timing appropriate for the site conditions.

Species	Note selected species characteristic(s)

☐ During implementation:
- install and maintain erosion control measures for the site, as needed.
- protect the planting(s) from plant and animal pests and fire.
- notify NRCS in writing of any planned changes to verify changes meet NRCS enhancement criteria.

TASK	Species	Species	Species
Planting Date			
Planting Technique			
Arrangement/Spacing			

NRCS will:

☐ Prior to implementation:
- provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (CPS 490) as it relates to implementing this enhancement. Verify the enhancement is planned for acres that have been appropriately prepared for tree/shrub establishment.
- provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612) as it relates to implementing this enhancement.
- verify the enhancement is planned for the appropriate land use.
- verify no plants on the Federal or state noxious weeds list are included in the planning combination.
- NRCS will provide Technical Assistance, as needed, in the following:
  - Selecting a combination of species to meet enhancement criteria.
  - Selecting planting techniques, arrangement and spacing design, and timing appropriate for target native wildlife, the site and soil conditions.
  - Planning the use of additional erosion control for the site, as needed.
  - Preparing specifications for applying this enhancement for each site using approved state implementation requirements, national technical notes, appropriate state technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

☐ During implementation:
- evaluate any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria and were established to specifications developed for the site.

☐ After implementation:
- verify the planned trees and shrub species were established to specifications developed for the site.
- verify the plantings were protected from plant and animal pests and fire.
- verify all erosion control needed for the site is functioning and is maintained to specifications developed for the site.

NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name _____   Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____   Fiscal Year Completed _____

_____   _____
NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature   Date

2024 CSP ENHANCEMENTS – GUIDANCE & PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATION

ENHANCEMENT NUMBER AND TITLE:

E612G –Tree/shrub Planting for Wildlife Habitat

Conservation Practice 612: Tree/shrub Establishment

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ENHANCEMENT: Tree or shrub planting to enhance habitat for native wildlife. Standard hardwood tree planting procedures will be followed. This includes mechanical and/or chemical site preparation on forested and grassland sites. In addition, soils/site suitability must be confirmed by a forester or other natural resource professional that has experience with hardwood planting.

A minimum of four native tree species and one shrub species will be used; they will be species that provide food and/or cover for identified wildlife species.
Some important things to note:
- Ninety percent of the seedlings planted must be trees. At least one species from the white oak group and one species from the red oak group must be planted. White oak (Quercus alba) or species from the white oak group must comprise at least 50% of the trees planted. The white oak group includes, but is not limited to, the following species: white oak, swamp white oak, swamp chestnut oak, post oak, chinquapin oak, live oak and overcup oak.
- All trees must be native hardwood tree species. The forester that confirms site suitability will also provide a list of recommended species for the site. Species recommendations will often vary even on the same tract due to differences in slope, aspect and soil moisture.
- No more than 33 percent of the total trees planted may be in any one species.
- A maximum of 3 soft mast tree species will be allowed but are not required. Soft mast means species such as black cherry, maple, gum, yellow poplar, shortleaf pine (within natural range) or other species as approved by NRCS Wildlife Biologist. These species provide soft mast used by many species of wildlife, provide fast growing cover for wildlife and they can serve as "trainer" trees for nearby hard mast species that are planted such as oak. <u>No more than 33% of the total seedlings planted may be soft mast trees.</u> Soft mast "trainer" trees should be planted in solid rows – every third or fourth row to allow them to be removed easily once the primary species reach a developmental stage where added sunlight from "trainer" tree removal would be beneficial.
- A minimum of 302 trees per acre (12' x 12') should be planted. For best tree form (training) effects, a density between 8' x 8' (680 trees/acre) and 10' x 10' (435 trees/acre) is recommended. Landowners will be given flexibility to choose spacing based on their management objectives, as long as the spacing is not lower than the minimum 302 tpa.

- At least 5 percent but no more than 10 percent of the species planted must be shrubs with wildlife value.
- Plant shrubs along the edges of roads, timber stands, streamside management zones, wildlife openings and other areas that have sufficient light. Shrubs can also be planted in open patches left within the timber stand where no trees are planted.
- The following is a list of approved shrubs for purposes of this enhancement: dwarf chinquapin oak, chinquapin, red mulberry, flowering dogwood, crabapple, apple*, wild plum, eastern red cedar, serviceberry, native blueberry, blueberry*, elderberry, wax myrtle, mayhaw and other species as approved by the NRCS state forester or wildlife biologist. *Note -- commercial varieties of apple and blueberry that are suited to soils and climate of the property can compose up to 50% of the shrub plantings but they will NOT be allowed in orchard style block plantings. They must be mixed with other shrub species and planted in areas as described above.

ATTACH COPIES OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AS NOTED BY THE ENHANCEMENT JOB SHEET. CHECK THE BOX OR OTHERWISE IDENTIFY THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION.

- ☐ MAPS OF THE AREA or LOCATION(S) WHERE TREE PLANTING OCCURED SHOWING SPECIES PLANTED BY LOCATION
- ☐ SEEDLING INVOICE SHOWING SPECIES AND NUMBERS PURCHASED
- ☐ REPRESENTATIVE DIGITAL IMAGES/PHOTOS OF THE AREA AND INDICATE AREA ON MAP
- ☐ DATES OF COMPLETED ACTIVITY

The attached documents support the full implementation of this Conservation Stewardship Enhancement.

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CSP Participant Name   Date