



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E511D\_

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

**Forage harvest management to improve terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates during critical over-winter periods**

Conservation Practice 511: FORAGE HARVEST MANAGEMENT

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Perennial) RESOURCE CONCERN

ADDRESSED: Animals

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

**Enhancement Description**

Eliminate or forgo the last fall cutting of hay or haylage to optimize wildlife cover and shelter during critical over-winter periods and lengthen late season bloom period for invertebrates. Allowing late season stand maturity increases stand life and reduces risks of frost and winter damage while providing valuable wildlife habitat and extended bloom periods.

**Criteria**

- Specify the wildlife species of concern on the state-approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG). The species of concern must be one that is present for at least part of their life cycle in the geographical/physiographic region and benefit from the late season, over-winter standing hay/haylage crop.
- The state's WHEG must specify cover and shelter or continuity habitat requirements for the wildlife species of concern. The total WHEG score after installation of this practice must be 0.5 or greater.

**Species of Concern:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Present WHEG score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Planned WHEG score:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Eliminate or forgo the last scheduled fall cutting to provide suitable over-winter habitat for desired wildlife species and pollinators.

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- Eliminate or forgo the last fall harvest to benefit the desired wildlife species by following state guidelines. {State Specify last date hay cutting may occur}
  - Example: Hay cutting in SD will occur no later than September 1 of the given year to allow adequate regrowth before winter dormancy.
- Prior cuttings to the foregone harvest must result in stubble heights that will promote health and vigor of the hayland species (refer to Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) 511). The last cutting of the season must ensure minimum plant heights required by the identified wildlife species. Regrowth and taller stubble heights will reduce winter-kill in cold climates (as applicable) and provide additional wildlife benefits. Refer to Cooperative Extension Service recommendations where available.



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## Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- Y Prior to implementation, identify typical date of last fall cutting. Provide the forage harvest plan and cutting dates to NRCS for review to confirm it meets the criteria of the enhancement.
- Y Prior to implementation, design the last cutting heights to meet WHEG criteria.
- Y Bales from the last cutting prior to the foregone cutting must be removed from the field for off-field storage to minimize predator impacts.
- Y Prior to implementation, review the map delineating the fields selected for improving wildlife cover and shelter and enrolled in the enhancement.
- Y During implementation, take photographs of the forage stand to verify final cutting was left standing in the field and plant heights meet state wildlife requirements for the identified species. Overwintering stubble heights and regrowth must be maintained during the dormant period to promote wildlife habitat.
- Y During implementation, notify NRCS of any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria.
- Y During implementation, keep the following documentation for each field:

Field	Forage species	Overwinter height (inches)	Last Harvest Date



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Y After implementation, make documentation and photographs of forage cutting heights available for review to NRCS to verify implementation of the enhancement.

NRCS will:

- Y As needed, provide technical assistance to meet the criteria of the enhancement.
- Y Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard and specifications of Pasture and Hay Planting (Code 512) as it relates to implementing this enhancement.
- Y Prior to implementation, an NRCS biologist or partner wildlife biologist will complete the state-approved NRCS WHEG. Specific species targeted will be notated on the WHEG, and total score after implementation must equal 0.50 or greater.

<b>Wildlife Species of Concern</b>	
<b>Cover &amp; Shelter Requirements</b>	
<b>Planned WHEG Score after implementation</b>	

- Y Prior to implementation, verify a map has been developed delineating the hayfields that will have the enhancement implemented.
- Y Prior to implementation, NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed to:
  - o Develop a plan to harvest forage in a manner that protects stand longevity, while also maintaining or improving wildlife habitat. Plan must meet requirements of NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Forage Harvest Management (Code 511).



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- Develop specifications detailing the wildlife protection measures, such as selecting time periods to avoid forage harvest to protect wildlife and ensuring that suitable wildlife habitat exists during critical nesting periods.
- Υ During implementation, evaluate any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria.
- Υ After implementation, verify the planned forage harvest was completed to specifications developed for the fields delineated.
- Υ After implementation, review documentation and photographs of forage cutting heights to verify implementation of the enhancement.
- Υ If changes were made after implementation, complete the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).



**NRCS Documentation Review:**

**CONSERVATION  
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PROGRAM**

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and 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

*\*Sign and certify in the Oregon-Acknowledgment & Certification supplement below.*



## OREGON SUPPLEMENT TO CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT

## CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

### ACTIVITY E511D

#### Additional Criteria for Oregon

- In addition to the criteria specified in the National job sheet E511D the following additional criteria apply in Oregon:
  - Hay cutting will occur no later than September 1 of the given year to allow adequate regrowth before winter dormancy.
  - Stubble height at last cutting will be adequate for the wildlife species identified in WHEG if perennial species are past peak growth for the season and regrowth is not likely.

#### [eFOTG: Section 3: Oregon Conservation Planning Documents: Wildlife Habitat Inventory Documents:](#)

- Use the Priority Oregon Wildlife Species Slicer or the Oregon Conservation Strategy Species to identify the species of concern.  
[Slicer – Priority Oregon Wildlife Species](#)  
[Oregon Conservation Strategy Species](#)
- The primary nesting/fawning season in Oregon is March 1 – July 15, or use the most current state defined dates.

- Information pertinent to managing hay land in Oregon can be found in the following publications:

[HAYMAKING ON THE WESTSIDE Washington State University EB1897](#)

[OSU Hay Production Resources for Small Farms](#)

[Chapter 9 of Idaho Forage Handbook](#)

[Conservation Outcomes from Pastureland and Hayland Practices: Chapter 4: Forage Harvest Management](#)

**Design Approvals & Acknowledgements:**

<b>Design Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Job Approval Authority</b>
Designed by:		
Approved by:		

**Client's Acknowledgement Statement:**

The client acknowledges:

- I have received a copy of the specification and understand the contents and requirements.
- It is my responsibility to obtain all necessary permits and/or rights and to comply with all ordinances and laws pertaining to the application of this practice.
- I will not begin installation of this practice until I have received appropriate approval to do so. I understand NRCS also has Federal and state laws to comply with that may take some time to address (e.g. cultural resources).

<b>Client's Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>



**Certification Documentation:**

	Field Evaluation: Post-treatment inventory, measurements, notes, as-built, and supporting documentation (document completion in conservation plan), as required.
	Map(s): Including field numbers, fields treated, and units treated (may document on conservation plan map), as required.
	Photos or other supporting documentation (e.g., seed tags, soil tests, receipts, invoices, spray records, fertilizer records, etc.)
Brief Description of Work Accomplished (types of equipment used, date of application, extents and quantities installed, etc.)	

**Certification Statement:**

The employee certifies the implementation of this conservation practice:

- Meets the purpose, general criteria, and any required additional criteria as documented in the conservation practice standard and/or enhancement sheet.
- Meets the specifications contained herein and is complete.
- Conforms to my existing Job Approval Authority controlling factors and levels.

Name	Date	Job Approval Authority

<b>Field Level Certification</b> – For multiple applications of this design.				
Land Unit/ Contract Item Number	Date	Unit(s)	Amount Installed	Certifier