



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY
E645D (with Montana Supplement)

CONSERVATION
STEWARDSHIP
PROGRAM

Enhanced Wildlife Habitat Management for Upland Landscapes

CONSERVATION PRACTICE: 645 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed); Crop (Perennial); Pasture; Range; Forest; Associated Ag Land; Farmstead

RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals (Inadequate Fish & Wildlife Habitat)

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 years

Enhancement Description

Enhance existing upland wildlife foraging, breeding or overwintering habitat (currently meeting minimum wildlife habitat planning criteria) for locally breeding and migratory wildlife species.

Criteria

- Appropriate locations for this enhancement will be provided by the NRCS State Office who will base locations on current distribution of the targeted species and potential expansion into adjacent habitat for the target species.
- Create a supplement to an existing Wildlife Habitat Management Plan listing management actions that will provide locally breeding or migratory wildlife species with enhanced foraging, breeding, or overwintering habitat. The supplement will identify management activities, locations where they will be applied, the amount in which they'll be applied and the time they will be applied to meet the targeted wildlife needs.
- Use a Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG), appropriate to target species and land use, to document that implementation of the Enhancement will improve wildlife habitat value above minimum planning criteria. The following may be used to meet this criterion:
 - [For circumstances where planning criteria for wildlife habitat is equal to 0.5] Post implementation, planning criteria for wildlife habitat is equal to or greater than 0.6.
 - [For circumstances where planning criteria for wildlife habitat is greater than 0.5] Post implementation, planning criteria for wildlife habitat increases at least 0.1.

E645D - Enhanced Wildlife Habitat Management for Upland Landscapes with Montana Supplement (bold)	September 2022 Montana Supplement November 2023	Page 1
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CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- States will apply general criteria from NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard (NCPS) Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645) as well as additional criteria either already contained in the State’s Specification or determined by the NRCS State Office. Examples of State criteria are:
 - No nitroguanidine neonicotinoids (clothianidin, dinotefuran, imidacloprid, and thiamethoxam) will be applied in any manner to the acres covered by this enhancement.
 - No insecticides allowed from February 1 – September 30th or while resident plants are in bloom on cropland, orchard, or vineyards.
 - All existing or newly installed vertical pipes used for any purpose, will be capped (e.g., fence post construction, vents for irrigation or water storage, wildlife structure placement).
 - Disturbance to key migratory, nesting, rearing, or hiding locations are controlled, almost eliminated, when target wildlife species are using locations.
 - To assess efficacy and support adaptive management, contracted areas are monitored using NRCS State Office approved monitoring approaches.
- Operations and Maintenance actions will include:
 - Regular use of a WHEG to evaluate habitat conditions and to adapt the habitat management supplement and schedule of implementation if necessary. If planned habitat conditions do not materialize as expected explore additional alternatives to reach desired wildlife habitat conditions.
 - Follow all required Operations and Maintenance actions required by NCPS Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645) and all facilitating practices planned/contracted to address the limiting habitat elements/ factors.
 - Annually inspect and repair structural or vegetative components associated with this enhancement.
- Use of fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals shall not compromise the habitat management objectives and will adhere to the State’s Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645) specifications.
- Use criteria in other NRCS Conservation Practice Standards to facilitate the management of wetland wildlife habitat associated with the uplands as appropriate for the site.

E645D - Enhanced Wildlife Habitat Management for Upland Landscapes with Montana Supplement (bold)	September 2022 Montana Supplement November 2023	Page 2
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CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- Depending on site conditions, facilitating practices may be used to implement this enhancement. The NRCS Conservation Practice Standards may include, but are not limited to: Wildlife Habitat Planting (Code 420), Hedgerow Planting (Code 422), Fence Code 382), Restoration of Rare or Declining Plant Communities (Code 643), Field Border (Code 386), Filter Strip (code 393), Grade Stabilization Structure (Code 410), Riparian Herbaceous Cover (Code 390), Shallow Water Development and Management (Code 646), Stream Crossing (code 578), Structure for Water Control (Code 587).

MT:

- **Refer to Montana Biology Technical Note MT-19 (Rev. 5) *Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guides for Montana* to assess wildlife habitat. The technical note can be found in Montana FOTG Section 1 Reference and Technical Notes, Biology References, Biology Technical Notes.**
- **For appropriate locations for this enhancement, refer to Montana Field Guide for information and range maps on current distribution of the targeted species. Access the Montana Field Guide here: <https://fieldguide.mt.gov/>.**

Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- Prior to implementation, review NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645), including any State approved implementation requirements, job sheets or work sheets.
- Prior to implementation, provide NRCS with any relevant information related to onsite operations and management for inclusion in the Wildlife Habitat Management Plan.
- Prior to implementation, meet with NRCS to review results of wildlife habitat assessment conducted by NRCS and discuss range of management alternatives that would improve wildlife habitat conditions.
- Prior to implementation, meet with NRCS to obtain and review Wildlife Habitat Management Plan.
- During implementation, follow the Wildlife Habitat Management Plan.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- During implementation, maintain field log to include:
 - Date/time of each field visit and document any required monitoring activities from the supplement.
 - Digital photographs to document habitat provided through the management actions intended to reduce the impacts of human disturbance.
- After implementation, provide the field log to NRCS for review to verify enhancement was implemented to meet criteria.

NRCS will:

- As needed, provide additional technical assistance to the participant.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain State NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645) as it relates to implementing this enhancement.
- Prior to implementation, assess habitat condition using Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide to calculate current WHEG score and anticipated WHEG score after implementation of Enhancement; **Existing WHEG score = _____ Planned Post Implementation WHEG score = _____.**
- Prior to implementation, review results of wildlife habitat evaluation with participant and discuss range of management alternatives that would improve wildlife habitat conditions.
- Prior to implementation, develop Wildlife Habitat Management Plan for wildlife habitat on land type for targeted suite of species using those habitats.
- Prior to implementation, review and explain the Wildlife Habitat Management Plan to the participant.
- After implementation, reassess habitat condition using the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide; **Post Implementation WHEG score = _____.**
- After implementation, review field log to verify enhancement was implemented to meet criteria.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

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