

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

WHIP

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program can help you:

- Restore native grassland, shrubland & range
- Protect wetlands & playas
- Improve forest health
- Plant streamside vegetation
- Control invasive plants
- Provide food & cover for native wildlife



www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov

HELPING PEOPLE
HELP THE LAND

NRCS NEW MEXICO



WHIP is a voluntary program that helps private landowners and Tribes create, restore and enhance native wildlife habitats on private land.

Through WHIP, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides financial and technical assistance for the development and restoration of upland, grassland, wetland, aquatic and other types of wildlife habitat.

Those who apply and are selected for the program receive a set payment rate to offset the cost of approved practices. Fiscal Year 2010 WHIP payment rates can be found on the New Mexico NRCS Web site at: www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip or at your local NRCS office. In New Mexico, WHIP funds such practices as:

- Brush management,
- Wildlife watering facilities,
- Ponds,
- Riparian restoration,
- Wetland enhancement,
- And more.

Through WHIP, NRCS may also provide or cover the cost of professional technical services to design practices. This includes:

- On-site assessments,
- Site-specific practice and management plans, and
- Engineering designs.

Historically Underserved Clients

WHIP provides a higher payment rate to agricultural producers (individuals, joint operations or entities) who qualify as a Beginning Farmer-Rancher, a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer-Rancher, or Limited Resource Farmer-Rancher. For more information, contact your NRCS office or go to: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/SLB_Farmer.

Land Eligibility

Lands eligible for WHIP are:

- Private agricultural lands, including cropland, grassland, rangeland, pasture and adjacent areas, such as pivot corners and streamside areas;
- Non-industrial private forest land including rural land that has existing tree cover or is suitable for growing trees; and
- Tribal lands.

Applicant Eligibility

The applicant may be an individual or an entity that owns or manages the land. An eligible applicant will be either a producer engaged in agricultural production or a private non-industrial forest landowner.

In addition, eligible applicants will:

- Have control of the land during the length of the contract;
- Meet Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) criteria;
- Be in compliance with:
 - The highly erodible land & wetland conservation provisions of the 1985 Food Security Act, and
 - Any other USDA conservation programs in which the applicant is enrolled; and
- Meet any other program requirements.

The 2008 Farm Bill has changed the eligibility requirements of WHIP, and non-agricultural, as well as state, county, and local government-owned lands are not eligible for WHIP.

When and How to Apply

WHIP applications may be submitted at any time at the local USDA Service Center.

In addition to submitting application materials, you will also work with NRCS to identify and plan the conservation measures you want on your land. This information is recorded in a conservation plan, called a WHIP Plan of Operations, which includes a detailed description of your selected practices. Those who have previously developed a conservation plan with NRCS may already have the conservation planning step completed.

Program Participation

Each year, NRCS announces a cutoff date when applications are ranked and selected for funding.

After an application is selected for funding, the applicant enters into a WHIP contract with USDA for one to ten years, depending on the practices to be implemented. The contract is based on practices outlined in the WHIP Plan of Operations and will specify a period of time, one or more years, during which activities must be completed. These activities may include practice installation as well as operational and maintenance activities.

Program participants are expected to maintain any WHIP practice throughout its useful life, even after the contract is completed.

In most cases, WHIP payments are made after practices have been completed. WHIP payments to a person or legal entity are limited to \$50,000 per year.

Those enrolled in WHIP agree to grant to NRCS access to the land for application, assessment and monitoring purposes.

More Information

Contact NRCS to learn more about how WHIP can help you protect and improve your working lands. More information can be found at your local USDA Service Center listed in the telephone book under Federal government agencies.

Or, visit the NRCS Web site at:

www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov



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