



Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

**Private Lands Working Group
And
Public Lands Working Group**

Annual Report

2010

May 30, 2010

Respectfully submitted by

**Gary Langell and Bill Bean
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Fish and Wildlife**

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Meeting Time and Place

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources hosted the annual joint meeting of the Private and Public Lands Working Groups on April 18 - 21 at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Bloomington, Indiana.

Attendance

State agency representatives from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin were present at the meeting. Agency representatives from Kentucky were unable to attend due to travel restrictions. Besides invited speakers, representatives from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Environmental Defense Fund, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service were in attendance. (Please see attached attendance list). The meeting was held during a difficult fiscal period for many states. Indiana staff and the members of the two working groups thank the Directors for their continued support in allowing staff to attend this meeting.

Executive Summary

The 19th annual meeting of the Midwest Private Working Group and Public Lands Working Group convened in Bloomington, Indiana on April 18 – 2, 2010. The Private Lands Working Group meeting covered the following topics: Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, challenges to implementing prescribed fire on the private landscape, status on the development of the National Pheasant Plan, Farm Bill program updates, NRCS and FSA program implementation issues, Farm Bill grant opportunities, and the impact that Indiana's Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) is making at the landscape level.

The Public Lands Working Group meeting covered the following topics: fragmented populations of huntable species, how to deal with increased PR/DJ funds, budget and staff reductions, alternative energy facilities on public lands, climate change, field trials, prescribed burning, federal aid land acquisition issues, and invasive species.

Private Lands meeting attendees participated in a field tour highlighting various private lands habitat development and management practices focused on early successional habitat management. Public Lands meeting attendees participated in a field tour that highlighted the newly constructed shooting sports range at Atterbury Fish and Wildlife Area. Both field tours culminated with a tour of Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area and a steak cook out. Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Areas is 8,074 acres in size and contains a 7, 135-acre permanent WRP easement. Wednesday morning's business meetings focused on the discussion and development of action items for the MAWFA directors' consideration. Those action items and are listed below.

Director Action Items – Joint Private Lands and Public Lands Working Groups

ISSUE: Increased funding for APHIS Wildlife Services to address feral swine

Feral Swine populations are increasing through the Midwest and other portions of the United States, causing significant disease risks for the pork and livestock industry, destruction of native wildlife habitat and associated wildlife, and millions of dollars of damage to crops and private property. It is

estimated that current population levels of feral swine cause upwards of \$800 million dollars in damage annually.

Although USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) provides technical assistance to ranchers, farmers, and other landowners, the majority of their efforts have been focused on disease surveillance, disease control and monitoring through their National Wildlife Disease Program. The MAFWA Private Lands Working Group and Public Lands Working Group feel a more comprehensive APHIS Wildlife Services feral swine program should be developed that places more personnel on the ground in high risk areas to address eradication, damage control, and outreach needs. To expand Wildlife Services' program above its current level of disease surveillance, monitoring and damage control, additional funding will need to be secured and dedicated to these activities.

ACTION: Draft letters were prepared for the Directors to consider sending to the other Regional Associations and to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, and the House Committee on Agriculture requesting their support and additional funding for APHIS Wildlife Services to expand their feral swine program. **Letters are attached as Appendix 4.a.i-ii.**

Lead: Gary Langell – IN DNR, Bill McGuire – MDC, Keith Jackson – MDC

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ISSUE: Use of EQIP and CIG for Feral Swine Eradication

In much of the Midwest, feral swine are a growing issue on private land. Unfortunately, private landowners have little assistance in their efforts to address the problem. Efforts to date to utilize USDA cost-share programs to address this issue have been met with considerable resistance within the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)—both within individual States as well as nationally. Currently one state (Alabama) has utilized Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) funds to address this, but the environmental impacts caused by feral swine go well beyond wildlife habitat. The USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) affords cost-share assistance to landowners to address a multitude of resource concerns on their property, and appears to be a much better fit for this issue. Feral hog impacts on water quality, soil erosion, domestic livestock and wildlife all argue for inclusion in a broad-based program such as EQIP. In addition, the NRCS' Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) program could be used to explore new and innovative techniques to control feral swine.

The MAFWA Private Lands Working Group and Public Lands Working Group fully endorse the usage of the EQIP cost share program as one additional 'tool' in the suite of options available for landowners to address feral hog problems on their property. We encourage the Midwest Directors to work with other regional associations to secure NRCS approval to allow this option within EQIP policy for individual states.

ACTION: Draft letters were prepared for the Directors to consider sending to the other Regional Associations and to Dave White, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief to assist you with this important issue. **Letters are attached as Appendix 4.b.i-ii.**

Lead: Gary Langell – IN DNR, Bill McGuire – MDC, Keith Jackson – MDC

Director Action Items – Private Lands Working Group

ISSUE: AFWA Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst Position

During the business meeting at the MPLWG meeting in Bloomington, Indiana, we had considerable discussion on the importance of Jen Mock Schaeffer's position and the value of keeping states engaged in agricultural legislation and policy. State fish and wildlife agencies recognize the value of USDA Farm Bill conservation programs. Across the Midwest there are success stories, such as CRP SAFE projects, renewed interest in the Wetlands Reserve Program and the announcement of a general CRP signup in 2010. However, we also recognize the challenges that lie ahead for conservation such as maintaining 32 million acres of CRP nationwide, increased pressure from the biofuels industry, providing guidance to policymakers regarding the continued loss of grazing land and native prairie, and implementation delays for programs such as the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentives Program.

We also realize that addressing conservation on private lands is best accomplished through agricultural legislation and policy. Jen has developed the trust and respect of key legislators and staff of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees to give wildlife a voice in agriculture conservation policy. With Jen's help, state fish and wildlife agencies played a major part in the 2008 Farm Bill.

We estimate that this position costs AFWA \$160,000 per year for salary, benefits, and travel. In 2005, a three year special assessment was agreed upon by the Directors for 2006-2008 and was extended an additional year for 2009. Because the Farm Bill is so important to the Midwest states, the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies contributed 50 percent, or up to \$80,000 of the cost of the position. However, in 2010 Jen's position has been partially funded with a Multi-State grant because the special state assessment has lapsed. These grant funds cannot be used to lobby congress. This is an important factor to consider especially since implementation and reauthorization of the 2012 farm bill has already begun with House Agriculture Committee holding several farm bill hearings across the country. Thus, it is soon going to be critical that AFWA's Ag Conservation Policy Analyst have the flexibility to spend significant time lobbying congress.

We strongly support the Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst position and encourage the Midwest Director's to work with other regional associations to secure financial support for this position and to look for a long term funding solution through state membership dues or other non federal sources. We fully understand that many states are facing difficult economic situations, and increased state membership dues may not be appropriate at this time. However, we feel that this position is important enough that it should become a permanent position within the AFWA annual budget. We are including draft letters that can be signed and forwarded to other Regional Associations and AFWA Executive and Budget Committees to assist you with this important issue.

ACTION: Letters were drafted for the Directors to consider sending to the other regional associations and the AFWA Executive and Budget Committees requesting support for maintaining the AFWA Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst position and finding a long term funding solution through state membership dues or other non federal sources. **Letters are attached as Appendix 4.c.i-ii.**

Lead: Kevin Kading - ND Game & Fish, Todd Bogenschutz - IA DNR

ISSUE: 25th Anniversary of the Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve Program has been the cornerstone of all conservation programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture by providing critical wildlife habitat, improving the water quality, and protecting soil and forest resources across America. In addition to the enhancement and protection of our natural resources, the Conservation Reserve Program has been a wise investment of taxpayer funds by promoting balanced ecosystems addressing declining populations of threatened and endangered species while providing significant nesting and brooding habitat for millions of waterfowl, pheasants, quail, and neo-tropical species of birds. Over the years, the Conservation Reserve Program has also provided recreational opportunities to hunters, anglers, and wildlife enthusiasts, contributed millions of dollars in outdoor related expenditures to rural economies and private landowners, addressed essential pollinator habitat, and sequestered millions of tons of carbon. The many individuals, both past and present, who have been involved with the work of the United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are to be commended for their tremendous efforts in administering the Conservation Reserve Program over the past twenty-five years.

ACTION: The Private Lands Working Group has drafted a resolution, paying tribute to the Conservation Reserve Program and recognizing the USDA for its administration of the program. The Private Lands Working Group is requesting the Directors adopt the resolution and forward a copy to Tom Vilsack, USDA Secretary of Agriculture. **Resolution is attached as Appendix 4.d.i.**

Director Action Items – Public Lands Working Group

ISSUE: Reinstatement of the Public Lands Technical Working Committee

The Public Land committee is scheduled for abolishment on August 1, 2010 unless reinstated for another 3 years in the bylaws. Since all recommended bylaws changes have to be distributed to the Directors 30 days in advance of the annual meeting, the committee made the recommendation during the 2009 Directors meeting.

The Public Land committee again discussed the benefits of the working group. The committee believes it is in step with the mission of MAFWA which is to provide a forum for state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies to share ideas and information, pool resources, and initiate action to benefit the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest.

Benefits include:

- Sharing ideas and information on strategies for addressing mutual management issues
- Update of current projects in each state via state reports
- Networking and the opportunity to pool our collective resourcefulness if not resources, to solve problems

ACTION: The Committee recommends the Directors initiate and approve the reinstatement of the committee for another term of 3 years or longer.

ISSUE: Restrictions on Consumptive Uses of National Wildlife Refuges (NWR)

The committee noted and discussed that they are seeing more restrictions imposed on hunting on some of the NWR in their respective states. The group again noted the irony that States are expected to adhere to the allowable uses to ensure that wildlife dependent activities such as hunting and trapping are not compromised by activities that conflict with the purpose for which the State acquired the land with federal funds. Yet it appears that the FWS may be moving towards more restrictive regulations on hunting and other consumptive activities on their (FWS) properties.

ACTION: The committee has drafted letters to USFWS Region 3 and 6 offices for the MAFWA Directors to consider. The letter will point out the dichotomy between the compatible issues that state wildlife management areas are required to operate under per federal aid regulations and the compatible and allowed uses on national wildlife refuges throughout the Midwest. The letter will ask the respective regional offices to investigate the inconsistencies and consider revamping the rules that NWR's operate under concerning public use. **Letters are attached as Appendix 4.e.i-ii.**

Lead: Bill Bean – IN DNR

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ISSUE: Feral Swine

The committee recognizes and discussed the extensive problems that feral swine are causing in many Midwest states. These problems include but are not limited to, carrying disease and possible transmission to domestic livestock and pets, destruction of native wildlife habitats and associated wildlife, as well as crop and property damage. Feral swine are not selective and cause damage on both private and public lands.

The committee fully supports and endorses the MAFWA Private Lands Working Group's letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and to the Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture supporting a more comprehensive APHIS Wildlife Services feral swine program that places more personnel on the ground in high risk areas to address eradication, damage control, and outreach needs and provides the additional funding to do so.

The committee also fully supports and endorses the MAFWA Private Lands Working Group's letter to the Office of Chief, NRCS, USDA fully supporting the usage of the EQIP cost share program as one additional 'tool' in the suite of options available for landowners to address feral hog problems on their property.

ACTION: The committee encourages the MAFWA Directors to endorse these letters and submit them to the respective offices.

Director Information Items – Private Lands Working Group

ISSUE: Prescribed Fire on Private Lands

The perennial topic of prescribed fire for the management of wildlife habitats on private lands and the role of state wildlife personnel as the primary source for burn plan development for Farm Bill programs was discussed. States shared various strategies they have employed for overcoming training requirements and meeting demand for Farm Bill program burn plans, especially as it applies to meeting mid-contract management requirements on Conservation Reserve Program contracts.

ACTION: No action for the Directors at this time.

ISSUE: National Pheasant Plan

An update on the development of a National Pheasant Plan was provided to the group. Currently the committee is developing a pheasant density index that can be used consistently across the entire range. The next annual meeting of the Pheasant Working Group will be held September 20 – 23, 2010 in West Lafayette, Indiana.

ACTION: No action for the Directors at this time.

ISSUE: 2013 Farm Bill Discussion Taking Place

Discussion of reauthorization of the 2012 farm bill has already begun with House Agriculture Committee holding several farm bill hearings across the country. It is imperative that state personnel assigned to AFWA Farm Bill related committees work closely with Jen Mock Schaeffer to make sure wildlife needs continue to be incorporated and refined in the next Farm Bill.

ACTION: We encourage State Directors to make sure appropriate personnel are assigned to the AFWA Agricultural Conservation Committee and participate to the fullest extent possible in crafting State, Regional Association, and AFWA committee comments and recommendations as they apply to the Farm Bill.

ISSUE: CRP General Sign Up Coming

USDA has announced that a large General CRP sign up will be occurring soon. Program details and the specific sign up start date will be announced by USDA upon completion of an Environmental Impact Statement. USDA is looking to enroll approximately 2 million acres.

ACTION: We encourage State Directors to make sure appropriate agency personnel work closely with USDA NRCS and FSA offices to keep apprised of sign up details, and work closely with private landowners and other partners to promote wildlife associated CRP practices and provide technical assistance to NRCS and FSA as needed.

ISSUE: USDA Data Sharing Under Section 1619 of the Farm Bill

Section 1619 of the Farm Bill prohibits the Secretary of Agriculture and its employees from disclosing certain information that has been provided by agricultural landowners and producers to participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) programs, except as necessary for delivering technical assistance. In order for partners, including state wildlife agency personnel, to obtain this information to carry out technical assistance, USDA requires each partner to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding. Some states have expressed difficulty in meeting this requirement. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed a template that all partners who currently have a MOU, Contribution Agreement, or Cooperative Agreement with NRCS can use to satisfy Section 1619 compliance. The template is entitled "NRCS Conservation Cooperator

Acknowledgement – Acknowledgement of 1619 compliance” and can be obtained from the State Conservationist.

ACTION: No action for the Directors at this time.

Director Information Items – Public Lands Working Group

ISSUE: Compatible Uses on State Wildlife Management Areas

The perennial topic of compatible uses of wildlife management/conservation areas was extensively discussed by the committee once again. There was consensus that public demand for using state wildlife lands is becoming more problematic with even bigger issues on the horizon (i.e., wind farms, highway construction, bio-fuels, various easements, etc.).

FWS rules and policy are helpful (522 FW 21 <http://www.fws.gov/policy/522fw21.html> and 522 FW 22 <http://www.fws.gov/policy/522fw22.html>), as is the willingness of the FWS to “weigh-in” on state issues when asked; however, the rules and policy put the burden on the states to decide whether a use is in conflict with primary purposes or not. States are not overly anxious for the FWS to dictate which activities may or may not be allowable, yet there is concern that states may be making inconsistent determinations, and that the individual states may not appreciate all the ramifications of these determinations.

ACTION: No action for the Directors at this time, but as a result of last year’s discussion, the representative from Wisconsin volunteered to put together a matrix that will describe briefly how each state deals with different public use issues. The top ten issues as determined by polling the member states will be sent out as a survey. Results will be tabulated and sent back to committee members. After the assessment is complete, the information will be shared with the states and a determination will be made as to the need for further action by the Committee or Directors.

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ISSUE: Lead Shot for Hunting

The committee discussed this high profile issue that is growing in importance nationwide. Most all states have been phasing in a requirement for non-toxic shot for dove hunting with fairly good success and acceptance by hunters. Indiana is phasing in requiring non-toxic shot for upland game hunting as well on areas where spent shot is likely to be picked up by waterfowl. Again, hunter acceptance has been fairly good once they understand the reasoning behind the change.

ACTION: Indiana will continue to expand its wildlife management areas that require non-toxic shot, and report back to this committee. Hopefully other states will join in as the manufacture of non-toxic shot grows and becomes more economical for hunters to purchase.

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ISSUE: Prescribed Burning

This issue continues to generate discussion among the members about the different training requirements, permits, and equipment required by each state and federal government (on state

managed federal lands). As a result of last year's meeting the representative from Illinois updated and distributed the prescribed burning matrix to member states.

ACTION: No further action is required at this time. If a states status changes on prescribed burning regulations and requirements, they are encouraged to advise other member states of the changes.

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ISSUE: GIS Application Development

As a result of last year's discussion and member states sharing information about using GIS to plan and document habitat planning on private and public lands, Illinois put together a spread sheet that gives GIS contact information for each member state to facilitate networking

ACTION: No action is required at this time, unless contact information should change for a member state. If so, that state is asked to update that information and distribute to the other committee members.

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ISSUE: Wind Farms

Committee members shared information on the extent of wind farm construction in their respective states. The main concern is that no one knows the impacts that they have on local or migratory wildlife. The committee recommends protecting wildlife management areas from the encroachment of wind farms until impacts are better understood and defined. The representative from Iowa stated that they meet regularly with wind farm committees and require a one-fourth mile set back from public lands.

ACTION: The committee encourages the MAFWA Directors to support research throughout the Midwest to define better the impacts of wind farms on wildlife.

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ISSUE: Attendance at MFWFA Public Lands Working Group Meetings

The attendance has been improving at our meetings each year, with this year's attendance being nineteen, representing eleven states. The committee understands that all states are facing budget issues that often dictate attendance, but also feels the representation from each state is vital to the optimal functioning of this group.

ACTION: The committee encourages the MAFWA Directors to do everything in their power to help representatives from each state be allowed to attend both the public and private lands meeting each year.

Time and Place of Next Meeting

Next year's Private Lands and Public Lands Working Group meetings will be held in Decorah, Iowa on May 1-4, 2011.

List of Appendices

1. Private Lands Meeting Agenda
2. Public Lands Meeting Agenda
3. List of Attendees
4. Director Action Items
 - a. Increased funding for APHIS Wildlife Services to address feral swine Letter to
 - i. Template Letter to Regional Associations
 - ii. Template Letter to Senate and House Agriculture Committees
 - b. Use of EQIP and CIG for Feral Swine Eradication
 - i. Template Letter to Regional Associations
 - ii. Letter to Dave White, NRCS Chief
 - c. AFWA Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst Position
 - i. Template Letter to Regional Associations
 - ii. Template Letter to AFWA Executive and Budget Committees
 - d. 25th Anniversary of the Conservation Reserve Program
 - i. CRP 25 year Anniversary Resolution
 - e. Restrictions on Consumptive Uses of National Wildlife Refuges (NWR)
 - i. Letter to USFWS Region 3
 - ii. Letter to USFWS Region 6
5. State Reports

Appendix 1

Midwest Private Lands Working Group Meeting Agenda

SUNDAY APRIL 18th

5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. **Early Registration**

6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. **Welcome Reception**

MONDAY APRIL 19th

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. **Registration**
Breakfast on your own

8:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. **Welcome**

8:15 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. **Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs)** – *Craig Czarnecki - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. **State Reports/New Initiatives, Moderator - Gary Langell**

Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Michigan
Minnesota

10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. **Break**

10:45 a.m. - 12:00 **Remainder of State Reports Moderator - Gary Langell**

Missouri
Nebraska
North Dakota
Ohio
South Dakota
Wisconsin

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. **Lunch (provided)**

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. **Challenges of Prescribed Fire Moderator - Gary Langell**

Illinois – *Mike Wefer*
Iowa – *Kelly Smith*

Ohio – *Luke Miller*
Michigan – *Mark Sargent*

2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	National Pheasant Plan Status - <i>Budd Veverka, Indiana Farmland Research Biologist</i>
3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	Break
3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	The Farm Bill – Where are we? - <i>Jen Mock Schaffer</i>
3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	CRP/FSA Issues & Updates - <i>Luke Miller</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mid Contract Management• General CRP Sign-up• EBI• State No Plant lists• State and National Conservation Priority Areas• Status of CP33 and CP38• Data Sharing and Section 1619• CRP Biomass Removal
6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	Dinner on your own

8:00 p.m. - ?? **Group Work Session**

TUESDAY APRIL 20th

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Registration Breakfast on your own
8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Farm Bill Updates and Discussion <i>Moderator - Gary Langell</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voluntary Hunter Access Program – <i>John Laux</i>• TSP and Contribution Agreements - <i>Jen Mock Schaffer</i>• Weaving National Wildlife Initiatives and State Wildlife Action Plans into Farm Bill Programs - <i>All</i>
9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Grant Opportunities in the Farm Bill <i>Moderator - Gary Langell</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiatives – <i>Shannon Zezula, Indiana NRCS</i>• Healthy Forest Reserve Initiatives – <i>Shannon Zezula, Indiana NRCS</i>• Mississippi River Basin Initiatives – <i>Shannon Zezula, Indiana NRCS</i>

- Great Lakes Coastal Initiatives – Shannon Zezula, Indiana NRCS
- NIFA – National Institute for Agriculture – Jen Mock Schaffer

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Indiana's WRP – Making a Difference at the Landscape Level - <i>Dave Stratman – NRCS State Biologist and Lee Sterrenburg – Indiana Audubon Society</i>
11:00 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.	Lunch - Box Lunch Provided
11:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Load Vans and Begin Field Tour
	Tour of Private Lands Management Practices
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Cookout at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area
8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Load Vans and Return to Bloomington
9:00 p.m. - ?	Work Session - Farm Bill Reauthorization

WEDNESDAY APRIL 21th

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast on your own
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	MPLWG Business Meeting Development of Issues Document for MAFWA Directors
12:00 p.m.	Adjourn

Appendix 2

Midwest Public Lands Working Group Meeting Agenda

SUNDAY APRIL 18th

5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. **Early Registration****

6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. **Welcome Reception****

MONDAY APRIL 19th

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. **Registration**
Breakfast on your own

8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. **Welcome**

8:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. **Indiana State Wide Public Lands Report**
State Reports

10:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. **Break**

10:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. **Continue State Reports**

11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. **Lunch (provided)**

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Fragmented Populations of Hunttable Species**
 Jim Janson – IA
Increased PR/DJ Funds, How to deal with
 Jeff Hoffman – NE
Reduced Budgets and Staff
Wind and Other Alternative Energy Facilities on Public
 Wildlife Lands – Suzanne Willhite – MN
Climate Change
 Suzanne Willhite – MN

3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. **Break**

3:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Field Trials and Dog Training**
Prescribed Burning
Federal Aid Land Acquisition Issues
Management Plans
Invasive Species
Wildlife Diseases

6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. **Dinner on your own**

TUESDAY APRIL 20th

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|-------------------------|---|
| 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. | Registration
Breakfast on your own |
| 8:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. | Federal Budget Appropriation Priorities for the 2013 Federal Budget |
| 10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. | Break |
| 10:30 a.m. | Load Vans and Begin Field Tour
Box Lunch on Bus Provided |
| 10:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. | Tour of Atterbury Shooting Range and Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area |
| 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. | Cookout at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area |
| 8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. | Load Vans and Return to Bloomington |

WEDNESDAY APRIL 21th

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. | Breakfast on your own |
| 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Development of Issues Document for MAFWA Directors |
| 12:00 p.m. | Adjourn |

Appendix 3. Attendees

Private Lands Working Group Meeting

Name	Affiliation
Jennifer Mock-Schaffer	Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Lee Sterrenburg	Audbon Society - Indiana
Claudia Emken	Environmental Defense Fund
Mike Wefer	Illinois
Bill Maudlin	Indiana
Budd Veverka	Indiana
Chris Grauel	Indiana
Dean Zimmerman	Indiana
Gary Langell	Indiana
Jason Wade	Indiana
Josh Griffin	Indiana
Kent Hanuaer	Indiana
Linda Byer	Indiana
Mitch Marcus	Indiana
Patrick Mayer	Indiana
Rick Peercy	Indiana
Roger Stonebraker	Indiana
Shannon Winks	Indiana
Kelly Smith	Iowa
Jake George	Kansas
Matt Smith	Kansas
Mike Mitchener	Kansas
Mark Sargent	Michigan
Bill Penning	Minnesota
Bill McGuire	Missouri
Keith Jackson	Missouri
John Laux	Nebraska
Kevin Kading	North Dakota
Dave Stratman	NRCS - Indiana
Shannon Zezula	NRCS - Indiana
Luke Miller	Ohio
Mark Norton	South Dakota
Craig Czarnecki	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Melissa Sparrow	Wisconsin

Public Lands Working Group Meeting

Name	Affiliation
Mike McCulley	Illinois
Bill Bean	Indiana
Brad Feaster	Indiana
Jim Gerbracht	Indiana
Mark Reiter	Indiana
Nate Levitte	Indiana
Randy Millar	Indiana
Ron Ronk	Indiana
Jim Jansen	Iowa
Brad Simpson	Kansas
John Silovsky	Kansas
Robert Barbee	Kansas
Earl Flegler	Michigan
Suzann Willhite	Minnesota
Mike Hoffmann	Missouri
Scott Peterson	North Dakota
Jennifer Windus	Ohio
Paul Coughlin	South Dakota
Alan Crossley	Wisconsin

Appendix 4.a.i. Letter to Regional Associations Regarding APHIS Wildlife Services Funding

June 30, 2010

Directors - AFWA Regional Associations-DRAFT Template

Dear President (Regional Assns.):

On behalf of the Midwest Private Lands Working Group and Public Lands Working Group, I would like to bring a serious issue to your attention regarding the increased expansion of feral swine across the Midwest and other portions of the United States. Free-ranging populations of feral swine currently exist in at least 32 States. Most experts estimate the current U.S. population of feral swine at between 4 to 5 million animals and they are more firmly entrenched in some states than in others. In regard to the Midwestern states, feral swine are gaining a troubling toehold and, without concerned and timely attention, populations will likely grow beyond ability to contain them.

As a result of this expansion, come increased risks of damage to livestock industries and wildlife from disease transmitted by feral swine, destruction of native wildlife habitats and associated wildlife, as well as crop and property damage. It is estimated that current population levels of feral swine cause upwards of \$800 million dollars in damage annually.

More importantly is the fact that feral swine are susceptible to many pathogens and serious diseases, including swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, swine fever, and foot-and-mouth disease. Feral swine have been documented to carry 30 viral and bacterial diseases and 37 parasites. Diseases such as pseudorabies and swine brucellosis are commonly found in feral swine and can spread to pets and livestock. Currently, swine brucellosis and pseudorabies are occurring in some populations of feral swine at a prevalence rate greater than 30 percent. A number of the pathogens found in feral swine, including *Trichinella*, *E. coli*, and *Salmonella* can cause infection in humans.

Although USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) provided technical assistance to ranchers, farmers, and other landowners in 24 States in fiscal year 2008, the majority of their efforts have been focused on disease surveillance, disease control and monitoring through their National Wildlife Disease Program.

A number of federal and state agencies, animal health and wildlife organizations, and the domestic swine industry have expressed the need for a more comprehensive WS feral swine program that maintains the necessary disease surveillance and monitoring components, but provides increased funding and personnel to substantially address feral swine eradication, damage management, and public outreach, education, and communication needs particularly in high risk areas, such as the Southeast, Midwest, and California.

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies fully endorse a more comprehensive APHIS Wildlife Services feral swine program that places more personnel on the ground in high risk areas to address eradication, damage control, and outreach needs and provides the additional funding to do so. It is important for governmental agencies and stakeholders such as private landowners to work in unison to eradicate feral swine because, otherwise, feral swine under eradication pressure in one place will simply go to another and then return when eradication pressure eases. It will take additional staff resources and funding to get the job done and APHIS is the logical agency to take the lead. Immediate attention is needed to bring feral swine under control, particularly where populations are newer and can still be eradicated at much less expense than if allowed to increase through inattention.

We encourage the other Regional Associations to lobby the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and the House Committee on Agriculture to secure increased funding and personnel for APHIS Wildlife Services to develop a more comprehensive feral swine program with greater emphasis on eradication, damage control, and outreach.

If the Midwest Private Lands Working Group can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Mark Reiter
President, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Appendix 4.a.ii. Letter to Senate and House Ag Committees Regarding APHIS Wildlife Services Funding

June 30, 2010

The Honorable Blanche L. Lincoln, Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
355 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Fax (202) 228-1371

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson, Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
2211 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Fax: (202) 225-1593

Dear Chairman Lincoln and Peterson:

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) was formed in 1934 to provide a common forum for state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies to share ideas, information, pool resources, and form action initiatives to better the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest. Currently, MAFWA represents 13 state and 3 provincial Midwest fish and wildlife agencies.

I am contacting you today to express the concern of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) regarding the on going expansion of feral swine populations across the United States. Free-ranging populations of feral swine (also called wild hogs, feral pigs, and Eurasian wild boar) currently exist in at least 32 States. Most experts estimate the current U.S. population of feral swine at between 4 to 5 million animals and are considered an invasive or exotic species, meaning they are not native wildlife. Localized feral swine populations can triple in a single year and they are more firmly entrenched in some states than in others. In the absence of quick and concerted attention, control of feral swine populations and repair of damage will be increasingly significant to society.

As a result of this expansion, come increased disease risks to livestock industries and wildlife populations, destruction of native wildlife habitats and associated wildlife, as well as crop and property damage. It is estimated that current population levels of feral swine cause upwards of \$800 million dollars in damage annually.

More importantly is the fact that feral swine are susceptible to many pathogens and serious diseases, including swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, swine fever, and foot-and-mouth disease. Feral swine have been documented to carry 30 viral and bacterial diseases and 37 parasites. Diseases such as pseudorabies and swine brucellosis are commonly found in feral swine and can spread to pets and

livestock. Currently, swine brucellosis and pseudorabies are occurring in some populations of feral swine at a prevalence rate greater than 30 percent. A number of the pathogens found in feral swine, including *Trichinella*, *E. coli*, and *Salmonella* can cause infection in humans.

Although USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) provided technical assistance to ranchers, farmers, and other landowners in 24 States in fiscal year 2008, the majority of their efforts have been focused on disease surveillance, disease control and monitoring through their National Wildlife Disease Program.

A number of federal and state agencies, animal health and wildlife organizations, and the domestic swine industry have expressed a need for a more comprehensive WS feral swine program that maintains the necessary disease surveillance and monitoring components, but provides increased funding and personnel to substantially address feral swine eradication, damage management, and public outreach, education, and communication needs particularly in high risk areas, such as the Southeast, Midwest, and California.

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies fully endorses a more comprehensive APHIS Wildlife Services feral swine program that places more personnel on the ground in high risk areas to address eradication, damage control, and outreach needs and provides the additional funding to do so. It is important for governmental agencies and stakeholders such as private landowners to work in unison to eradicate feral swine because, otherwise, feral swine under eradication pressure in one place will simply go to another and return when eradication pressure eases. It will take additional staff resources and funding to get the job done and APHIS is the logical agency to take the lead. Immediate attention is needed to bring feral swine under control, particularly where populations are newer and can still be eradicated at much less expense than if allowed to increase through inattention.

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies encourages you to give this issue your utmost consideration and find ways to provide increase funding to APHIS Wildlife Services to implement a more comprehensive feral swine program.

Sincerely,

Mark Reiter
President, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Cc: House Committee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
President(s) of SEAFWA, WAFWA, and NEAFWA
Ron Regan, Executive Director, AFWA
MAFWA Board of Directors
Gary Langell, MAFWA Private Land Committee Chair
Bill Bean, MAFWA Public Lands Committee Chair
Sheila Kemmis, MAFWA Recording Secretary

Appendix 4.b.i. Letter to Regional Associations Regarding Use of EQIP for Feral Swine

June 30, 2010

Directors - AFWA Regional Associations-DRAFT Template

Dear President (Regional Assns.):

I am contacting you today to express the concern of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) regarding the on going expansion of feral swine populations across the United States. Free-ranging populations of feral swine (also called wild hogs, feral pigs, and Eurasian wild boar) currently exist in at least 32 States. Most experts estimate the current U.S. population of feral swine at between 4 to 5 million animals and are considered an invasive or exotic species, meaning they are not native wildlife. Localized feral swine populations can triple in a single year and they are more firmly entrenched in some states than in others. In the absence of quick and concerted attention, control of feral swine populations and repair of damage will be increasingly significant to society.

As a result of this expansion, damage to the pork and livestock industries from disease transmitted by feral swine, destruction of native wildlife habitats and associated wildlife, as well as crop and property damage, is on the increase and that trend is expected to continue in coming years. It is estimated that current population levels of feral swine cause upwards of \$800 million dollars in damage annually.

More importantly is the fact that feral swine are susceptible to many pathogens and serious diseases, including swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, swine fever, and foot-and-mouth disease. Feral swine have been documented to carry 30 viral and bacterial diseases and 37 parasites. Diseases such as pseudorabies and swine brucellosis are commonly found in feral swine and can spread to pets and livestock. Currently, swine brucellosis and pseudorabies are occurring in some populations of feral swine at a prevalence rate greater than 30 percent. A number of the pathogens found in feral swine, including *Trichinella*, *E. coli*, and *Salmonella* can cause infection in humans.

Feral swine are a growing issue on private land. Unfortunately, private landowners have little assistance in their efforts to address the problem. There has been confusion and differing guidance within the States about opportunities to utilize USDA cost-share programs to address this issue. Currently one state (Alabama) has utilized Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) funds to address wild hogs, but the environmental impacts caused by feral swine go well beyond damage to wildlife habitat. The USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) affords cost-share assistance to landowners to address a multitude of resource concerns on their property, and we

believe it is a much better fit for this issue. Feral hog impacts on water quality, soil erosion, domestic livestock and wildlife all argue for inclusion in a broad-based program such as EQIP. In addition, we would like to see NRCS' Conservation Innovation Grant program as a venue that could be used to explore new and innovative techniques to control feral swine.

Due to the nature of the issue, our recommendation is that the 595 Integrated Pest Management Standard be the vehicle by which States could address this problem within their borders. We believe use of this standard to control a problem animal that is clearly not native is a sensible decision.

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies fully endorses the usage of the EQIP cost share program as one additional 'tool' in the suite of options available for landowners to address feral hog problems on their property. It is important for governmental agencies and stakeholders such as private landowners to work in unison to eradicate feral swine because, otherwise, feral swine under eradication pressure in one place will simply go to another location and return when eradication pressure eases. Feral hogs are a growing problem, and it will take a multitude of agencies and programs to bring them under control.

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies would like to encourage the other Regional Associations to give this issue your utmost consideration and forward similar recommendations to Dave White, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief.

Sincerely,

Mark Reiter
President, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Appendix 4.b.ii. Letter to NRCS Chief Regarding Use of EQIP for Feral Swine

June 30, 2010

Dave White, Chief
USDA, NRCS, Office of the Chief
1400 Independence Ave., SW, Room 5105-A
Washington, DC 20250
Fax (202) 720-7690

Dear Chief White:

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) was formed in 1934 to provide a common forum for state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies to share ideas, information, pool resources, and form action initiatives to better the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest. Currently, MAFWA represents 13 state and 3 provincial Midwest fish and wildlife agencies.

I am contacting you today to express the concern of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) regarding the on going expansion of feral swine populations across the United States. Free-ranging populations of feral swine (also called wild hogs, feral pigs, and Eurasian wild boar) currently exist in at least 32 States. Most experts estimate the current U.S. population of feral swine at between 4 to 5 million animals and are considered an invasive or exotic species, meaning they are not native wildlife. Localized feral swine populations can triple in a single year and they are more firmly entrenched in some states than in others. In the absence of quick and concerted attention, control of feral swine populations and repair of damage will be increasingly significant to society.

As a result of this expansion, damage to the pork and livestock industries from disease transmitted by feral swine, destruction of native wildlife habitats and associated wildlife, as well as crop and property damage, is on the increase and that trend is expected to continue in coming years. It is estimated that current population levels of feral swine cause upwards of \$800 million dollars in damage annually.

More importantly is the fact that feral swine are susceptible to many pathogens and serious diseases, including swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, swine fever, and foot-and-mouth disease. Feral swine have been documented to carry 30 viral and bacterial diseases and 37 parasites. Diseases such as pseudorabies and swine brucellosis are commonly found in feral swine and can spread to pets and livestock. Currently, swine brucellosis and pseudorabies are occurring in some populations of feral swine at a prevalence rate greater than 30 percent. A number of the pathogens found in feral swine, including Trichinella, E. coli, and Salmonella can cause infection in humans.

Feral swine are a growing issue on private land. Unfortunately, private landowners have little assistance in their efforts to address the problem. There has been confusion and differing guidance within the States about opportunities to utilize USDA cost-share programs to address this issue. Currently one state (Alabama) has utilized Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) funds to address wild hogs, but the environmental impacts caused by feral swine go well beyond damage to wildlife habitat. The USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) affords cost-share assistance to landowners to address a multitude of resource concerns on their property, and we believe it is a much better fit for this issue. Feral hog impacts on water quality, soil erosion, domestic livestock and wildlife all argue for inclusion in a broad-based program such as EQIP. In addition, we would like to see NRCS' Conservation Innovation Grant program as a venue that could be used to explore new and innovative techniques to control feral swine.

Due to the nature of the issue, our recommendation is that the 595 Integrated Pest Management Standard be the vehicle by which States could address this problem within their borders. We believe use of this standard to control a problem animal that is clearly not native is a sensible decision.

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies fully endorses the usage of the EQIP cost share program as one additional 'tool' in the suite of options available for landowners to address feral hog problems on their property. It is important for governmental agencies and stakeholders such as private landowners to work in unison to eradicate feral swine because, otherwise, feral swine under eradication pressure in one place will simply go to another location and return when eradication pressure eases. Feral hogs are a growing problem, and it will take a multitude of agencies and programs to bring them under control.

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies encourages you to give this issue your utmost consideration and find ways to provide funding to address feral swine through EQIP and CIG.

Sincerely,

Mark Reiter
President, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

cc: President(s) of SEAFWA, WAFWA, and NEAFWA
Ron Regan, Executive Director, AFWA
MAFWA Board of Directors
Gary Langell, MAFWA Private Land Committee Chair
Bill Bean, MAFWA Public Lands Committee Chair
Sheila Kemmis, MAFWA Recording Secretary

Appendix 4.c.i. Letter to Regional Associations Regarding AFWA Agricultural Conservation Policy Analyst Position

June 30, 2010

Directors - AFWA Regional Associations-DRAFT Template

Dear President (Regional Assns.):

On behalf of the Midwest Directors, I would like to bring a very important issue to your attention. During the Midwest Private Lands Working Group business meeting in Bloomington, Indiana, there was an action item identified for the Midwest Directors regarding Jen Mock-Schaeffer's (Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst) position within AFWA.

In 2005, a three year special assessment was agreed upon by the Directors for 2006-2008 and was extended an additional year for 2009. Because the Farm Bill is so important to the Midwest states, the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies contributed 50 percent, or up to \$80,000 of the cost of the position. However, in 2010 Jen's position has been partially funded with a Multi-State grant because the special state assessment has lapsed. These grant funds cannot be used to lobby congress. This is an important factor to consider especially since implementation and reauthorization of the 2012 farm bill has already begun with House Agriculture Committee holding several farm bill hearings across the country. Thus, it is soon going to be critical that AFWA's Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst have the flexibility to spend significant time lobbying congress.

It is estimated that this position costs AFWA \$184,000 per year for salary, benefits, and travel. We encourage all other Regional Association Director's to work with us to aggressively search for a long term funding solution. We fully understand that many states are facing difficult economic situations, and increased state membership dues may not be appropriate at this time. However, we feel that this position is vitally important and we need to work together with the AFWA Executive and Budget Committees to resolve this issue.

If the Midwest Directors can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Mark Reiter
President, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

**Appendix 4.c.ii. Letter to AFWA Executive and Budget Committees Regarding the
Agricultural Conservation Policy Analyst Position**

June 30, 2010

AFWA Executive and Budget Committee-DRAFT Template

Dear (Executive and Budget Committees):

On behalf of the Midwest Directors, I would like to bring a very important issue to your attention. During the Midwest Private Lands Working Group business meeting in Bloomington, Indiana, there was an action item identified for the Midwest Directors regarding Jen Mock-Schaeffer's (Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst) position within AFWA.

In 2005, a three year special assessment was agreed upon by the Directors for 2006-2008 and was extended an additional year for 2009. Because the Farm Bill is so important to the Midwest states, the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies contributed 50 percent, or up to \$80,000 of the cost of the position. However, in 2010 Jen's position has been partially funded with a Multi-State grant because the special state assessment has lapsed. These grant funds cannot be used to lobby congress. This is an important factor to consider especially since implementation and reauthorization of the 2012 farm bill has already begun with House Agriculture Committee holding several farm bill hearings across the country. Thus, it is soon going to be critical that AFWA's Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst have the flexibility to spend significant time lobbying congress.

It is estimated that this position costs AFWA \$184,000 per year for salary, benefits, and travel. We encourage the Executive Committee aggressively search for a long term funding solution. We fully understand that many states are facing difficult economic situations, and increased state membership dues may not be appropriate at this time. However, we feel that this position is vitally important and the issue should be discussed during the upcoming AFWA Executive and Budget Committee meetings

If the Midwest Directors can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Mark Reiter
President, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Conservation Reserve Program

WHEREAS, The member states of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies are pleased to extend special recognition to the United States Department of Agriculture on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Conservation Reserve Program; and

WHEREAS, The Conservation Reserve Program has been the cornerstone of all conservation programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture by providing critical wildlife habitat, improving the water quality, and protecting soil and forest resources across America; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the enhancement and protection our natural resources, the Conservation Reserve Program has been a wise investment of taxpayer funds by promoting balanced ecosystems addressing declining populations of threatened and endangered species while providing significant nesting and brooding habitat for millions of waterfowl, pheasants, quail, and neo-tropical species of birds. Over the years, the Conservation Reserve Program has also provided recreational opportunities to hunters, anglers, and wildlife enthusiasts, contributed millions of dollars in outdoor related expenditures to rural economies and private landowners, addressed essential pollinator habitat, and sequestered millions of tons of carbon; and

WHEREAS, The many individuals, both past and present, who have been involved with the work of the United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are to be commended for their tremendous efforts in administering the Conservation Reserve Program over the past twenty-five years. It is certain that the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies vows to work closely with these federal agencies to ensure that the opportunities to improve upon the Conservation Reserve Program will continue for many years to come.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, in adopting this Resolution, pays tribute to the Conservation Reserve Program on its twenty-fifth anniversary and extends congratulations to the United States Department of Agriculture for its efforts during those years.

Appendix 4.e.i. Letter to USFWS Region 3 Regarding Consumptive Uses on National Wildlife Refuges

June 30, 2010

Tom Melius – Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Region 3
BHW Federal Building
1 Federal Drive
Ft. Snelling, MN 55111

Dear Director Melius:

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) was formed in 1934 to provide a common forum for the 14 state and 3 provincial Midwest fish and wildlife agencies to share ideas, information, pool resources, and form action initiatives to better the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest.

A recurring point of discussion among members of the MAFWA Public Lands Committee during the last 2 years has been the perception that public hunting and trapping opportunities on refuges is declining. This trend, if real, is of concern to us for 3 reasons:

1. Overall, the future of hunting, fishing, and trapping is a vital part of a shared interest and partnership between the states and the FWS. Any obstacles or impediments to hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities on refuge land would appear to be in conflict with this shared interest.
2. We are aware of instances where state-owned wildlife areas share a common boundary with refuge system land, but regulations differ between two public agencies whose missions would appear to be similar to the public, causing confusion and potential enforcement issues.
3. Likewise, confusion is created when regulations, seasons, and methods differ substantially between refuges and adjacent private lands that share a common border, again, a source of confusion and other potential issues.

Therefore, the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies respectfully request you to review the hunting and trapping policies on federal refuges to ensure that those policies reflect current national and state desires to promote and enhance opportunities for participation in these activities on all lands. Moreover, we urge you to make contact with individual state directors in this Association to identify any specific issues that may exist regarding the use of refuges lands for hunting and trapping, or possible conflicts between state and federal regulations, seasons, and methods governing hunting and trapping.

We look forward to your response and attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Mark Reiter
President, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Appendix 4.e.ii. Letter to USFWS Region 6 Regarding Consumptive Uses on National Wildlife Refuges

June 30, 2010

Steve Guertin – Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Region 6
134 Union Boulevard Lakewood,
Lakewood, CO 80228

Dear Director Guertin:

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) was formed in 1934 to provide a common forum for the 14 state and 3 provincial Midwest fish and wildlife agencies to share ideas, information, pool resources, and form action initiatives to better the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest.

A recurring point of discussion among members of the MAFWA Public Lands Committee during the last 2 years has been the perception that public hunting and trapping opportunities on refuges is declining. This trend, if real, is of concern to us for 3 reasons:

4. Overall, the future of hunting, fishing, and trapping is a vital part of a shared interest and partnership between the states and the FWS. Any obstacles or impediments to hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities on refuge land would appear to be in conflict with this shared interest.
5. We are aware of instances where state-owned wildlife areas share a common boundary with refuge system land, but regulations differ between two public agencies whose missions would appear to be similar to the public, causing confusion and potential enforcement issues.
6. Likewise, confusion is created when regulations, seasons, and methods differ substantially between refuges and adjacent private lands that share a common border, again, a source of confusion and other potential issues.

Therefore, the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies respectfully request you to review the hunting and trapping policies on federal refuges to ensure that those policies reflect current national and state desires to promote and enhance opportunities for participation in these activities on all lands. Moreover, we urge you to make contact with individual state directors in this Association to identify any specific issues that may exist regarding the use of refuges lands for hunting and trapping, or possible conflicts between state and federal regulations, seasons, and methods governing hunting and trapping.

We look forward to your response and attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Mark Reiter
President, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Appendix 4. State Private Lands Annual Reports

Illinois Private Lands Report

The goals of the Private Land Program are to protect, enhance and develop wildlife habitat on private land to improve wildlife populations, soil and water conservation, and the quality of life for all Illinois residents.

Wildlife Personnel

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Office of Resource Conservation, Division of Wildlife Resources has 30 District Wildlife Biologists (DWB) statewide. In 1998, 18 public land biologists were merged with 17 private land biologists to create 35 DWBs with dual responsibilities. DWBs provide services to private landowners primarily under the framework of Illinois' Acres for Wildlife Program. Five districts are presently vacant. Districts vary in size from 2 to 4 counties. The DWBs are supervised by Regional Wildlife Administrators. Currently two Regional positions are vacant.

Acres for Wildlife

The Acres for Wildlife Program (originally known as the Private Land Wildlife Habitat Management Program) began in 1986. Program efforts are subdivided into four basic activity areas: Conservation Education, Interagency Coordination, Acres for Wildlife Planning, and Acres for Wildlife Implementation. In the first 3 quarters of FY10, district staff prepared 264 habitat restoration/improvement plans on private and public lands for forest (11,705 acres), savanna (436 acres), grassland (8,324 acres), shrubland (1,170 acres), and wetland (11,136 acres).

Habitat and Pheasant Funds

The Habitat Endowment Act, enacted in 1992, provides long-term funding for the State Pheasant Fund, State Furbearer Fund, and the Illinois Habitat Fund. The State Habitat Stamp replaced the Pheasant and Furbearer stamps, expanding opportunities for enhancement to all types of habitat.

DWBs are allocated Private Lands Incentive dollars from the Habitat and Pheasant Funds to enhance wildlife habitat on private lands. DWBs use the funds to purchase seed, seedlings, herbicide, and water control structures for cooperating landowners. In 2009 DWBs provided funds to 273 landowners for wildlife habitat enhancement on 5,205 acres.

Competitive grants for equipment, materials, and services are reviewed and approved by the Habitat Fund and Pheasant Fund committees. The allowable uses for these grants are delineated in statute and administrative rules. In 2009, five Pheasant Fund grants totaling \$222,112 were awarded to Pheasants Forever and Quail Unlimited to fund habitat projects in the pheasant range. Eight Habitat Fund grants totaling \$342,412 were awarded to Quail Unlimited and Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever for habitat projects throughout the state.

Farm Bill Biologists

Funds from the Pheasant and Habitat Funds and the State Wildlife Grant (SWG) allowed Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever to hire five Farm Bill Biologists (FBBs). These are the first FBBs to work in Illinois. Their primary purpose is to promote grassland habitat and provide technical support in the state's SAFE areas. Landowner interest in SAFE has been pretty low. It is hoped that they can help increase enrollment. Two FBBs are working in the Grand Prairie and three are in the Southern Till Plain.

Habitat Team

IDNR, Office of Resource Conservation, Program Support Division operates four Habitat Teams. Three of the teams (formerly called Eco-teams) were comprised of 2 temporary natural resource technicians. Last year they worked from June 1-October 31. The end working date was extended due to a late start date. The fourth team (formally the Roadside and Farmland crew) is comprised of a program manager, two permanent natural resources technician (one of these positions is currently vacant) and four intermittent laborers. Habitat Fund and Pheasant Fund dollars were principally used to purchase seed and herbicide for the teams. The teams work predominantly on private land, but also work on state lands, primarily State Habitat Areas. Last year, the teams prescribed burned 759 acres, planted 571 acres of warm season grasses with forbs and 365.5 acres of cool season grasses and legumes. Additionally, 763.1 acres of herbicide was applied and 693.2 acres were mowed for site preparation and invasive weed control.

Illinois Prescribed Burning Act

In the fall of 2007, the Illinois State Legislature passed 525 ILCS, the Illinois Prescribed Burning Act. The act states that periodic prescribed burning is essential to the perpetuation, restoration, and management of many plant and animal communities. It declares that prescribed burning is in the public interest. The act defines prescribed burning as a landowner right. The act also offers some liability protections if the proper steps are followed. The act instructed the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the State Fire Marshall to develop rules to define the requirements for burn manager certification and burn prescriptions. Administrative Rule 1563 to implement the act was approved in the fall of 2009.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is now processing applications for burn boss certification. The rule allows experienced burners the opportunity to be "grandfathered" into the new system if they apply within a year of the rule's approval.

Text for the act and rule can be found at the following links:

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=2904&ChapAct=525%26nbsp%3BILCS%26nbsp%3B37%2F&ChapterID=44&ChapterName=CONSERVATION&ActName=Illinois+Prescribed+Burning+Act>.

<http://dnr.state.il.us/legal/adopted/1565.pdf>

Farm Bill

Farm Bill programs continue to be the key to large scale wildlife habitat restoration in Illinois. IDNR continues to pursue and capitalize on opportunities to work with USDA agencies. Many DWBs spend a significant amount of time providing technical assistance to landowners participating in USDA Farm Bill programs. Biologists also work closely with NGOs such as Pheasants Forever, Quail Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and Ducks Unlimited. The State Technical Committee continues to function as an excellent forum for exchange of information and identification of issues.

CRP

The Conservation Reserve Program is by far the greatest source of potential wildlife habitat in Illinois. Illinois has 1,033,020 acres of CRP, down about 15,000 acres from this time last year. In the north half of the state, enrollments are primarily buffer practices and southern Illinois has more whole field enrollments. IDNR has been working closely FSA and NRCS to encourage landowners to apply mid-contract management practices to existing CRP contracts. Most of Illinois' CRP grasslands are in urgent need of disturbance.

Below is a brief breakdown of select CRP practices installed in Illinois:

		Acres			Acres
CP1	New cool season grass plantings	159,456	CP15	Contour grass strips	1,696
CP2	New warm season grass plantings	45,706	CP21	Filter strips	141,468
CP3A	New hardwood tree plantings	50,097	CP22	Riparian buffers	110,597
CP4D	Wildlife habitat	123,171	CP23	Wetland restoration	49,484
			CP23A		
CP8	Grass waterways	32,502	CP25	Rare and declining habitat	2,147
CP9	Shallow water for wildlife	5,721	CP31	Bottomland hardwood	2,605
CP10	Existing grass	209,126	CP33	Upland bird habitat buffers	49,180
CP11	Existing trees	16,739	CP38	SAFE	6,376
CP12	Wildlife food plots	6,351			

SAFE

Illinois has four SAFE proposals that have been approved by the Farm Service Agency. The proposal submitted by the IDNR Division of Wildlife Resources establishes 22 township-sized focus areas in the Grand Prairie Natural Division (28 counties in central and northern Illinois) for restoration of grasslands and wetlands in prairie landscapes for pheasants and other grassland wildlife (10,300 acres). In the Southern Till Plain Natural Division, 9 focus areas have been established (8 counties in south-central Illinois) for restoration of grassland habitat for greater prairie chickens (10,300 acres). The locations of IDNR's SAFE areas were based upon goals established by the state's Wildlife Action Plan. So far, enrollment has been pretty low. A total of 3,815 acres have been enrolled in the Grand Prairie and only 380 acres in the Southern Till Plain.

Three smaller projects (500 acres, 1,500 acres, 2,000 acres) submitted by Soil and Water Conservation Districts highlight habitat restoration for pheasants and bobwhite. Initially their enrollments were pretty low until they dropped the requirement that fields contain a percentage of grassland soils. Mercer County enrolled all of their first 500 acres, received an additional 300 acres, and enrolled 175 of those. Western Illinois enrolled all their initial 1,500 acres, received 2,100 additional acres, and enrolled all those acres. They now have 1,175 acres on a waiting list. Sangamon County was allotted 2, 000 acres and has enrolled 1,330.

CREP

CREP is currently closed to new enrollments. About 127,134 acres in the Illinois River drainage have been enrolled in the program. Practices available include wetland restoration, forest riparian buffers, permanent wildlife habitat, tree planting, filter strips, warm season grass planting, shallow water areas and food plots. So far, 64,132 acres of grassland, 25,382 acres of trees and 36,646 acres of wetland have been preserved and established through CREP. If the proposed state capital bill, which includes CREP funding, is passed in spring 2010, CREP could re-open to new enrollment. The new proposal would add the Kaskaskia River drainage to the program.

EQIP

This year, \$11.3 million of EQIP cost-share funds was awarded to 1,041 applicants in Illinois. In 2009, there was strong interest in general conservation, grazing livestock, and confined livestock.

WRP

The new 7-year ownership impacted program sign-up rates. In FY' 09 NRCS obligated about \$3 million for WRP applicants. They plan to obligate \$10 million in FY '10. NRCS plans to reach out to landowners with small to medium-sized projects.

WHIP

Program changes in 2009 eliminated WHIP access for public owned land or communities. This resulted in fewer applications statewide. NRCS issued 19 contracts for a total of 370 acres improved.

Submitted by:

Michael Wefer
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
District Wildlife Biologist
238 Route 26
Lacon, IL 61550

Mike.Wefer@illinois.gov

Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife 2010 Private Lands Program Report

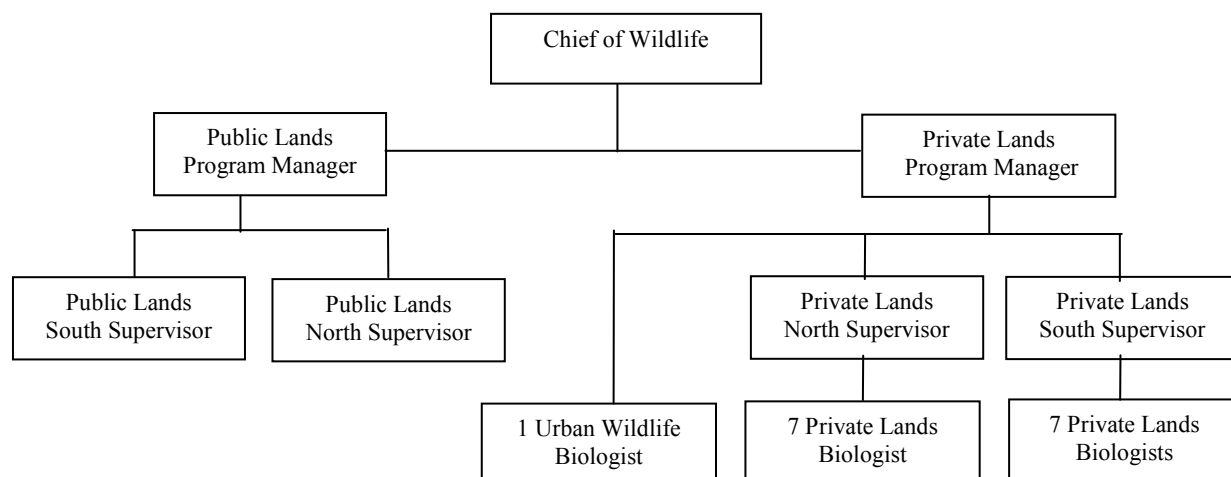
Mission

The mission of the IDNR, Division of Fish and Wildlife is to professionally manage Indiana's fish and wildlife resources for present and future generations, balancing ecological, recreational, and economic benefits. Indiana's Private Lands Program is the Division's mechanism for applying this mission to the vast majority (96%) of Indiana's landscape that is in private ownership. This is accomplished through 4 primary areas of responsibility: technical assistance, financial assistance, public information/education, and wildlife conflict resolution.

Infrastructure

Staff – Previously Indiana's Private Lands Program consisted of a Private Lands Program Manager, 2 Regional Supervisors and 22 private lands biologists. Sixteen of the biologists had multi-county districts, while the remaining six biologists were Assistant Property Managers, having responsibilities for both a State Fish and Wildlife Area (FWA) and the private lands within the county in which the FWA was located. In 2006 the Private Lands Unit was restructured, removing the 6 Assistant Property Managers of private lands responsibilities and converting one private lands biologist to an urban wildlife biologist position. In 2009, the Division had a number of professionals retire, and many of those positions were permanently deleted by the Department of Administration, including one private lands biologist. The remaining 14 private lands biologist are responsible for districts containing from 5 to 9 counties, based on expected workload and potential opportunities. The Private Lands Program Manager oversees the development, coordination, implementation, and evaluation of the Division's Private Lands Program and serves as the Division's liaison with other IDNR divisions, state and federal agencies, and private conservation organizations that directly impact natural resources management on private lands.

Organizational Chart of Private Lands Section



Facilities – All private lands biologists are located at State property or Regional office complexes within their assigned districts.

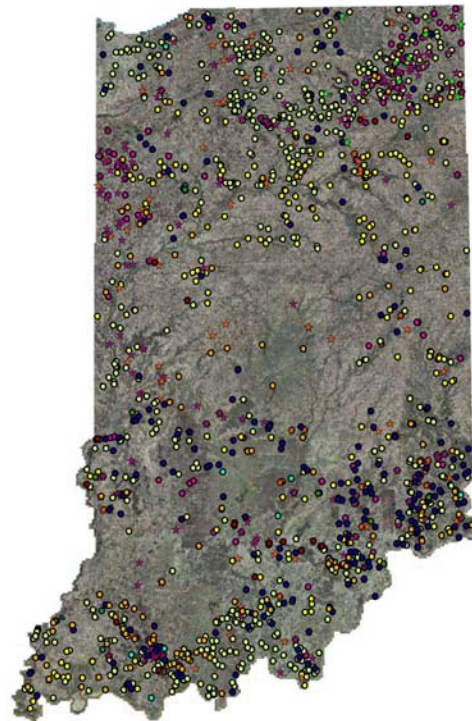
Equipment – All private lands biologists are provided with a 4-wheel drive vehicle, office space, desk, file cabinets, desk, telephone, cell phone, pager, mobile radio, binoculars, spotting scope, and laptops with Internet access.

Private Lands Programs

GIS/GPS Initiative

In 2006, the Private Lands Unit began a GIS/GPS Initiative to bring our biologists up to speed with USDA partners. In 2006, all private lands biologists received GPS receivers and training on how to use them. Biologists began collecting waypoints for each parcel of private property where they developed a wildlife management plan or provided cost-share assistance. The data will be used to evaluate program participation, implementation, and future habitat priority areas. Waypoints are named according to a predefined protocol that captures program acronyms and program year so that program participation and program distribution can be tracked.

Wildlife Management Plans and Habitat Projects 2007 and 2008



Wildlife Mgmt. Plans and Projects Funded

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| ★ NE Wet/Grass | ● Mgmt. Plan | ○ Wildlands |
| ● WRP | ● LIP | ★ Cost-Share |
| ● ROW Program | ★ Gamebird | ○ CRP |
| ○ WHIP | ● EQIP | ● Burn Plan |

All private lands biologists have laptops instead of desktop computers, and each has an individual ArcGIS 9.3 license. This allows our biologists to work interactively with landowners while on-site as well as show various DVDs created to promote habitat programs and habitat management activities to the landowner. Each biologist is also equipped with a Garmin 205W Nuvi to assist them in locating landowner properties and conducting survey routes.

Classified Wildlife Habitat Program

Through legislation passed in 2006, the Classified Wildlife Habitat Act and the Classified Forest Act were merged into one program called the Classified Forest and Wildlands Program and is now administered by the Division of Forestry. The Private Lands Unit provides technical assistance to the Division of Forestry to prepare wildlife management plans for parcels of land wanting to enroll in the wildlands portion of the program.

Wildlife Habitat Cost-Share Program

The Division of Fish and Wildlife allocates \$50,000 from the Fish and Wildlife General Fund annually to implement the Wildlife Habitat Cost-Share Program. This program provides landowners up to 90% cost-share assistance, not to exceed \$1,000, for wildlife habitat development on private lands. The program focuses on providing permanent wildlife habitat, although food plots may be cost-shared if they are part of a program to maintain early successional habitats in a rotational basis. Biologists develop a written agreement specifying the work to be completed and the amount that the Division will reimburse the landowner. Payment is made after the biologist has inspected the work for completion. In the past, we have reimbursed landowners based on the selected cost-share rate and eligible receipts. Beginning in July of 2007, we began using standardized rates for all practices.

Game Bird Habitat Development Program

Each year the Division typically allocates \$100,000 from the Game Bird Habitat Stamp Fund for the Game Bird Habitat Development Program. This program provides landowners up to \$100 per acre for game bird habitat development projects. The program focuses on providing permanent game bird habitat, although food plots may be cost-shared if they are part of a program to maintain early successional habitats in a rotational basis. Biologists develop a written agreement specifying the work to be completed and the amount that the Division will reimburse the landowner. Payment is made after the biologist has inspected the work for completion. Due to budgetary constraints and the availability of WHIP funds, the Game Bird Habitat Development Program was not implemented this year.

National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative

In 2004, the Private Lands Unit stepped down the habitat objectives specified in the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative to specific county level objectives. These county level objectives were then combined to develop district level objectives that were incorporated into each private lands biologist's annual work plans. Each biologist has a specific CRP fescue conversion, CRP mid-contract management, non-CRP fescue conversion, and brood-cover/idle nesting cover habitat development objective for increasing bobwhite quail and pheasant populations.

In order to have a greater impact on these populations, the Private Lands Unit decided to focus our efforts into priority areas. A total of 7 Pheasant Habitat Priority Areas were developed in northern Indiana and 8 Quail Habitat Priority Areas were developed in southern Indiana. Priority areas were selected based on Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) models for bobwhite quail prepared by Mississippi State University, areas of known quail/pheasant populations, interspersed of habitat types, and the

potential for results. CRP enrollment incentives, CRP Mid-Contract Management incentives, and increased caps for use of Wildlife Habitat Cost-Share funds and Game Bird Habitat Development Funds were provided in the priority areas to encourage landowner participation. Landowners in priority areas also receive additional points in the USDA WHIP ranking process.

2009-10 Habitat Priority Areas



CP33 Monitoring

Beginning in 2006, the Division began CP33 monitoring according to the protocol established by Mississippi State University. A total of 41 pairs of CP33 buffers/control fields are monitored during June using the point count protocol for songbirds and quail. October covey call counts were discontinued this year. As of March, 2010 a total of 12,201 acres have been enrolled in CP33 in Indiana.

Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program

The Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (not associated with USDA WHIP) is available to any landowner interested in developing wildlife habitat. The biologist meets with the landowner, discusses the landowner's wildlife goals and objectives and prepares a wildlife management plan. This program often generates participation in the other programs listed above.

Indiana LIP Program

Indiana received \$180,000 in Tier 1 funds in 2007 to provide 75% cost-share assistance for at-risk species habitat development with a primary focus on converting tall fescue to more wildlife friendly grass, legume and forb mixtures. The grant is set to expire at the end of July 2010. To date, we have obligated \$160,000 and converted 1,063 acres of fescue and brome.

CP38 – State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement

Currently all acres have been obligated at the state level. However, approximately 1,000 acres in contracts have yet to be signed by producers, with the majority of those acres (700 acres) awaiting

conservation plan development through NRCS. Until those contracts are signed, Indiana will not receive the additional allocation that other states have received.

Partnerships

Game Bird Partnership Program

Each year the Division allocates \$30,000 from the Game Bird Habitat Stamp Fund for the Game Bird Partnership Program. This program provides Quail Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and The National Wild Turkey Federation up to \$10,000 per organization per year for game bird habitat development projects on privately owned lands. Local chapters, in cooperation with Division biologists, develop agreements with landowners. The Game Bird Partnership Committee prioritizes all projects and notifies the chapters of selected projects. The Division reimburses 50% of the chapters' costs, not to exceed \$100 per acre, upon completion of the selected projects. This program creates approximately 1,100 acres of game bird habitat annually. Total cost of projects completed by landowners typically exceeds \$165,000 annually.

Northeastern Wetland/Grassland Restoration Program (NWGRP)

The NWGRP is a partnership between the Division, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Ducks Unlimited (DU), and Pheasants Forever (PF). It targets an eight-county area in northeastern Indiana for wetland and grassland restorations. The program pays up to 100 % of wetland restoration costs, not to exceed \$1,000 per acre. Grassland restorations are cost-shared provided they are within 1/4 mile of a wetland capable of sustaining waterfowl brood habitat through July. Grasslands are restored at a 4:1 grassland/wetland ratio. Annual funding for the program combines \$20,000 from USFWS and \$20,000 from DU. Pheasants Forever contributes seed and labor for native grass establishment, and the Division provides participant screening, site review, survey and design work, and permit coordination.

Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiatives

The Division has two Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiatives currently being implemented.

The Woodland Regeneration Openings Initiative establishes woodland regeneration openings for early successional forest birds in the 8-county Central Hardwoods Region. The Central Hardwoods Joint Venture priority species: Ruffed grouse, Whip-poor-will, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, American Woodcock, Eastern Wood Pewee, Red-headed Woodpecker, Kentucky Warbler, and Cerulean Warbler are targeted. The Division is responsible for initial site visit, marking openings, final inspection, \$300/acre incentive payment, and monitoring. Landowners allow sites to be utilized as demonstration site.

The Woody Edge Renovation (woodland edges and fencerows) initiative targets Northern Bobwhite and Ring-necked Pheasant in Division of Fish and Wildlife's Quail and Pheasant Priority Areas statewide. The Division is responsible for initial site visit, marking sites, final inspection, \$250/acre incentive payment, and monitoring. Landowners allow sites to be utilized as demonstration site.

NRCS Contribution Agreements

The Division of Fish and Wildlife has not had any contributions agreements in place with NRCS the last 2 years. NRCS Technical Assistance Funds were utilized for other purposes.



Iowa Department of Natural Resources

2010 Private Lands Progress Report to

The Midwest Private Land Wildlife Management Group

Bloomington, IN

April 18 - 21, 2010

Mission

Iowa's Private Lands Program is designed to improve, restore, and create wildlife habitat and other natural resources on private lands. Currently, about 98% of Iowa's landscape is privately owned. The DNR's management section staff including Private Lands Program staff as well as wildlife management biologists administers Iowa's private lands habitat programs. Staff provides technical assistance to landowners and USDA staff. Program funding comes from numerous funding sources including the fish and wildlife trust fund, Federal Aid, NRCS Contribution Agreement and many other grants, and local funding sources.

Organization

Iowa has private land biologists co-located in all 5 NRCS Area offices within Iowa and 5 wildlife specialists (1 currently vacant) and many temporary or partner staff located in NRCS field offices, to assist private land biologists. PL staff work with USDA staff and landowners implementing wildlife practices, federal, state, and county programs, on private lands. Iowa also has 16 wildlife management units with a biologist and two technicians assigned to each unit. Units are primarily responsible for managing public lands in a 5-7 county area. Management biologists provide assistance to USDA staff and landowners as directed or requested.

Iowa Private Lands Programs

The Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Bureau's Private Lands Program (PLP) consists of a Private Lands Program Coordinator, a Farm Bill Coordinator, 5 Private Lands Biologists (PLB), 5 Wildlife Specialists, and 9 temporary/partner staff. These positions are funding through a variety of partnerships. The PLP Coordinator works primarily to provide support to Private Lands Program staff and District Supervisors. The PLP Coordinator also provides input on a statewide level to partners involved in activities that affect wildlife habitat on private lands. The FB Coordinator works to provide input on a national level to influence the development and implementation of conservation programs of the 2007 Farm Bill.

2009 marked the 10th year of Iowa having a formal Private Lands Program. 2009 was a year of significant changes to private lands wildlife technical assistance delivery. The contribution agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for the programs five PLB was discontinued and these individuals were put under Federal Aid funding. They are housed out of each of the NRCS Area offices to work directly with Area office staff to provide wildlife technical assistance to NRCS Field Office employees through an MOU agreement. The NRCS contribution agreement for the five Wildlife Specialists was extended for another year. Through the Contribution Agreement NRCS provides half of the cost of the 5 positions. The PLP has been able to establish partnerships with EPA's 319 funding, Iowa DNR's Lakes Restoration Funding, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), and other local entities to hire 4 temporary staff to work on a 1-2 county area. Through grant funding the PLP also maintained 3 AmeriCorps Habitat Specialists and one Wetland Specialist.

Reload Iowa (Pheasants Forever's Capital Campaign)

In early 2009 Pheasants Forever announced their Reload Iowa Capital Campaign that would be used to raise funding to hire up to 50 Farm Bill Biologists located throughout the state. PF was successful in raising the funds to hire 4 Farm Bill Biologists covering 9 counties by October. PF has and continues to work closely with the Iowa DNR throughout this process to integrate their efforts into the existing structure of the DNR's PLP. It was agreed upon by both parties early in the process that regardless of the funding sources for the Farm Bill Biologists that the Farm Bill Biologists, although employees of and receiving specific guidance from PF would be a part of the DNR PLP. As with any new partnership development there have been some growing pains but both parties remain dedicated to making the partnership work and progress continues to be made.

Sustainable Funding

In 2008 and 2009, more than 90 percent of Iowa's state legislators overwhelmingly approved legislation that would establish the constitutionally protected Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. In November 2010 it will go to a vote of the people that if passed would establish a protected sustainable funding source of an estimated \$150 million annually. It is unknown how much of this would go toward private lands but it is expected that some will.

Farm Bill Conservation Programs

CRP – Iowa is losing general CRP acreage similar to other states. The Iowa DNR revised our State CPA's for the next general CRP signup. This was jointly based on water and wildlife concerns and ultimately approved by the STC. The Iowa Wildlife Action Plan was weighed heavily in this proposal. We continue to promote Continuous CRP at every opportunity:

CP23A – Iowa received 6,000 acres, 1,442 acres remain.

CP23 – Iowa received 68,000 and has enrolled 49,758

CP33 – Iowa received an additional 10,500 acres increasing the state's total allocation to 35,500. 25,183 have been enrolled

CP38 – Iowa received and additional 9,000 acres, all of which were allocated within 13 days and in another 3 days had a 2,100 acre backlog

MID-CONTRACT MANAGEMENT (MCM)

A joint memo from FSA and NRCS was drafted and sent out to all FSA, USDA, and DNR staff to explain the burn plan policy as it relates to CRP MCM including that landowners can write their own burn plans. The policy has greatly helped with the burn plan requests of DNR staff. Most landowners have proved to be more comfortable writing their own burn plans that we original thought they would.

Competitive State Wildlife Grant (C-SWG)

Iowa and Wisconsin partnered together to apply for a C-SWG grant to work primarily on private lands in the Driftless Area. Iowa received \$187,000 to work on early successional forest habitat targeting ruffed grouse and American woodcock within 2 miles of public lands complexes that are working to implement a Forest Wildlife Management Plan. Projects have been approved on 22 sites covering 200 acres for \$88,534 to fund practices such as aspen stand maintenance, tree planting, edge feathering, and timber stand improvement.

I-JOBS

I-JOBS is state funding with a goals of strengthening Iowa's economy, helping Iowa recover from the natural disasters of 2008, and preserve or create jobs. Of the \$830 million in the program \$1.475 million was dedicated to private lands work. \$475,000 was used to provide a \$600/acre incentive for landowners to enroll in tree planting practices in Iowa's Driftless Area. The high amount of the incentive allowed the funds to be allocated quickly. \$1 million is intended to be used to purchase conservation and access easements along high quality coldwater streams in Iowa's Driftless Area.

Walk-in Access/Habitat Program

Focus group meetings with landowners that expressed interest in being open to utilizing a public hunting access program if one were developed. Landowners expressed interest in access for deer/turkey hunting since both species are relatively abundant, few were interested in access for pheasant/quail hunting with current low populations. A hunter opinion survey of what an access program should provide is being summarized.

FY 2009 Private Lands Program Summary

Total Contacts/Technical Assistance: 1,805 landowners

Total Acres of Habitat Improvement Recommendations: 73,227 acres

Total Acres of Habitat Improvements Implemented: 43,615 acres (25% increase from 2008)

Common Practices –

Wetland Acres Implemented (WRP, FWP, CP9, CP 23, CP23A, wetlands): 9,945 acres (400% increase from 2008)

Filter Strips (CP21) Implemented: 128 acres
Quail Buffers (CP33) Implemented: 296 acres
All other CRP Practices Implemented: 738 acres
Burn Plans Implemented: 28,158 acres
Other Wildlife Habitat Improvements Implemented (native plantings, woody invasion removal etc.): 4,123 acres
LIP Acres Implemented: 1,557 acres



Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks **Fisheries & Wildlife Division – Wildlife Section** **2009 Private Lands Report**

Mission

- Conserve and enhance Kansas's natural heritage, its wildlife and its habitats – to assure future generations the benefit of the state's diverse, living resources;
- Provide the public with opportunities for the use and appreciation of the natural resources of Kansas, consistent with the conservation of the resources;
- Inform the public of the status of the natural resources of Kansas to promote understanding and gain assistance in achieving this mission.

Wildlife Division Organization

Private Land Coordinator: responsible for coordinating statewide private land programs with Regional field staff such as access programs like the Walk In Hunting Area program (WIHA) and habitat programs such as the Kansas Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), Pheasant Initiative, Southeast Kansas Quail Initiative, and Landowner Incentive Program.

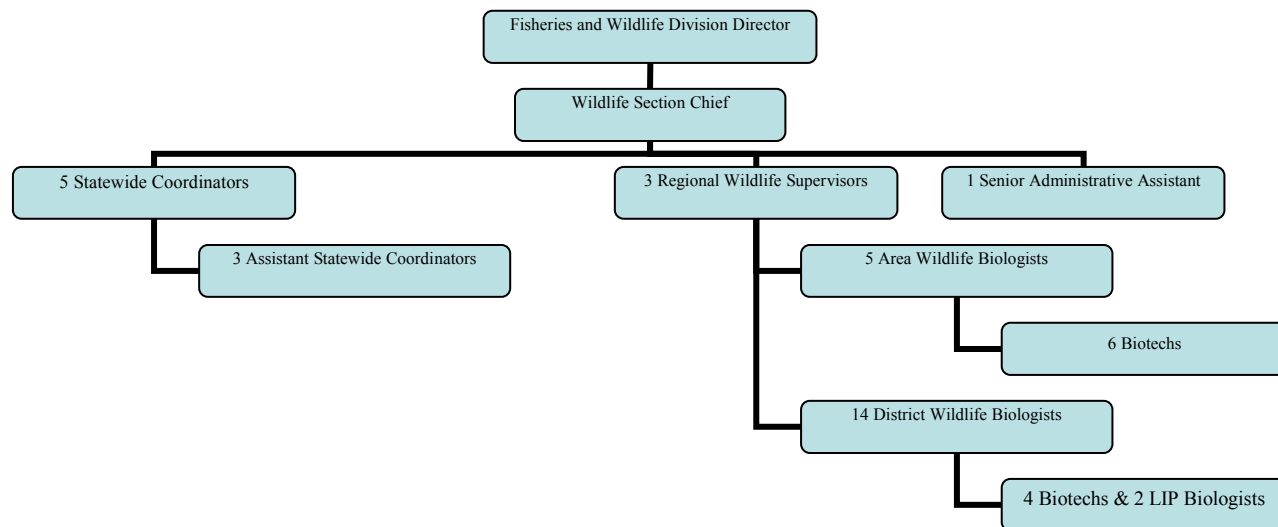
District Wildlife Biologists responsible for delivery of KDWP private land programs, and assist in delivery of farm bill programs to landowners throughout the state.

NRCS Area Wildlife Biologists are KDWP biologists co-located in NRCS area offices. Their immediate supervision is provided by NRCS when in the area office. They provide wildlife technical services to NRCS district conservationists, as well as assisting with wetland determinations and technical assistance for farm bill program delivery. Currently three of the Area Biologists spend two days/week in the NRCS offices. The other two Area Biologists spend one day/week performing NRCS duties. These two Area Biologists are also charged with the duties of the old Ag Liaison position, one representing the eastern half of Kansas and the other representing the western half of Kansas.

Wildlife Biological Technicians (unclassified) are hired to accomplish district responsibilities in the Area and Wildlife Biologist's districts. NRCS provides funding for six positions through a cooperative agreement and six positions through a contribution agreement for WHIP delivery.

Landowner Incentive Biologists (unclassified) were hired after receiving Tier 1 grant and located in NW and SW Kansas to promote and enhance restoration of playa lakes.

Organizational Chart



Equipment

Native grass drills, tree planting machines, weed barrier fabric machines, root plows and various prescribed fire equipment are available for loan through the department.

KDWP Private Lands Habitat Management Programs

The framework of the Private Lands Habitat Management Program consists of the Upland Game Bird Initiative, Pheasant Initiative, Quail Initiative, Prairie Chicken Initiative and KDWP Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. This program allows for KDWP Biologist and private landowners to work together in the development of habitat management plans. These plans directly impact wildlife species and habitats specific to the individual plan. Currently several plans are focusing on the CRP enhancements that include cost sharing on prescribed burning, light disking, food plot establishment, forb/legume interseeding, brush removal, and providing additional Sign-Up Incentive Payment (SIP) or Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) to help increase the enrollment in several Continuous CRP practices. Other plans have been developed to provide cost share for the conversion of farmland to native grass, converting grazing land and hay land from cool season grass to warm season grass, hedgerow renovation, wetland development, and deferred grazing on native rangeland. This program also provides the cooperating landowner the availability to loan or rent native grass drills, tree planting machines, weed barrier fabric machines, root plows, drip torches, and portable tanks and sprayers for controlled burns. Since 2004, conservation partners have contributed over \$80,000, adding to the nearly \$690,000 in contributions from KDWP. In 2009 alone, approximately \$120,000 was spent for direct on-the-ground habitat management projects across the state through the Upland Game Bird Habitat Initiative (UGBHI).

Landowner Incentive Program

This initiative started in 2006 with a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service LIP Tier II. Targeted areas are the mixed and short grass prairie ecoregions of Kansas. This program provides a maximum of 75% cost share assistance for implementing practices that benefit species in need of conservation (SINC). Seventeen projects, primarily in the Red Hills mixed grass region of south central Kansas have been selected for implementation. These project's management practices include mechanical brush removal (cedar trees), prescribed burns, and native grass planting. Total cost of completing these projects is \$677,301 and will directly impact 21,129 acres and improve habitat for at least 18 SINC species.

Playa Lake and Wetland Management Programs

KDWP completed the Playa Lake Sign-up Incentive Program that was initiated to help stimulate enrollment in CP23a Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain. The program should be considered a success with 1,416.3 acres enrolled by 27 landowners.

KDWP Playa Lake Habitat Improvement Program was initiated with funding from PLJV, Conoco/Phillips, SCC, USFWS, and Pheasants Forever. Similar to CP23a and the Farmable Wetland Program, this program leases private land playas for 10 year duration with a standard lease rate of \$40/acre/year. This program targets playas that are not eligible for USDA programs.

Walk-In Hunting Access Program (WIHA)

The WIHA program continues to be one of the most popular programs in the Department's history. In the fall of 2009 approximately 1,061,657 acres were enrolled statewide at an average cost of \$2.13/acre. For the 2010 spring turkey WIHA season we leased approximately 173,220 acres at an average cost of \$1.73/acre. Land is generally leased for upland bird hunting opportunities and CRP makes up more than 50% of the acreage. This program has no additional charges to the user and is funded through the Wildlife Fee Fund and PR Grants. About 75% of the land enrolled in the program is in the western half of the state. With the exception of spring turkey, efforts to shift some of the acres to the east have been unsuccessful. WIHA activities are accomplished primarily by private land biologists utilizing temporary help and some assistance from other KDWP divisions.

Special Hunts on Private Lands

In an attempt to increase public access to private lands in the eastern third of the state, a pilot program was implemented for the 2009 spring turkey season allowing limited public access to private lands. KDWP private land biologists were able to sign up tracts in eight counties, offering a total of 67 hunts (14 youth only, 26 youth-mentor, and 27 open). The eligibility of counties for the special hunts program were determined by the proximity of the county to urban areas and the historical lack of WIHA access within the counties. Program interest indicated a successful pilot with nearly 200 online applications for the 67 offered hunts. The program continued in the fall of 2009, merging with the public lands special hunt program in an attempt to simplify coordination efforts. Offered fall private lands special hunts included youth, mentor, and open hunts for deer, upland birds (including prairie chicken), waterfowl, turkey, and furbearer/coyote hunts. Nearly

13,600 acres of private land were made available for limited public access in 15 counties. Applicant numbers have continued to grow and survey results from the spring and fall 2009 seasons were very positive.

Farm Bill Programs

The Wildlife Division continues to promote wildlife related farm bill programs including CRP, CREP, EQIP, WHIP, CSP and WRP.

CRP

- **SAFE Initiative (CP38E)** – Kansas has applied for and received the “SAFE Habitat for Upland Game Birds” practice for the Northern Bobwhite quail, ring necked pheasants, greater prairie-chickens and other grassland-associated wildlife. 30,100 acres were allocated state-wide. Although this practice has gotten off to a slow start the potential is there to make a significant impact on grassland habitat across the state due to the practices’ simplicity and flexibility. Currently, there are 5,442 acres enrolled state-wide.
- **Upland Bird Habitat Buffers (CP33)** –CP33 continues to be a very popular continuous CRP practice in Kansas with 37,223 acres enrolled state-wide. KDWP Biologists continued to perform the monitoring on this practice in 2009.
- **Wetland Restoration-Non-Floodplain (CP23A)** –As of April 2010, Kansas has enrolled 2,419 acres under this practice. Although the KDWP Playa Lake Sign-up Incentive Program helped to spur some increased activity with regard to enrollment, high grain prices (among other factors) have slowed progress with regard to the success of this practice in Kansas.

CREP

The Kansas Upper Arkansas River (UAR) CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) is a partnership between USDA and the State of Kansas. This voluntary program provides incentives and cost sharing to participants who enroll their land into eligible conservation practices such as native vegetation establishment or wildlife conservation for a period of 14 to 15 years. The CREP area lies within 10 counties along the Arkansas River corridor, covering 1,571,440 acres. In the CREP area, 718,683 acres are authorized for ground water irrigation; approximately another 10,680 acres are authorized for irrigation from surface water. The state seeks to enroll up to 20,000 acres into the program under the current MOA; 17,000 acres of irrigated land, and 3,000 dryland corners from irrigated circles. Each county within the CREP was allocated 5,000 acres, but the statewide total could not surpass 20,000 acres. As of March 2010, 9,861 acres have been enrolled.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

KDWP district wildlife biologists have continued to deliver most aspects of the Federal Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). This includes program promotion, landowner contact, conservation planning and technical assistance with practice implementation. This continues to be a very successful partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Last year alone (FY2009), 116 WHIP contracts were approved, bringing nearly \$980,000 in federal funding to the state for wildlife habitat improvement projects.

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

KDWP/NRCS Area Biologists have been involved with the Conservation Security Program by promoting the program as well as by helping develop landowner Wildlife Self Assessments.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Although not as involved as with other programs, KDWP Biologists continue to promote EQIP, especially those applications that address wildlife resource concerns such as grassland health and tree encroachment onto native prairies. Additional efforts are underway to increase the application of EQIP to better address wildlife habitat issues.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

The Wetlands Reserve Program had experienced some decline in popularity due to the appraisal process implemented for 2006 and 2007. Offers to applying landowners decreased significantly during this period causing many landowners to reject the offers. Due to changes that came about with the 2008 Farm Bill, future WRP offers will be based on the highest and best use of the land and established geographical area rate caps. WRP offers excellent opportunities to perpetually protect wetlands and hopefully reverting back to the old appraisal system will result in increased program interest.



2010 MWPLWG Program Report

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Infrastructure of Private Lands program

This past year has seen several new faces at the field level. We currently have 14 biologists and 2 technicians in NRCS cost-shared positions, including two vacant biologist positions we are in the process of filling. Additionally, KDFWR now has 16 private lands biologists (PLBs) supervised by our 5 regional coordinators. We have had a number of Farm Bill biologists move into our more coveted Private Lands Biologist positions (merit protected affording superior job security) over the last several years. These changes have helped demonstrate the role and value of an experienced Farm Bill biologist in our more generalized private lands positions.

Program and Project Updates

Kentucky Prescribed Fire Council – Last year officially kicked off the KY Prescribed Fire Council. The Department and over 20 other partners united to expand and protect the tool of prescribed fire. The first annual meeting had nearly 80 participants. Several working committees were formed that are working towards minimum training standards associated with a certified burner.

legislation, information and education for the public, air quality regulation and management, and research needs.

CREP – Our Green River CREP project is poised to be the greatest habitat conservation project in the Commonwealth's history. The program is fully enrolled, 101,500 acres. Those acres are dominated native grasses and wildflowers aimed at improving water quality and wildlife habitat in the Green River Watershed. The program exploded upon the inclusion of buffering sinkholes (CP-29) as an eligible practice. KDFWR is working with the University of Tennessee and Mississippi State University to develop a long-term bird monitoring protocol to measure the landscape-scale effect of the CREP.

CP-33 – We have stalled at roughly 7,000 of our initial allotted 9,000 acres of CP-33. Honestly, we are disappointed by our inability to obligate all these acres. KY's agricultural system is a perfect fit for this practice given smaller field sizes that are often bordered by forest. We are using the additional allotment of 2,500 acres to re-invigorate the program with a direct mailing campaign solely aimed at the economic benefits of the program. KDFWR has formed a partnership with the KY Chapter of the Wildlife Society to carry on the multi-state CP-33 monitoring effort coordinated by Mississippi State University.

QU Habitat Team - The KY Quail Unlimited Habitat Improvement Team (HIT) continues to help landowners get high quality habitat on the ground. The team has been reduced to one full time member, but does have a stable of part-time employees that keep the effort moving forward. The turbulence surrounding QU stagnated progress and minimized accomplishments in the last 6 months. Efforts are underway to reinvigorate the team thanks to the partnership of KDFWR, KY Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, and QU. The team's primary source of revenue is prescribed burning of CRP, but they have made revenue through a number of other activities like herbicide application, strip disking, ephemeral pool creation, cedar removal, and NWSG plantings.

SAFE - CP-38 acres have been promptly used in KY. Unfortunately, our allocation was modest at 8,000 acres. KY proposals divided those acres among native grass and bottomland hardwood restoration. As anticipated, the bottomland hardwood work was not attractive to producers, and acres were transferred to the native grass restoration projects. We were disappointed that we did not receive an acreage increase for this program as more potential exists.

WHIP – KDFWR biologists continue to do the lion share of work with WHIP in KY. Our roughly \$1 million program continues to be popular in the state. Forest stand improvement has become a popular practice in the state. However, the process and paperwork are hampering morale of our private lands staff, particularly private lands biologists that were not as engaged in Farm Bill activity. From a Farm Bill biologist perspective, WHIP has taken large amounts of time that minimizes their impact in programs like CRP and EQIP. Ideally, a block grant to the Department would be a wonderful means of minimizing red tape and focusing efforts on implementation.

EQIP - We've been quite pleased with the progress made in EQIP the last couple of years. A \$1M dollar each grassland and forestland initiative have been established as well as a \$1M energy initiative. Although none of the initiatives have been fully enrolled to date, they all have activity and we hope to continue efforts to utilize these opportunities. The grassland initiative coincided

perfectly with our bobwhite restoration efforts. We are working closely with NRCS state office personnel to continue to promote prescribed grazing and native warm season grasses as forage.

WRP – Our WRP cup runneth over!! We have more dollars available than we can likely spend or deliver. Several efforts are underway to boost interest in enrollment. The most effective have been direct mailings.

CPA's – Through the State Technical Committee partners, we were able to create our first statewide CPA that was exactly as designed by the conservation community. The result should provide outstanding opportunities for CRP in Kentucky. We are hopeful for large and regular sign-ups!

Northern Bobwhite Restoration – This year will go down as the official beginning of KDFWR's bobwhite restoration efforts. The Department invested \$1.5M towards the implementation of the Road to Restoration: The Blueprint for Restoring the Northern Bobwhite in Kentucky. The majority of funding this year was aimed at public lands efforts. Peabody and Clay WMA's were the most heavily funded. Bobwhite research is also underway on Peabody and private land in Oldham County. Monitoring is underway on 4 focal areas and will expand this year.

A new focal area developed this year called the Shaker Village Nature Preserve. Remnant LIP dollars and KDFWR HIP dollars helped transform nearly 800 of a 3000 acre property to native plant communities. Fall covey counts yielded 20 coveys on the property. Activity is currently underway to restore 200 more acres this year. All tolled, 33% of the property is slated to be restored in 2 years! We are hoping for good weather this summer and a bobwhite explosion. A large-scale fund raiser is being planned to take advantage of this success story and help fund subsequent management of the area.

Private Lands Program Critical Review - We plan to critically evaluate our private lands efforts this year. The program has been static for nearly 10 years. A refocus and a new direction are likely warranted. Historically, our efforts have been mostly on recreational landowners that invite us on their lands. To make significant contributions to private lands conservation, we believe it's imperative to influence lands managed for agricultural production. Additionally, we'd like to find mechanisms to promote and incentive landowner cooperatives. Our one farm at a time model is not generating measurable results. A key obstacle to overcome will be moving from a reactive private lands (wait to be invited on a property) effort to a proactive lands effort (target landowners for conservation efforts).

Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) - We are in the 23rd year of the Habitat Improvement Program. The program is our primary state funded program for private landowners across Kentucky. Any landowner can receive technical assistance, a management plan, and equipment loan. From May 1, 2009 to April 30, 2010 we have provided technical guidance to 272 landowners with 37,554 acres. Additionally, we cost shared a wide variety of practices, helping to improve numerous acres for wildlife across the state (Table 1). The program provides these funds at a rate of 75% with a \$1000 limit per landowner per year. In many instances, we deliver cost-share in the form of equipment use, seed, and herbicide for landowners. Therefore, bulk prices for those products extend limited financial resources and maximizes habitat on the ground. The cost share money for next

years' budget is \$159,000. Over the life of the program, we have provided technical guidance to more than 12,000 landowners owning over 2.2 million acres across Kentucky.

Recommendation	Acres/Units
	100 ac
Fencing	5,767 ft
Fescue Eradication	335 ac
Forest Openings	2 ac
Legumes	103 ac
Mowing (ie., strip mowing of NWSG)	1,712 ac
Native Warm Season Grasses	885 ac
Nesting Structures	6
Prescribed Burning	37 ac
Shallow Water Wetlands	322 ac
Soil Amendments	102 ac
Streamside Restoration	300 ft
Timber Stand Improvement	100 ac
Trees & Shrubs	739
Wildlife Water Holes	53 units

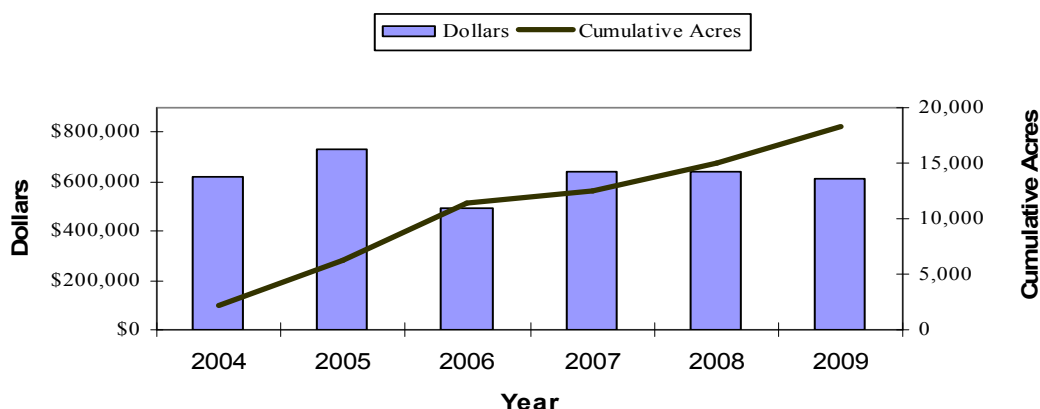
Table 1. Habitat Improvement Program accomplishments by practice, 1 May 2009 through 30 April 2010.

Michigan Private Lands Program Annual Report – April 17, 2010

Michigan's Private Lands Program was fortunate to secure several new funding sources to expand our program; including, USDA Conservation Innovation Grant targeted at grassland birds on working grasslands, Competitive State Wildlife Grant focused on massasauga rattlesnake and Mitchell satyr habitat in southern Michigan, Woodcock Initiative funds, as well as deer and turkey habitat funds. These extra dollars provided for an expansion of our program. To meet these objectives all wildlife biologists will spend approximately 12% of their time on private lands activities. Last fall the Private Lands Program Manager and the Landowners Incentive Program Coordinator provided training opportunities to our field staff to prepare them for these new duties.

Michigan's *Landowner Incentive Program (LIP)* program focuses on wetlands and grasslands in the southern Lower Peninsula, barrens and jack pine in the northern Lower Peninsula and mesic conifers in the Upper Peninsula. The program's goal is to increase habitat for species at-risk on private lands. We have a program coordinator and 25 field biologists responsible for implementation of habitat projects. From 2004 through FY2009, we provided technical assistance to over 550 landowners covering 64,149 acres and provided financial assistance for 511 projects impacting 21,659 acres. The graph below shows program dollars and cumulative financial assistance acres impacted as reported to date.

LIP Expenditures and Cumulative Acres 2004-2009



Michigan's **Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG)** focuses on providing important habitat to grassland birds on working grasslands, such as haylands and pastures. These lands provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species, including rare and declining grassland birds, turkey, pheasants, and sharp-tailed grouse. This program will explore new incentives for hayland and grazing farmers to change their practice to help grassland birds. These new approaches should help increase farmer participation in programs such as Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) in order to increase management for grassland birds. Last fall regional focus groups were developed to identify focus areas for project implementation as well as targeted approaches to get conservation on the ground. Implementation of practices will begin this spring such as planting native grasses for forage, altering mowing practices, controlled burning as well as other techniques.

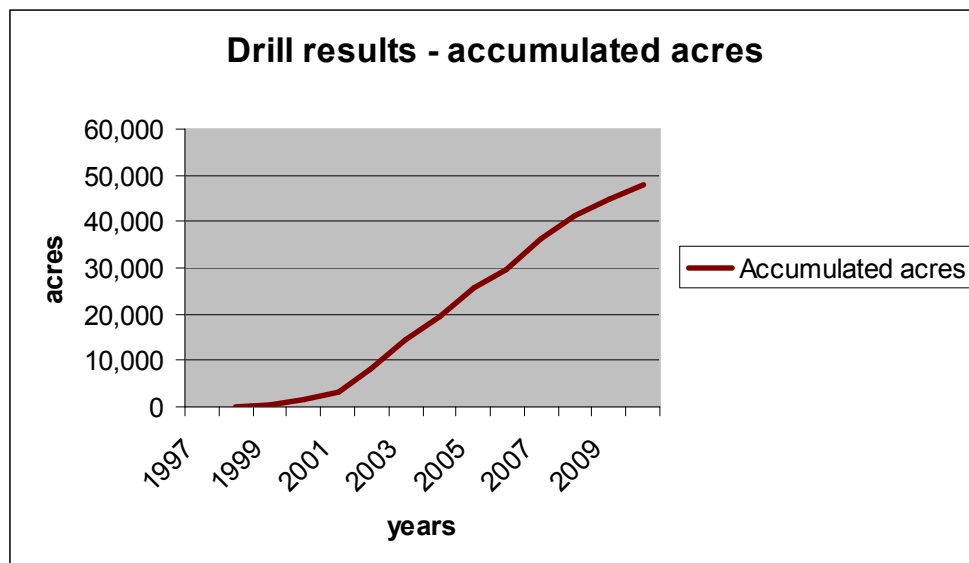
Last year we received a USFWS **Competitive State Wildlife Grant (cSWG)** targeted to restore and enhance 200 acres of prairie fens and associated savannas to benefit the federally endangered Mitchell's satyr butterfly (*Neonympha mitchellii mitchellii*), to restore 400 acres of prairie fen and associated savannas for the federal candidate eastern massasauga rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*) and to protect 11.7 acres of prairie fen occupied by Mitchell's satyrs. Project implementation began this spring.

Wildlife Management Institute Woodcock – Early Successional Forest Initiative will promote management of early successional forests on private lands to benefit woodcock, ruffed grouse, and deer. These funds are distributed to the Upper Peninsula, Northern Lower Peninsula and the Saginaw Bay area. Biologists will work with landowners to maintain or increase early successional habitat through on-site technical assistance, educational events, media, and funding treatment of non-commercial practices such as alder management. Priority areas have been identified.

Turkey funds are being used to implement specific habitat projects for turkeys through providing technical assistance to landowners. **Deer Range Improvement Program (DRIP)** funds are being used in the Western Upper Peninsula and the Northwest Lower Peninsula to provide technical assistance to landowners interested in managing their land for deer. Local management Units are to develop local priorities and identify priority areas to deliver private lands assistance to improve turkey and deer habitat.

Since 1997, the private lands program has been responsible for the coordination and distribution of 31 **native grass drills** through a cooperative working relationship with county conservation districts. In 2009, these

drills planted 3,210 acres of habitat, mostly native grasses, on 262 sites. By next year we will have planted over 50,000 acres of habitat with these drills.



Work continues on the *Michigan genotype native warm season grass fields* at Rose Lake. These seed production fields are for the purpose of producing Michigan genotype switch grass, Indian grass, big bluestem, and little bluestem seed. Each site is approximately 1-3 acres in size. Last year, we were able to collect approximately 508 lbs. of switch grass, 475 lbs. of little bluestem, 103 lbs. of big bluestem, and 242 lbs. of Indian grass for a grand total of 1,328 pounds of seed.

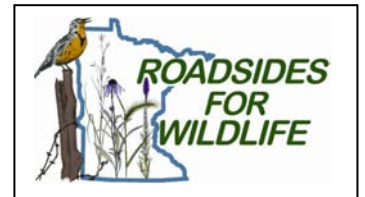
For the 2009/10 hunting season the *Hunters Access Program* leased 7,917 acres for public hunting use on 53 properties. That compares to 8,611 acres last year and 30,915 acres ten years ago. Properties are being mainly lost due to landowners receiving higher payments from private individuals, ownership changing hands, and problems associated with high hunter pressure.

Other projects include providing input and support for the implementation of the *federal farm bill program* such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). Private lands staff promotes wildlife benefits and opportunities through the Michigan Technical Committee as well as all program sub-committees.



Minnesota Annual Report Midwest Private Lands Working Group

**April 18-21, 2010
Bloomington, Indiana**



The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Section of Wildlife staff were again very busy in 2009 assisting private landowners with the development and improvement of wildlife habitat on their lands. Thousands of landowner contacts were made at various venues including fairs, farm shows, workshops, phone calls, and hundreds of projects were accomplished on private lands.

Cost sharing and technical assistance were made available to private landowners from the DNR Section of Wildlife for establishing, maintaining, and enhancing wildlife habitat for nesting cover, woody cover plantings, brushland management and wetland restoration. It was common to partner with other state and federal agencies to accomplish these efforts.

In addition to cost sharing with private landowners, 3 other programs are an important part of our private lands efforts for wildlife: Farm bill Assistance Program, Roadsides for Wildlife, and research directed at farmland wildlife issues.

PHEASANT HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (PHIP)

The PHIP provides cost sharing for management practices that improve pheasant habitat by establishing food plots, nesting cover, and restoring wetlands. PHIP is funded through Minnesota Pheasant Habitat Stamp fees. In 2009 \$989,000 was spent out of the PHIP account, \$234,000 (24%) was spent on private lands.

FARMLAND WILDLIFE RESEARCH

We have initiated a study evaluating methods for establishing and maintaining an abundance and diversity of forbs in established grasslands. This study will also evaluate insect responses to forb management treatments. In addition, we are in the early stages of designing a study to evaluate the effectiveness of methods for controlling woody vegetation in grasslands. We have completed fieldwork and data summary for a 5-year study to determine the value of farm programs for providing winter cover and food for pheasants. Finally, we are writing manuscripts for a study estimating probability of detection in pheasant crowing surveys.

FEDERAL FARM BILL IMPLEMENTATION & PROMOTION

The Federal Farm Program is the most important private lands program in Minnesota. This program influences the management by farmers and landowners on over 20 million acres of agricultural land

in Minnesota. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is presently providing approximately 1.6 million acres of perennial cover in Minnesota, including approximately 100,000 acres of permanent Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP I) easements in the Minnesota River Valley. The Wetland Reserve Program/Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Reserve partnerships have enrolled over 70,000 easement acres with approximately a 4:1 ratio of upland acres to wetland acres. A new sign up-period began April 20th, 2009 (See attached press release) and runs through June 5th, 2009.

The Farm Bill Assistance Partnership is a cooperative effort between the DNR, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Pheasants Forever, and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Currently there are 22 FTEs working in 35 counties working to market the conservation programs offered through the Federal Farm Bill. The attached chart shows FBA enrollment accomplishments by year.

CP-38

Minnesota's was allocated an additional 10,800 acres of CP 38 at the end of February. Sign-ups began March 1st. As of April 7th approximately 1/3 of the acres have been allocated. We expect to be fully allocated in the next few weeks. Go to http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/mn_cp38e_factheet_20080403.pdf for a fact sheet on the Minnesota SAFE.

PILOT WALK IN PROGRAM

Currently there is a bill before the Minnesota Legislature to create a two year pilot walk in program. The pilot area would include the 16 southwestern most counties in the state. The Farm Bill Assistance Partnership would administer and staff the program. The program would be targeted to existing conservation acres with a two year target of a minimum of 25,000 acres. A 2008 Legislative Report found that Minnesota is dissimilar to states to the east where small parcel size, high population density and high land values have caused most programs to remain small or decline over time. Likewise, we are dissimilar to states to the west, where parcel size is very large, population density is low and land values are low. The pilot program is designed to determine landowner interest in the program and what the actual cost of securing easements will be.

PRIVATE LAND SPECIALIST POSITIONS

The Private Lands Program in the Section of Wildlife functions as the point of first contact for many private landowners seeking advice to protect, restore and enhance wildlife habitat on their land. Five Private Land Specialists provide technical assistance to landowners regarding habitat improvement requests, USDA conservation program sign-ups, on-site visits to assess habitat, prepare wildlife habitat management and stewardship plans, and make referrals to other appropriate natural resources agencies. These Specialists also develop workshops and other information sharing opportunities to larger groups related to conservation programs, prescribed burning, and general technical assistance. Most cost-sharing options are in collaboration with other DNR divisions, USDA programs, FWS Partners for Fish & Wildlife programs, and NGOs. In FY 2009, Specialists leveraged over \$111,000

in state and federal funds, directly improved over 2,900 acres of wildlife habitat, had over 1,000 private landowner contacts, and held 12 landowner workshops.

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MIDWEST PRIVATE LAND GROUP

2010 ANNUAL MEETING

Bloomington, Indiana

**MISSOURI REPORT
PRIVATE LAND SERVICES DIVISION**

Mission: *Help landowners meet **their** land management objectives in ways that enhance fish, forest and wildlife conservation.*

In late 1999, the Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) created a Private Land Services Division to deliver services to private landowners who own and manage 93% of the land in Missouri. Private Land Services Division staff, as much as practical, were collocated with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), mostly in Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) offices, to provide the best service to landowners and raise awareness of fish/forest/wildlife needs among agency partners. Like most other agencies, we've had to tighten our belt and have reduced overall agency staffing by roughly 10%, but were able to maintain our Private Land Conservationist staffing levels. The following paragraphs provide a summary of fiscal year 2010 efforts.

Farm Bill Opportunities

Four area biologists help train/support NRCS field staff, and four wetland biologists help NRCS deliver WRP and CRP wetlands and other state and federal wetland cost share programs. In addition, we have one program biologist in the NRCS State Office that provides supervision to the wetland biologists and input into farm bill programs and NRCS policies and standards. The agreement we had with NRCS in the past to provide 50% of salary and benefits for 10 NRCS Soil Conservationists specializing in biology or forestry has not been renewed due to budgetary issues and decreased TSP funding.

Private Land staff assisted with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Conservation Programs as follows:

- CSP, CCRP and CREP has helped several of our Missouri counties near the habitat goals of the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI). Cass County joined Scott County last year as the first two counties in the nation to reach the NBCI goals for both habitat and population.
- Missouri received \$4.5M so far for FY2010 WRP. As of March 2010, Missouri WRP has easements recorded covering over 130,000 acres with FY10 contracts pending. Eliminating the yellowbook appraisal method has improved the interest in the program. We have been averaging around 5000 new WRP acres annually, and rumor has it that we will be ramping up to around 9200 acres (an estimated additional \$6.5M), but that has yet to be confirmed with actual dollars. To date the 7-year ownership rule and limits on easement payments are issues which have not had a great impact, but may affect offers in the future.
- Missouri has received almost \$3.3 million since FY06 (not counting FY10 allocation) in the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). Of that, over \$575,000 has been spent directly on natural community restoration.
- Over 31,200 acres of CP33 have been allocated and reports are already being received from cooperators about positive quail responses. Our CP33 monitoring indicates that dickcissel, indigo bunting and field sparrows are also positively responding to the buffers. Missouri recently received another 13,300 acres of CP33, bringing our total to 47,300 acres.
- The Missouri State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) signup started May 4, 2008, and interest is extremely high for the Quail Practice. To date we have enrolled over 11,000 acres in our quail SAFE practice, and recently received approval to transfer 3000 acres from one of the other practices to take care of a backlog of requests. A request to the national office for an additional 3000 acres has yet to be approved. Other practices focusing on prairie chicken priority areas and sand prairie habitat are still receiving limited initial interest, although demand has picked up in the sand prairie geography (currently at almost 2400 acres). The Missouri SAFE targeted several state wildlife action plan focal areas.
- For FY06 through FY09, Missouri obligated almost \$5.1 million in EQIP and another \$3.6 million in WHIP for fish, forest, and wildlife practices. Of that amount, \$2.8 million was targeted for forestry in EQIP, with another \$600,000 in WHIP. For FY10, to date we had \$1.2 million for forestry in EQIP.
- MDC submitted CCPI proposals in FY09 asking for about \$250,000. All were approved, and are currently moving forward. We are waiting on the RFP for FY10.

Cost-share to Fill Gaps Left by Federal Programs

- Approximately 523 individual landowners received just under one million to implement over 921 conservation practices which improved over 12,000 acres of fish, forest, and wildlife habitat in FY09 through the Conservation Department's Landowner Assistance Program. These funds are used in concert with a statewide docket of cost-share practices and rates. Bobwhite quail and prairie chicken focus areas are targeted with 90% cost-share rate. This amount was also reduced in FY10 due to budget issues.
- Several funding partnerships that leverage available Department funding were continued and enhanced. The Missouri Bobwhite Quail Challenge Grant is a program that partners Department funding with local NGO chapters to implement habitat improvements for quail in the participating chapter's local geography. This is a 1:1 match where the Department matches funding that is pledged by local NGO chapters. The amount spent has increased annually and has resulted in over \$1 Million in habitat improvements for Bobwhite Quail since the program started in 2000.

- Staff from the Private Land Services Division provided on-site technical assistance to 16,171 landowners to develop conservation plans, make wildlife habitat recommendations, and assist with delivery of state and federal conservation program opportunities.

Non-Governmental and Other Partners

- A targeted cost-share program with DU that allows for over-building of CP23 structures to allow temporary flooding of croplands in fall and winter is commonly referred to as the Missouri Agricultural Wetland Initiative. Six projects covering three counties for \$56,561 were accomplished this fiscal year to date. We are having some difficulty with differing interpretations of CCRP rules between counties, which has held up some projects.
- The Department is partnering with University of Missouri (MU) research farms to research and demonstrate how quail restoration and agriculture can work together. Research plots comparing crop yields with CP33, root plowing, and no treatments are being shown to more than 5000 visitors annually on an MU farm in central Missouri. We are funding a study to determine which native grass mixes are most suitable for waterway plantings. Finally, we are working with them to compare a highly diverse mix of native forbs and grasses to a grass monoculture for biofuels production, with production plantings on Department lands.

Wildlife Damage Management

Six wildlife damage biologists (3 in rural; 3 in urban areas) provided counsel and training to individuals that were experiencing negative interactions with wildlife. Wildlife damage staff had approximately 4500 requests for assistance last year from citizens, resulting in 1,040 on-site visits related to the control of nuisance wildlife. In addition, over 4200 individuals attended training related to wildlife damage issues. This includes responding to complaints from a relatively new and growing black bear population and addressing public concerns surrounding the presence of mountain lions whether real or perceived.

The Missouri Department of Conservation continues to address the problem of a growing feral hog population in the state. Feral hogs are a serious concern for Missouri's natural resources and agricultural interests. With the backing of a Governor's feral hog task force consisting of state, federal and private organizations we have stepped up our efforts to cooperatively eradicate feral hogs in Missouri. In fiscal year 2009 staff discovered and eradicated over 500 pigs from and around 20 different Conservation Areas across the southern half of the state.

Through the Governor's task force we are supporting outreach efforts and changes in legislation concerning feral hogs in Missouri.

Outreach

- Production and distribution of three issues of the *Native Warm Season Grass Newsletter* to over 3750 individuals will be discontinued due to budget issues.
- Production and quarterly distribution of *The Covey Headquarters* newsletter to 10,000 cooperators and agency staff
- Designed two CCRP practice flyers for enhanced promotional efforts, and also have a revision of our mid-contract management flyer in the works.
- Development of a how-to video series on wildlife practices posted on YouTube at

<http://youtube.com/user/molandowner>

- Staff from the Private Land Services Division participated in 394 individual workshops, events, and meetings to provide landowner assistance for the development of fish, forest, and wildlife habitat. These events reached over 34,959 individuals.

Technical Service Provider

NRCS is providing the Department with \$350,000 in FY2010 TSP grants in exchange for Department assistance in USDA Programs. The Department documents our costs based on actual products delivered (restoration plans, status reviews, technical assistance plans) that are used to assist with USDA Conservation Programs.

- Technical assistance agreement allows for the staffing of 4 wetland biologists, 4 area biologists, one program supervisor, and 49 private land conservationists in NRCS state, area, and field offices throughout the state.

The TSP grant has allowed the Department to hire 4 additional cooperative positions with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS):

- USFWS technical assistance position focusing on grassland wildlife species.
- USFWS/DU technical assistance position focusing on wetland developments at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.
- Due to the economy 2 NGO positions have not been funded, but we are looking for additional opportunities
- We also subcontract with private technical service providers to handle some larger wildlife and forestry planning jobs on private lands.

For More information Contact:

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2010 Nebraska Private Lands Program State Report Midwest Private Lands Working Group Meeting

April 18 - 21, 2010

The Habitat Partners Section of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission delivers private land habitat management activities in the state, coordinates conservation partnerships, and provides wildlife education. Our goal is to change the way people think and act in respect to their own individual responsibility for the health of the land.

Initiatives

Focus on Pheasants (FOP)

- FOP continues to be a joint private and public land initiative.
- Efforts have shown positive results from landowners, land managers and in pheasant populations.
- Private lands focus has until now been largely focused on CRP Mid-Contract Management activities. Initial efforts focused on disking and interseeding, but we are expanding our efforts to incorporate prescribed burning and herbicide use to better demonstrate and support the full suite of MCM tools that are available.
- We have plans to unveil a new FOP effort in southwest Nebraska in early summer, with initial funding commitments of at least \$500,000 for a 3-yr effort. We are going to place a large emphasis on trying to double the amount of CRP in the focus area using incentive payments to landowners. We may also use a variety of new incentives for rangeland and cropland management, in addition to the MCM incentives (100% cost-share) we've used in previous focus area efforts.

Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist Partnership

- Within a month we should have 12 positions jointly funded through a Cooperative agreement between NRCS and NGPC with a cost split of 85% NRCS and 15% NGPC. Positions are hired and held by NGO partners (PF, QU, DU, RMBO), NGPC provides leadership, and often a vehicle and travel costs, NRCS provides office space and computers, and supervision is shared by the non-federal partners. NGO partners provide various leadership elements and contribute a range of from limited to substantive amounts toward salary, vehicle and benefit expenses.
- One of these positions is being added in a strategic location to assist with our new FOP effort in southwest Nebraska.
- Through this partnership, our Farm Bill Wildlife Biologists consistently complete more work products than required for reimbursement by NRCS.

Nebraska Natural Legacy Program (NNLP)

- Actively implementing Nebraska's Natural Legacy Plan (our State Wildlife Action Plan).
- 12 coordinating biologists hired with various partners (PF/QF, RMBO, NPLT, etc.) to implement the NNLP. Nine of those are primarily focused on working with private landowners in NNLP focus areas using a variety of funds (LIP, SWG, Nebraska Environmental Trust, Farm Bill).
- NRCS-EQIP NNLP Special Initiative. Nebraska NRCS has continued to set aside \$1 million in EQIP funds for a special initiative (with its own statewide ranking) for projects in the NNLP focus areas that meet the NNLP goals (this is the third straight year).
- We are updating the Natural Legacy Project through public input and conservation practitioners input. A revised document will be available in March 2011.

Saline Wetland Partnership

- Partnership with City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, and Lower Platte South Natural Resources District to promote conservation of saline wetlands (only found in and north of Lincoln, NE).
- Only remaining habitats for the federally and state endangered Salt creek tiger beetle; also provide habitat for waterfowl, upland game birds, and other wildlife.
- Over \$7,835,000 dollars in grant money has been secured by the partnership for these and future projects. Major grant contributors have included the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality.

- Since its inception, this partnership has protected over 1,000 acres of very rare saline wetlands; restoration and management efforts ongoing. Development pressures continue to increase the costs for protecting these important and limited wetland resources.

Sandhills Task Force

- Locally led initiative by ranchers, local community leaders, conservation partners, and agencies to maintain and restore fully functional native grassland resources and wetlands in what may be the largest intact grassland landscape remaining in North America. Section staff serve on the board and assist in evaluating and implementing projects.
- Multiple NNLP focus areas are within the larger area covered by the Sandhills Task Force.
- In 2009, the Task Force spent \$127,950 on 16 private lands projects and over \$16,000 for education and outreach.

Rainwater Basin Joint Venture

- Focused on spring migration habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds in some of Nebraska's most intensively farmed lands.
- Section staff assist with coordinating, developing and delivering private lands conservation throughout the basins.
- In 2009, the RWBJV spent \$1,399,683 to advance conservation efforts in this landscape. These funds were spent on acquisitions, easements, research, monitoring, and the restoration and management of public and private lands. On private lands, 36 projects were completed, improving 2,889 acres.
- A special initiative under Federal WHIP (in the amount of ~\$100,000) is currently being used to restore watershed hydrology to wetland basins by filling irrigation re-use pits that are no longer used, but short-stop surface runoff from getting to terminal wetland basins. This year, approximately 40 re-use pits will be filled within priority watersheds around wetlands under long-term protection (e.g., WMAs and WPAs) using a combination of these WHIP funds, NET and Challenge Cost-Share Grants, and other Partner contributions.

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

- New dedicated WRP teams are being set up statewide by NRCS.
- Use of GARC (geographic area rate cap) rates for establishing value of easements has been a huge success. Landowners can find out up front what sort of \$\$ per acre they could be looking at.
- New WRP habitat specialist position was created and filled earlier this spring. This is a 3-year term position that is supported through NGPC, USFWS Partners Program, NRCS, and RWBJV funds. This position is housed in the JV office and will closely work with the private lands workgroup to market and deliver conservation programs with a special focus on WRP in the RWB.
- This spring, there were ~50 WRP applications submitted by the first deadline but only 6 of these applications were RWB wetlands.

Platte River Habitat Partnership

- Partnership to restore functional wetland and grassland complexes in the Central Platte River; includes critical habitat for federally endangered Whooping Cranes and the world's largest concentration of sandhill cranes each spring, as well as an abundance of waterfowl, and the federally listed interior least tern and piping plover.
- Original effort resulted in nearly 10,000 acres of restored wetland/grassland complexes, using funds from a competitive State Wildlife Grant and the two local partners: The Nature Conservancy, and NGPC.

- The partnership is now taking a lead role in coordinating efforts to treat invasive wetland vegetation (phragmites, Russian olive, salt-cedar) on privately owned lands in and along the Central Platte River.
- Also leading a “grassland exchange effort” that matches wetlands that can benefit from grazing (e.g., RWB wetlands) with pastures that can benefit from rest (e.g., wet meadows and grasslands along the Platte River).

Central Basins CREP

- We have over almost \$500,000 available from Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) funds available for landowners incentives for enrolling in our “Resource Areas” – pivot corners and small fields—and for enrolling CRP wetlands in the Central Basins CREP.
- Interest in the last year has picked up, but with SAFE in the mix we have been unable to capture much attention to the program. We enrolled just over 1,000 acres last year, a huge increase over the past 4 years, and interest continues to slowly build. We have over 14,500 acres left that can be enrolled.
- Looking back, part of the initial success of this practice was it’s availability during a general CRP signup. We hope that the signup this year will again see FSA staff pointing landowners with eligible lands to the CREP for enrolling small fields and pivot corners.

General CRP Sign-up

- Currently working on setting the state Conservation Priority Areas (Wildlife CPA’s, Water quality CPA’s, and even some Air Quality CPA’s) for the state. Those have been sent by the state office to DC, and we haven’t heard much back yet. We are trying to push back on the national office making a new requirement that we put the entire central basins CREP in a CPA.
- Trying to work through AFWA on improvements to the EBI

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

- We fully enrolled both of our SAFE projects last summer (Upland Game Bird SAFE and Tallgrass Prairie SAFE).
- We received an additional allocation of 4,500 SAFE acres in the announcement this spring. However, all of those acres were officially obligated last week. We had nearly as many acres in application backlog as were made available, so we expect to have a new backlog. We are encouraging our staff and FSA to continue signing up producers.
- Nebraska FSA has formally requested another 40,000 acres of SAFE
- NGPC staff and Farm Bill Wildlife Biologists have been actively promoting and providing technical assistance for the program.

Field Borders for Upland Game Birds (CP33)

- We fully enrolled our Quail Buffer acres and now have another 2,500 acres of CP33. We are looking at opportunities to take CP33 to a statewide practice (we had previously limited it to our primary bobwhite quail range) based on monitoring results and benefits to a broad suite of game and non-game birds. We are also reviewing our CP33 seeding designs to make sure we are providing adequate habitat for pollinators.
- We are improving our monitoring by partnering with the University of Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and completing repeated bird counts on CP33 fields and control sites.
- We are working on efforts to try to ramp excitement about CP33 back up, especially clarifying that landowners can fully enroll pivot corners in CP33 as long as they connect those to another pivot corner with a CP33 field border. Early on with CP33 in Nebraska, the interpretation was that full pivot corners could not be enrolled; that has been corrected but the perception is still out there.

NWTF/WMA funding for Riparian Improvement Projects

- Last year, the National Wild Turkey Federation received a \$100,000 NET grant that was matched with Federal WHIP funds to restore riparian habitat within SC Nebraska. These initial funds were targeted in two counties along the Republican; however, a second grant in the amount of \$500,000 was received earlier this spring can be used in other areas of the state as well. Using these funds, eligible landowners could receive up to 85% in cost-share for practices such as forest stand improvement and riparian buffers, among others.
- Weed management areas (WMAs) have also been successful in obtaining state and federal grant funding for riparian improvement projects, especially along the Platte and Republican Rivers (don't have specifics on amount of funding received). These organizations are comprised of county weed control personnel, state and federal agencies, landowners and other local groups. Much of their initial focus has been controlling noxious weeds directly within the river channel through practices such as herbicide application, woody debris removal, and deep disking of sandbars).
- Section staff regularly attend WMA meetings and provide technical assistance on these riparian projects. The level of NGPC involvement varies between the individual WMAs.

Prescribed Fire in Nebraska

- Many landowners are becoming interested in using prescribed fire to help manage their grasslands. In Nebraska, fire is primarily used to control eastern red cedar, increase forage production, and quite a few landowners use prescribed burning to fulfill their CRP mid-contract management requirements.
- With key support from partners (especially PF) and staff, several prescribed burn associations and task forces have been formed throughout the state and several more are currently in the works. These groups have found and utilized a variety of funds to help purchase equipment caches for landowner use.
- Due to the increasing use of fire in Nebraska, the state fire marshal and legislators are monitoring the application of prescribed fire.

Wildlife Education

- We currently have 4 full-time educator positions (two in Lincoln and one each in Scottsbluff & Norfolk).
- 27 Project WILD workshops that certified 508 educators (426 teachers, 40 non-formal educators, 42 resource professionals and general public).
- Advanced WILD workshops for "Flying WILD" and the new "WILD about Herpetology"
- Program staff conducted 109 educational programs across the state, reaching 8,310 adults and youth.
- Creating a new Nebraska Natural Legacy (our State Wildlife Action Plan) Education Supplement for teachers to provide information and activities about Nebraska's wildlife that meet state educational standards.

Access

- CRP-MAP—delivered by NGPC Partners staff. Enrollment dropped to ~148,000 acres during the 2009/10 hunting season (from high of 186,000 in 2003-04) due to expiring CRP contracts.
- We work with landowners to upgrade enrolled sites using FSA Mid-Contract Management, and FOP funds in certain focus areas.
- Open Fields and Waters—delivered by all NGPC staff from all divisions (Section staff coordinate in each district). Focus on enrolling wetlands, woodlands, and fishing access. We had limited success during the first year: enrolled ~35,000 acres and 28 miles of streams. The costs for last year's contracts (landowner payments) totaled ~\$137,000. The 2010/11 signup is in progress.

- Concerns that we will continue to see large drops in CRP-MAP as CRP acres expire. We are anticipating a high demand for a limited number of CRP acres in the upcoming general signup.

Nebraska Wind and Wildlife Working Group

- Coordinate internal development of a statewide map indicating relative wildlife risk.
- Coordinate statewide working group to develop voluntary siting recommendations and guidelines to avoid and minimize negative impacts for wildlife.
- Engage Nebraska wind power industry, legislators, and energy agencies in issues.

Recruitment, Development and Retention (RDR) of Hunters and Fishermen

- Agency wide effort targeted at retaining, keeping, and recruiting new hunters.
- Promotion of family friendly activities and outdoor events (expositions, recreational camps) to introduce hunting and fishing to youth and adults. All section staff being involved in helping plan and staff events.
- Our new access program (Open Fields and Waters) was one of the primary efforts identified and funded in RDR.
- The Section also took the lead along with PF in developing the Outdoor Family Event Partnership. A fully equipped education trailer was developed that provides for six age appropriate outdoor activities for each of three different age groups of youth. The activities were developed to engage the whole family unit. PF will take the lead on using the trailer (two more are planned) by encouraging local family events through PF/QF Chapters.



NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT Private Lands Report – Spring 2010

North Dakota Game and Fish Department Private Lands

Staff and Funding Overview:

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's mission is to protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for sustained public consumptive and no consumptive public use. The Private Land Initiative (PLI) is the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's overall mechanism for applying this mission onto the private landscape of North Dakota. The PLI has three main goals: 1) Conservation of habitats for fish and wildlife populations; 2) Provide landowners interested in wildlife conservation with cost-share assistance for developing and protecting wildlife habitat; 3) Provide the public with opportunities to access fish and wildlife resources on private land. The primary focus of the PLI is public access to private land for hunting.

The PLI is funded with revenue from the sales of Habitat Stamps, interest accrued from the Department's reserve fund and special legislative appropriations. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of every hunting license goes toward a Private Land Habitat and Access Improvement Fund. The Department operates its PLI program out of this fund, creating or managing wildlife habitat and ensuring that hunters have readily accessible areas to hunt. Three full time employees, located in the Department's central office in Bismarck, head up this initiative and administer its budget, while nine full time employees, located in district field offices, work with district wildlife managers, technicians and local landowners to provide for program delivery across the state (Fig. 1)

PLI habitat programs include practices such as grass plantings, wildlife tree/shrub plantings, aspen management, habitat protection, wildlife water developments, nesting structures, and cooperative projects. Agreements with landowners, which combine both habitat enhancements and public access, are referred to as Conservation PLOTS (Private Land Open To Sportsmen) agreements. These tracts of land are posted with Department PLOTS signs and are identified in the Department's annually printed Conservation PLOTS Guide. The Conservation PLOTS Guide is a full-color hunting atlas, which displays all PLOTS lands, as well as other public lands available for hunting.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's PLI contains many components made up of a combination of Department-sponsored programs, USDA cost-share programs and partnerships with many state and federal agencies and non-government organizations. These primarily habitat-based access programs have created a "menu" of choices for private landowners. There are over 2,200 producers enrolled in PLI programs with over 3,100 contracts totaling 1,040,000 acres.

Private Land Access Program Overview:

CRP Access Program. This program provides cost-sharing assistance and incentives to landowners enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). In exchange for the cost-sharing assistance and incentives, producers sign an agreement with the Department allowing access for walk-in hunting from September 1 – April 1 for the term of their CRP contract.

Habitat Plot Program. The Habitat Plot Program is a short-term and multi-year rental of private land providing nesting, wintering, and other key wildlife habitat in addition to public walk-in access. The habitat plot can be newly established cover (cropland converted to grass), existing cover, or a combination of both. Landowners are compensated based on soil classification based rental rates. Landowners opting for the short-term feature of the program are paid an annual lease payment during a rental period of 3 to 6 years. Producers opting for the long-term feature of the program choose from a 10, 15, or 20 year conservation easement.

Working Lands Program. The Working Lands Program is a short-term program designed to evaluate the wildlife and hunting value, and public access opportunities on lands that are actively being farmed or ranched. Land offered for the program is evaluated and must meet certain ranking criteria. Biologists take into consideration land stewardship, wildlife production, hunting habitat, access to quality habitat, location, habitat diversity and habitat improvement. Producers can enhance their land, and increase their ranking, by planting food plots, trees or grass, using conservation friendly farming practices such as no-till or minimum tillage, adjusting haying dates around the primary nesting season for upland birds or implementing a rotational or deferred grazing system and so on.

CREP/CoverLocks Program. CREP/CoverLocks is a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) partnership with landowners, FSA, NRCS, SCD's, NDGFD and Pheasants Forever developed to create wildlife habitat, hunter access, and improve water quality on private lands. Producers agree to establish 20-acre habitat complex (10 acres grass, 5 acres trees, and 5 acre food plots) and provide public walk-in access to the quarter section encompassing the 20-acre complex for a period of 30 years. Producers are not required to alter management of the 140 acres outside the 20-acre habitat complex. Seed, trees and fabric, and most installation costs are paid by FSA and

NDGFD. Producers also receive 15 years of continuous CRP payments on the 20-acre habitat complex and an up-front soil classification based rental payment from NDGFD.

Private Forest Conservation Program. The Private Forest Conservation Program is a multi-year rental program that provides protection and enhancement in unique forested ecosystems and also provides public walk-in access. Producers are compensated \$9 to \$12 per acre annually for 3 to 6 year contracts or for the long-term feature of the program are paid an up-front amount for a 10 to 30-year conservation easement. Producers selecting the long-term feature of the program are paid 35% of the appraised value of the forest times the forest acreage for a 10-year agreement and 65% of the appraised value of the forest times the forest acreage for a 30-year agreement.

Wetland Reserve Program Incentive. This partnership between NRCS and the Department that provides additional financial incentives to producers currently enrolled or enrolling their land in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Producers are compensated 15% of the established value of their land by the Department in exchange for habitat development and public walk-in access to the tract for the 30-year term or 5% of the established value of their land in exchange for habitat development and public walk-in access to the tract for a 15-year term. The Department up-front payment is in addition to the 75% established value payment producers receive from the NRCS for a 30-year conservation easement.

Tree Planting Cost-sharing Program. This program provides cost-share assistance for the establishment of tree and shrub plantings on private lands. Producers allowing public access receive 25-50% cost-share on trees and shrubs, 25% cost-share on weed barrier, and receive a \$100/planted acre up-front practice incentive payment. Producers opting for the access option must provide 10 years of public walk-in access to at least 80 acres that includes the planting and associated or detached legal subdivisions. Producers who do not allow public access option receive 10% cost-share on trees and shrubs only. The Department will not cost share trees planted on broken native prairie. The Department will not cost share on Russian Olive.

Food Plot Program. The Food Plot Program is an annual, short-term program that provides producers with establishment cost-share and soil classification based rental rate payments for developing a wildlife food source that is accessible to walk-in hunters.

Cooperative Grants/Partnerships:

Beginning Farmer/Rancher Program. The Department and the Natural Resources Trust are collaborating in this program to provide up-front payments to producers that are purchasing land in exchange for implementing conservation practices, habitat development, and providing public walk-in access for the term of the contract. Producers are compensated based on the number and types of conservation practices, number and types of habitat development, and agreement term.

North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA). provides matching dollars for federal grants for waterfowl habitat projects in North Dakota contributing to the goals of the North American Waterfowl Plan.

Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). North Dakota secured an \$890,500 grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to supplement the PLI towards protecting and restoring habitats on private lands to benefit endangered, threatened, candidate or other at risk wildlife species. The LIP funds

will be used in three focus areas: the sagebrush/short-grass prairie habitat, mixed-grass prairie and wetland habitat, and the tall-grass prairie and wetland habitat.

State Wildlife Grants (SWG). The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Private Lands Initiative will be utilizing a portion of SWG dollars to begin implementation of North Dakota's Wildlife Action Plan. SWG dollars will be utilized to protect and enhance at risk habitat essential to hundreds of species in the state, including species of conservation priority. SWG dollars will be targeted toward landscapes identified in North Dakota's Wildlife Action Plan.

Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has partnered with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to fund three Pheasants Forever (PF) Farm Bill Biologists (FBB) positions. FBB duties include promotion and coordination and implementation of the conservation provision of the Federal Farm Bill and other related wildlife conservation programs. Day to day activities include habitat planning, program promotion, contract coordination, conservation plan modification, site assessment and reporting for the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program, Wetland Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.

Ducks Unlimited Conservation Program Biologists. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has partnered with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to fund two Ducks Unlimited Conservation Program Biologists. Duties are essentially the same as the PF biologists with more emphasis on grassland/wetland programs and practices including easements and USFWS programs.

Farm Bill Activity in North Dakota:

CRP - Expiring CRP acres will continue to be a concern for North Dakota. (Table 1) North Dakota was successful in obtaining an 18,000 acre CP38 SAFE project in southwest North Dakota with the help of Pheasants Forever and other partners. The 18,000 acre allocation was exhausted in less than two days, proving that there is still strong demand from producers for CRP in North Dakota. North Dakota also received an additional 25,000 acres for CP37 which is expected to be used up very soon. (Table 2) There is considerable interest in the new CP41 practice- flooded prairie wetlands.

Table 1. Expiring CRP acres in North Dakota.

<u>Year of expiration</u>	<u>Acres expiring</u>
• 2007	410,000 acres
• 2008	180,000 acres
• 2009	236,445 acres
• 2010	258,327 acres
• 2011	389,572 acres
• 2012	815,059 acres

Table 2. Continuous CRP practices

Practice	Ac. Allocated	Ac. Used
• CP37 – Duck Nesting Habitat	67,000	49,077
• CP23A –Wetland Restoration	16,000	16,144
• Farmable Wetland Program	100,000	33,056
• CP38-CP – SAFE Coteau Area	20,000	19,418
• CP38-TG – SAFE Prairie Chicken	6,090	6,089
• CP38-SB – SAFE Sagebrush	1,000	710
• CP38-PH – SAFE Pheasants	18,000	17,988

WRP - NRCS had considerable interest in WRP in 2009; nearly 300 applications and over 24,323 acres were funded for a total of \$23M. There were 700 applications, 96,000 acres and \$77.9M requested. In 2010 there is \$25M is available for WRP with over 559 applications, 68,000 acres and \$77.3M in offers. The discontinuation of the Yellowbook, the introduction of GARC's allows landowners the ability to know what they will receive for payment ahead of time making the process easier to understand. The Department will be providing additional incentives for WRP on selected contracts for habitat enhancement and public access.

USDA - NRCS SAGE GROUSE INITIATIVE – On March 12, 2010, USDA Secretary Vilsack announced an initiative to alleviate threats to sage-grouse habitat while ensuring the sustainability of working ranches in 11 western states. Through this sage-grouse initiative, North Dakota landowners in Bowman, Golden Valley, and Slope Counties can apply for financial and technical assistance until April 23, 2010 through EQIP and WHIP. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department worked closely with NRCS officials to identify threats establish core areas and develop practices and guidelines for this initiative.

Wildlife Depredation on Private Land:

Big Game - The Department assists landowners in alleviating/minimizing damage to private livestock feed supplies caused by big game animals. The Department provides manpower, technical assistance, temporary fencing, repellent and scare devices to landowners. Intercept baiting is used in extreme cases and deer-proof hay yards are available to landowners who have documented chronic depredation problems. To date, the Department has provided materials to landowners for 225 hay yards statewide. The Department does not make damage compensation payments to landowners. The Department does not provide assistance to commercial fee hunting operations.

Canada Geese - The Department assists landowners with Canada goose crop depredation. Three land practices; food plots, grazing plots and shoreline vegetation management/barriers, are available to private landowners through PLI to help reduce crop depredation losses associated with resident Canada geese. Producers must agree to allow public walk-in access to contracted acres.

Turkeys – The Department assists landowners with alleviating/minimizing damage to private livestock feed supplies caused by turkeys. The Department provides manpower, technical assistance, temporary fencing/netting and scare devices to landowners. Intercept baiting is used in extreme cases for landowners who have documented chronic depredation problems.



**OHIO DNR - DIVISION OF WILDLIFE
PRIVATE LANDS PROGRAM REPORT
MIDWEST PRIVATE LANDS WORKING GROUP
2010 ANNUAL MEETING
Bloomington, Indiana
May 18-21, 2010**

MISSION OF THE OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

We are dedicated to conserving and improving the fish and wildlife resources and their habitats, and promoting their use and appreciation by the people so that these resources continue the quality of life for all Ohioans.

PROGRAMS OFFERED

Wetland Restoration Program – Budget cuts have reduced the number of projects and acres. The Division of Wildlife (DOW) Wetland Restoration Program continues to be one of the more popular habitat programs offered in Ohio. Since 1991, the program has assisted more than 734 landowners in restoring 5,100 acres of wetland. More than \$2.3 million of Ohio Wetland Habitat stamp money has been spent; much of which has been used in conjunction with federal set aside programs. Additional funding for this project has come from DU MARSH money, NAWCA grants, and USFWS Partners for Wildlife.

HUNTING ACCESS INITIATIVES

Hunt Ohio Farms Program – In the summer of 2009, the Division of Wildlife teamed up with the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF) and the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) to announce the development of a web-based deer hunter access program. The website, www.huntohiofarms.com, will be part of a two-year pilot project to be focused in four counties that were chosen following a survey of Farm Bureau members across the state. Hunters interested in finding land to hunt would fill out a hunter profile form on the webpage which would be entered into a database. Likewise, farmers that are experiencing deer damage could access the site and squeeze the list of hunters down to a usable number. This could be done by identifying the hunter by county of residence, type of hunter (i.e. archery, gun, youth, muzzleloader), month available to hunt, or antlerless deer only.

Over the last nine months, over 8,400 hunters had submitted profiles from 49 states. Unfortunately only 75 farmers applied on-line. The Division and OFBF is currently developing a survey of farmers that utilized the site to determine how many reviewed the list of hunters, if they contacted and utilized any hunters from the website, if the current format was user friendly, and if they would use it again next hunting season. Unfortunately the results of the survey have not been completed at this time. The results will determine whether to expand the program to additional high density deer counties or abandon the website altogether.

PARTNERSHIPS

SWCD Wildlife Specialist Partnership – The Division is providing grants to 21 county SWCDs to hire full time Wildlife Specialists to provide technical assistance to landowners seeking advice on methods of reducing wildlife damage to crops, developing wildlife habitat and timber stand improvement plans, wildlife education programs, and assisting federal agencies with set-aside program marketing and sign-ups. This program has been well accepted and endorsed by the Farm Bureau as a means of addressing crop damage complaints received from the farming community and has improved farmer/Division of Wildlife relations statewide.

Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist Program – The DOW provides a subsidy of \$100,000 annually to Pheasants Forever as part of a three-way partnership between the Division, Ohio Pheasants Forever state chapters, and NRCS. PF chapters provide \$50,000 toward the partnership and NRCS matches these non-federal funds with \$150,000. This money is utilized to hire six Farm Bill Biologists (FBB) that are assigned 3-4 county areas and each are provided office space at a centrally located NRCS office. A seventh position may be funded through a grant from the Environmental Defense Fund to cover focus counties within the Lake Erie CREP watershed.

NRCS Contribution Agreements – The DOW entered into three contribution agreements with NRCS since January 2009. Below is a summary of each:

- CRP MCM Assistance – From June – September 2009, DOW private lands biologists conducted vegetation assessments on 473 CRP grassland contracts due for MCM inspections covering 5,800 acres. Twenty-three CRP wetland sites were also assessed covering 199 acres. All told, PLBs drove 13,293 miles to complete all of these assessments. The contribution agreement paid 50% of the costs associated with wages and mileage resulting in a reimbursement of \$16,121.00.
- WRP Monitoring – Another 50% contribution agreement was signed to allow the DOW to hire three college interns for the summer of 2009 to complete WRP site monitoring. The interns were required to complete a comprehensive report covering the major vegetative, wildlife, and invertebrate communities associated with the wetland and surrounding buffer. GPS points were also recorded for the boundary of the wetland and the easement. Other items recorded included any violations to the contract (farming, buildings, timbering, etc), presence of invasive species, condition of constructed dikes and the possible need for water control structures. One hundred forty two easement contracts were inspected covering 5,344 acres. The contribution agreement paid 50% of the costs associated with wages and mileage resulting in a reimbursement of \$14,522.00.
- WRP Technical Assistance/Wetland Teams – In October 2009, the Ohio NRCS state office was notified that a statewide WRP acreage goal of 11,000 acres was allotted for FY10. The state conservationist made the enrollment goal a high priority to field staff and three wetland teams comprising of an NRCS soil scientist and a DOW wildlife biologist was established through an agreement to meet the statewide goal. In addition, a DOW private lands biologist was also assigned to assist the teams in identifying regions of the state with highest potential for sign-up, assist with marketing strategies to non-farming landowners, and coordinate wildlife friendly wetland design training for NRCS engineers. As of March, close to 8,000 acres of WRP applications have been submitted for consideration. A report for reimbursement of time and mileage has not been completed yet.



**South Dakota State Report
Midwest Private Lands Working Group
April 18-21, 2010, Bloomington, IN**

Mission

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GF&P), Wildlife Division's mission is to "manage South Dakota's wildlife and fisheries resources and their associated habitats for their sustained and equitable use, and for the benefit, welfare, and enjoyment of the citizens of this state and its visitors." Since approximately 90% of the land in South Dakota is privately owned, management efforts targeting private lands are essential in fulfilling our mission.

Our guiding principle is to develop partnerships with private landowners to develop wildlife habitat on private lands and to increase public outdoor recreation opportunity on private lands.

Infrastructure

The overall structure of the habitat programs in South Dakota is housed and administered under one subdivision of the Wildlife Division (Terrestrial Resources), by Paul Coughlin (Habitat Program Administrator) and contains 5 biologists (Habitat—Mark Norton, Tim Olson, David Kimble, Rocco Murano, and Matt Grunig). The local Wildlife Conservation Officers as part of their duties (law enforcement, public land management, private lands management, fisheries, boating enforcement, etc) deliver Upland habitat programs (Wildlife Partnership Program). The Wildlife Conservation Officers are contained and supervised within another subdivision of the Wildlife Division (Operations).

Programs Offered

Private Land Habitat Cost-sharing Programs

- Food and Cover Plots - lands under contract provide food and cover for wildlife. Payment rates are \$40/acre if the food plot is on a Walk-In Area or \$20/acre if the food plot is not on a Walk-In Area.
- Dense Nesting Cover Establishment - lands under contract for three years provide nesting and brood rearing for local wildlife populations. Cooperators are eligible for up to 100% cost-share.

- Habitat Fencing - contracts on fencing can be applied to any project that will benefit wildlife by protecting habitat enhancements from destruction by grazing animals. Payments are based on a 50% cost-share of materials only.
- Woody Cover- goal of this program is to increase wildlife populations by enhancing winter survival. GFP will reimburse producers for 75% of their out of pocket cost incurred for planting woody habitat for wildlife. Maximum payment per year is \$3,000 unless at least one shelterbelt to be planted is 8-12 rows wide and at least 3 acres, then the maximum payment is \$4,000. If at least one shelterbelt is 13 or more rows wide and at least 5 acres, the cost-share maximum is \$5,000.
- Wetland Habitat Development - purpose of this program is the restoration of natural wetlands that have been drained by being ditched, tiled, or by any other mechanical means. This restoration is being administered in the hopes that wildlife will benefit from the efforts. Project typically include:
 - Wildlife/livestock ponds creation on private land.
 - Wetland enhancement (primarily dam pond).
 - Upland restoration (primarily seeding).
 - Riparian habitat enhancement (primarily grazing systems).
 - Upland enhancement (primarily grazing systems).
 - GF&P partnerships with Ducks Unlimited, US Fish and Wildlife Service, SD Association of Conservation Districts and NRCS.

Hunting Access

South Dakota currently has four primary programs involving opening up private land to free public hunting. The largest of the programs is the Walk-In Area program. Current funding sources for the program come from a license fees (10%), PR Wildlife Restoration funds (40%), and one-half of a \$5 surcharge on most adult hunting licenses (50%).

Our second hunting access program is the Controlled Hunting Access Program. It is funding 100% by hunting license fees.

Our third private lands hunting access program is the Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access program. It is funded entirely through the sale of special 3-day nonresident private land hunting license. This is a fairly special program that is only available to landowners in the immediate Pierre area.

Our newest access program, which started in November of 2009, is our partnership with USDA to provide 100,000 acres of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to the James River Watershed. All land enrolled in CREP is open year round to public hunting and fishing access. We

are providing an additional 40% of the base CRP annual rental rate and 10% cost-share to establish cover on these lands. The funding is being provided by interest on money that was given to the state by the federal government when the dams were built on the Missouri river.

2009 Initiatives

Partnership with NRCS, Pheasants Forever and GFP

During the summer of 2002, GFP formed a partnership with NRCS and Pheasants Forever to staff up to 6 positions in NRCS offices to sell and enroll landowners in wildlife programs. GFP will provide up to \$231,000/year for salaries, Pheasant Forever will provide per diem for vehicles, supervise and report accomplishments, and NRCS will provide training, office space and computer software.

In 2009, the partners decided to staff 7 of the positions. A cooperative agreement between NRCS and Pheasants Forever brings in an additional \$60,000 from USDA. \$15,000 dollars/year for 3 years was committed by the Mitchell Pheasants Forever Chapter in 2009 for and allowed us to increase staffing to 7 positions in 2009.

Expanded GIS Data to Recreational Users

Implementation and hunter use of our ARC-IMS site continues to grow and allows users with a standard internet web browser to access GIS data and construct their own specialty maps. In 2010 we will be upgrading to a new version that will be faster, easier to use, and provide more information.

In 2009 we provided downloadable coverage of all land open to public hunting in South Dakota for Garmin, Lowrance, Magellan GPS units. We had over 3,000 people download this information from our website.

Program Accomplishments in 2009

Woody Habitat Program

- ◆ We worked with 64 landowner cooperators to create 199.5 acres of woody habitat at the cost-share expense of \$178,650.

Food Habitat Plots

- ◆ We provided \$245,032 of cost-share to 980 cooperators to plant 11,407 acres of winter food plots

Wetland/Grassland (Paid--\$516,676)

- ◆ Wetland Creations/Enhancements
217 acres (27 projects)
- ◆ Upland Restorations & Enhancements
3,621 acres (24 projects)

North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA)

- ◆ Prairies without Borders phase II - \$200,028
- ◆ South Dakota Prairie Coteau phase II - \$1,015,333
- ◆ Harvey Dunn Grassland phase III - \$831,782

Other Wetland & Grassland projects

- ◆ American Creek Multipurpose pond repair project - \$40,000

Walk In Access Program

- ◆ During the 2009 hunting season, 1,245,023 acres of privately owned land was open to unlimited free public hunting by 1074 cooperators at a cost of \$2,140,000.

Controlled Hunting Access Program

- ◆ We had 13 cooperators open 16,887 acres of private land to public hunting access at a cost of over \$10,000.

Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access Program

- ◆ During the 2009 waterfowl hunting season, approximately 35,000 acres of privately owned land was open to free public waterfowl hunting by 9 cooperators at a cost of approximately \$200,000.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- ◆ Sign-up started Nov. 23, 2009.
- As of April 13, 2010 we have approximately 18,000 acres in progress or under contract at a estimated annual cost of \$600,000.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Bureau of Wildlife Management
Private Lands Program Report
Midwest Private Lands Working Group
2010 Annual Meeting
Bloomington, Indiana

Missy Sparrow

Mission

Working with people to protect and manage Wisconsin wildlife populations and their habitats, and promoting wildlife enjoyment and appreciation for the benefit of current and future generations.

Program Highlights

Farm Bill Biologists

There are currently five Farm Bill Biologists working out of NRCS offices in Wisconsin. Funding for these positions comes from Wisconsin DNR (pheasant, turkey, and waterfowl stamp dollars), NRCS and Pheasants Forever. Since 2007, they have had 2,470 landowner contacts, enrolled 13,045 acres and had 20,587 hours into conservation programs in Wisconsin. They currently have 6,801 acres in development for 2010. There was a recent meeting with NRCS, DNR, PF and other partner groups to try and raise more funding to place five more Farm Bill Biologists in the state, for a total of 10, to increase WRP enrollment by 30,000 acres in the next 2 years.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Wisconsin's WRP is an extremely important and valuable tool in the protection and restoration of wetlands and associated upland habitat across the state. To date over 40,000 acres of habitat have been restored under this project. The allocation in 2009 \$24.8 million. This is up from less than \$4 million in the three previous years due to a change in easement valuation methods which renewed landowner interest in WRP. There were 32 permanent easements acquired for approximately 7,353 acres. The current backlog is about 61 applicants and 4,250 acres.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):

The next general CRP signup in 2010 will be very important to Wisconsin. Wisconsin has lost over 180,000 acres (30%) of CRP since 2007. This general signup will recover some of those acres. Wisconsin DNR has been working with FSA to determine state conservation priority areas (CPAs) for water quality, air quality and wildlife. Landowners in these areas typically receive a few more points on their applications than those that fall out of the CPAs. If this new general signup is similar to past signups, the entire state would remain eligible for CRP enrollment but those falling within the CPAs would receive a few more points. Work is in progress to place DNR wildlife staff in FSA offices for the June sign up to ensure quality wildlife habitat through CRP acres.

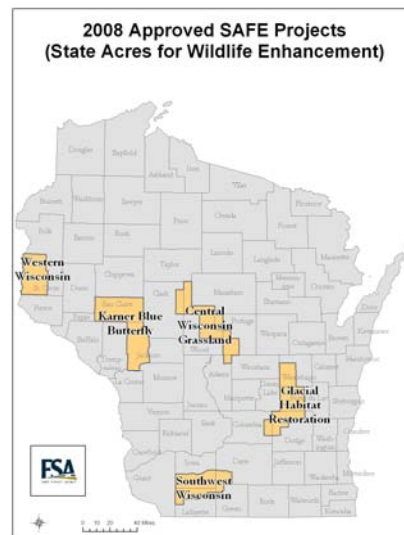
The Wisconsin FSA office along with the University of Wisconsin Extension are in the process of sending out a CRP survey to landowners that re-enrolled in CRP in 2006 and those that did not (REX and non-REX). Wisconsin had some of the lowest re-enrollment rates in the Midwest. Hopefully, this survey will determine why. The survey has been field tested and will be sent out in the next few weeks.

State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

Five Safe Projects were approved for Wisconsin totaling 12,750 acres. Four of the 5 projects were developed by WDNR staff (Southwest Wisconsin, Glacial Habitat Restoration, Central Wisconsin Grassland, and Western Wisconsin).

DNR will be contracting out the monitoring of these sites in 2010.

The total acreage in all five projects is up to 3,707. That is only 29% of the goal. Many contacts have been made with landowners, but it has been a tough program to sell due to high commodity prices and landowner frustration with CRP in the state.



Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP):

In August 2009, the Wisconsin DNR initiated an effort to develop guidelines for the planting and harvest of non-forest biomass on Wisconsin's agricultural landscapes. Development of the guidelines builds on work completed by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), the Wisconsin Council on Forestry, as well as guidelines developed by other states. In November, 2009, a technical team made up of scientists, land managers and administrators in DNR, Department of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), and University of Wisconsin (UW) was assembled to develop the guidelines. Simultaneously, an executive committee made up of administrators was formed to provide guidance to the technical team and ultimately approve the draft guidelines. Draft guidelines are expected to be produced by Summer 2010 and available for public comment in Early

Fall 2010. It is anticipated that these guidelines would be incorporated into state and federal biomass programs in Wisconsin.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

In 2009, there were 114 applications for WHIP with 64 contracts for \$1.1 million. One big project was located in southwest Wisconsin. It involved 10,500 feet of stream. It connected other restoration work done by the DNR, USFWS, and Trout Unlimited.