



At a Glance:

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

May 2008

Overview

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for private landowners to develop and improve high quality habitat that supports wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance. WHIP agreements generally last from 5 to 10 years.

Legislative Changes

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) extends the authority to the Secretary of Agriculture for carrying out the program during fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

Non-agricultural lands, as well as State, county, or local government-owned lands are now ineligible for WHIP.

Land eligible for WHIP includes:

- Private agricultural land,
- Non-industrial private forest land, and
- Tribal land.

The 2008 Farm Bill authorizes WHIP cost-share payments to be made to landowners to develop other types of wildlife habitat including habitat developed on pivot corners and irregular areas.

The total of WHIP funds available for use in long-term agreements to protect and restore plant and animal habitat is increased from 15 percent to 25 percent. Such agreements have a term of at least 15 years.

Priority will be given to projects that address issues raised by State, regional, and national conservation initiatives.

WHIP payments made, either directly or indirectly, to a person or legal entity, may not exceed \$50,000 per year.

Funding for WHIP is authorized at \$85,000,000 per fiscal year through 2012.

More Information

For more information and updates about WHIP and other Farm Bill topics, please visit your local conservation district — listed on the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) web site at www.macd.org — the Michigan Natural Resources Conservation Service web site www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/ and/or the U.S. Department of Agriculture web site at www.usda.gov/farmbill.

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

Michigan's 79 Conservation Districts are elected units of government authorized by state law. Most are organized along county boundaries. Each Conservation District is governed by a five member, locally elected board of directors who act as a locally controlled resource management agency. The District is the only entity in Michigan accountable to the landowners within its jurisdiction and responsible to provide services and implement programs that meet the needs of private landowners, the community, and its natural resources.