

Program – Agency:

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Landowner Requirements:

Landowner must be in compliance with conservation provisions of Food Security Act (e.g., erosion control). In addition, the landowner's average adjusted gross income must be < \$2.5 million over last 3 years (unless $\geq 75\%$ of income comes from farming, ranching or forestry).

Lands Eligible:

In general, any lands that have potential wildlife habitat values are eligible, regardless of size and no agricultural history is required. Specifically, eligible areas include habitat for declining or significantly reduced populations of wildlife species, practices beneficial to wildlife that may otherwise not be funded, and habitats identified as locally to nationally important.

Agreement Length:

5–10 years, ≥ 15 years for essential habitat projects

Benefits:

Up to 75% Cost share for <15 year agreements , up to 100% for ≥ 15 year agreements

Acceptable Practices:

Generally, commercial and non-commercial hunting, fishing, other outdoor recreation, and aquaculture is permitted on lands under WHIP contracts. While there are many practices funded through WHIP, typical practices that are cost-shared include:

- 1) Native tree and shrub planting
- 2) Water manipulation for waterfowl
- 3) Prescribed burning

Prohibited Practices:

The following activities are prohibited or strictly limited on lands under a WHIP contract:

haying, burning, grazing, cropping, timber harvesting, construction, developed recreational uses (i.e., boardwalks, permanent blinds), and vehicle traffic. Landowners cannot use lands under WHIP contract for mitigation credits during the contract period.