USDA NRCS
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Farm Bill 2008

May 2008

At a Glance:

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

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 refer to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Web site http://www.usda.gov/farmbill or the Natural Resources Conservation Service Web site http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip.
For updated information from NRCS Michigan go to: www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov
To view NRCS Program proposed regulations during the public comment period go to: www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html