

**WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM
OKLAHOMA PROPOSAL
FISCAL YEAR 1999**

INTRODUCTION

WHIP has been a very successful and rewarding program in Oklahoma. All of the participating wildlife interest groups agree that continuation of the current plan will achieve the desired wildlife habitat improvements. Consequently, our FY-1999 proposal will emphasize the same objectives and priorities as contained in last years plan. However, we will follow the recommended format contained in WHIP Guidance Document 98-10.

OKLAHOMA OBJECTIVES FOR WHIP

Objective (1) Provide statewide technical and financial assistance in developing fish and wildlife habitat as a viable secondary use of land that is currently devoted to agricultural production.

Objective (2) Provide statewide technical and financial assistance in developing fish and wildlife habitat as primary use of land where landowners are willing to forego agricultural production in favor of more intensive fish and wildlife habitat management.

OKLAHOMA PRIORITIES FOR WHIP

PRIORITY 1 Restore and Protect Native Habitats with Emphasis on Prairie Ecosystems.

Forty percent of the land area of Oklahoma is still rangeland. This cover type influences the overall health of wildlife more than any other vegetative community in the state. Intensive livestock production has diminished the quality and quantity of this habitat for intensive livestock production has diminished the quality and quantity of this habitat for indigenous wildlife. Practices to improve this habitat will focus on brush management for Eastern red cedar and mesquite control; prescribed burning to control brush invasion and improve grasses, forbs, and legumes for wildlife; range seeding to restore poor condition rangeland and areas previously converted to crop and pasture monocultures; and fencing to manage livestock grazing and protect grassland buffers around ponds and streams. Examples of benefited species include black-capped vireo, scissor-tailed flycatcher, ferruginous hawk, upland plover, loggerhead shrike, greater and lesser prairie chicken, bobwhite, scaled quail, and swift fox.

PRIORITY 2 Restore and Protect Buffers and Corridors.

Habitats adjacent to streams, ponds, and wetlands have been impacted by unrestricted livestock use and encroachment for crop and pasture production. These areas provide wildlife watering areas, increase habitat diversity and edge, provide important travel corridors by linking disjunct habitats, influence water quality and moderate water temperatures in streams. Practices to improve these habitats will focus on riparian buffer zones, tree planting, range seeding, fencing to exclude livestock, and alternative watering facilities for livestock. Examples of benefited wildlife species include interior least tern, leopard darter, Arkansas darter, river otter, mink, neotropical migratory birds, waterfowl and Ouachita Rock-pocketbook mussel.

PRIORITY 3 Increase Habitat Diversity Within Agricultural Areas Dominated by Monocultures.

Forty percent of the land area within the state has been converted to intensive crop and pasture production. These changes are particularly noticeable in the "wheat belt" where entire landscapes are dominated by annually planted small grain crops. These monocultures lack habitat diversity and interspersions needed to support indigenous species. Practices to improve these habitats will focus on range seeding, native grass waterways, field borders, tree planting, hedgerows and windbreaks. Examples of benefited wildlife species include pheasant, bobwhite quail, songbirds, Rio-Grande turkey, and other indigenous wildlife.

OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERS	WHIP PRIORITY NUMBER	CONTRIBUTION TYPES	DOLLAR VALUE
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation	1, 2, 3 (and species of special concern)	TA & FA	\$165,000
Fish and Wildlife Service	1, 2, 3 (and trust resources)	TA & FA	\$155,000
Oklahoma Conservation Commission	1, 2, 3	TA & FA	\$80,000
Oklahoma Forestry Services	3	TA	\$15,000
Cooperative Extension Service	1, 3	TA	\$30,000
Quail Unlimited	1, 3	TA	\$25,000
Ducks Unlimited	2	TA & FA	\$10,000
Lesser Prairie Chicken Workgroup	1, 3	TA	\$5,000
Playa Lakes Joint Venture	2	TA & FA	\$10,000
The Noble Foundation	1, 2, 3	TA	\$30,000
Oklahoma Wild Turkey Federation	1, 3	TA	\$10,000
TOTAL			\$525,000

OKLAHOMA WHIP RANKING CRITERIA

See attached ranking forms and instructions.

OKLAHOMA WHIP FUNDING NEEDS

FA Request	Partners FA Match	Partners TA Match
\$600,000 (maximum)	\$285,000	\$240,000

OKLAHOMA WHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Criteria	Number
Number of applications received	663
Dollar value of applications received	\$3,004,870
Number of individuals assisted	647 (Status codes not yet compiled)
Number of groups assisted	11 (Status codes not yet compiled)
Number of units of government	5
Number of preliminary conservation plans developed	494
Acres of preliminary conservation plans developed	175,466
Number of contracts developed (added category)	185
Acres in contracts developed	97,515

Amount obligated	\$1,045,845 (99 percent of allocation)
Amount dispersed	0 (installation of practices is just beginning)
Dollar value of partner T A contribution	\$240,000
Dollar value of partner FA contribution	\$285,000
Program participant contributions	\$348,615
Number of cost-share practices used	17
Types of practices used:	Fencing, Brush Management, Range Seeding, Prescribed Burning, Firebreaks, Hedgerows, Windbreaks, Tree Planting, Forest Riparian Buffers, Filter strips, Wildlife Watering Facilities, Trough or Tank, Dikes, Ponds, Water Control Structures, Animal Walkways, Critical Area Plantings
Acres of up land wildlife habitat mg mt	165, 181
Acres of wetland wildlife habitat mg mt	2,400
Acres of rip arian wildlife habitat mg mt	5,300
Acres of aq uatic wildlife habitat mg mt	4,985
Acres of T&E species habitat benefited	19,000

ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Oklahoma has developed a cooperative agreement with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) that will provide for an ODWC biologist to be located in the NRCS state office. Duties will include assistance to NRCS field offices in the implementation of WHIP and other Farm Bill programs involving wildlife resources.

Additionally, ODWC made all thirty of their field biologists available to NRCS field offices during the first WHIP ranking process. Consequently, all WHIP applications and preliminary plans were reviewed jointly by NRCS field staff and experienced ODWC wildlife biologists. These efforts will continue during the FY-1999 WHIP sign-up period.