

2001 Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program



Program Focus

"I want to take this opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate what you and all the other good folks at NRCS have done for me. Also, I would like for you to let everyone involved in the WHIP program know that they have helped us build a good solid foundation."

Rusty Minick, Founder
Kids, We Care, Inc., Guthrie

"Without the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, it would have taken me 20 years to install all these practices. A good program and good assistance"

Barney Hawkins
Cherokee County

Barney has 110 acres of land with a full canopy of trees with invading eastern red cedar. Barney had some ideas about what he wanted to do with the land for wildlife habitat, but did not have the means by which to accomplish them.

With technical assistance from NRCS, Barney developed a wildlife habitat management plan integrating his goals and objectives with the habitat needs of the deer, quail and turkey. Key practices in his conservation plan were firebreaks, prescribed burning, brush management, and pond construction.

Today, the trees have been thinned and the forest floor is once again productive with a mix of native grasses and forbs. The problematic eastern redcedar is being held in check by the prescribed burning. "Until I saw the results, I never knew fire was such a beneficial tool," Barney commented as he looked over the success of his conservation plan.



Oklahoma Summary

Overview

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program is a voluntary program that helps landowners develop and improve wildlife habitat on private lands. Interested landowners seek natural resource planning assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and other federal, state, and private organizations to develop conservation plans that improve wildlife habitat on land that is compatible for livestock use. Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program dollars help implement the actions identified in the plan. The compatibility of agriculture and wildlife programs benefits all.

Accomplishments

Wildlife is one of Oklahoma's natural resource treasures; the interest of landowners in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and cooperation by technical experts to implement the program are testimony to that fact. In 2001, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Oklahoma continued technical assistance to over 360 participants in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and serviced over 300 applications for cost-share through the program. In 1998, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program provided just under \$1 million for habitat improvement. In 1999, the program provided over \$300,000 for financial assistance to landowners. While the program was not funded in fiscal year 2000, the \$775,000 provided through the Agriculture Risk Protection Act funded over 130 applications for improving wildlife habitat on over 42,000 new acres. Oklahoma still has over 160 applications on file needing additional funding.

Program Benefits

With financial assistance through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and its partners, private landowners are restoring, enhancing and creating habitat for prairie chicken, bobwhite quail, white tail deer, wild turkey, bald eagles, and dozens of migratory grassland bird species. The restoration and protection of riparian areas are improving aquatic habitats for rare prairie fish, as well as game fish like largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish. Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species are benefiting through habitat improvement. People participating in the program value quality fish and wildlife habitat, and are especially supportive of native grassland and riparian area restoration.

In 2001, a portion of the available financial assistance was targeted for applications benefiting habitat restoration for the lesser prairie chicken. The lesser prairie chicken is currently a candidate species for listing as a Threatened and Endangered Species. In addition, funding was available to address critical habitat concerns associated with the Arkansas River shiner. With the cost share assistance available through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, private landowners can voluntarily provide for wildlife habitat restoration and improvement.

State Contact

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Oklahoma Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District

Oklahoma Dollars and Contracts

Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2001		Cumulative Total (98-01)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 1	\$7,618	1	\$15,481	3
District 2	\$80,390	20	\$475,840	113
District 3	\$279,726	45	\$606,428	103
District 4	\$44,652	11	\$170,029	35
District 5	\$82,254	14	\$171,531	28
District 6	\$279,515	39	\$514,259	79
State Totals	\$774,155	130	\$1,953,568	361

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