



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

March 26, 2012

IOWA BULLETIN NO. IA440-12-4

**SUBJECT: PGM – FISCAL YEAR 2012 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES
PROGRAM WILDLIFE HABITAT INITIATIVE GUIDANCE**

PURPOSE. To provide implementation policy regarding the fiscal year (FY) 2012 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Initiative.

EXPIRATION DATE. September 30, 2013

BACKGROUND: As described in National Bulletin NB440-12-6 the FY2012 Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) has changed and does not provide general WHIP funding in FY2012. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Iowa is providing EQIP funds for a Wildlife Habitat Initiative for the following wildlife categories: Grassland Habitat (statewide), Riverine Habitat (statewide) and Wildlife Habitat (statewide), and for two special projects that were originally selected for three years of WHIP funding in FY2010. Applicants in the WHIP Forestry fund code may apply in the existing EQIP Forestry fund code. The EQIP Wildlife Habitat Initiative is available to existing WHIP applicants and new EQIP applicants.

FUNDING ALLOCATION

Funding allocations for the EQIP Wildlife Habitat Initiative are split at the same percentages as used in previous years for the WHIP Program. Allocations are:

EQIP Fund Code	Counties	Allocation
Wildlife – Grassland Habitat	Statewide	\$52,900
Wildlife – Riverine Habitat	Statewide	\$35,300
Wildlife – Wildlife Habitat Management	Statewide	\$61,800
Wildlife – FY10 Quail Focus Area Project	Union	\$20,000
Wildlife – FY10 Driftless Area Project	Allamakee, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Jackson, Jones, Winneshiek	\$30,000
TOTAL		\$200,000

Attached to this bulletin is a copy of a sample letter being sent from the NRCS State Office to all FY2012 WHIP applicants. The mailing list for these letters was pulled from FY2012 WHIP applicants in ProTracts under the following status groups: pending, eligible, preapproved, approved, and deferred. NRCS staff may use the sample letter to contact any WHIP applicants that were not entered in ProTracts.

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Additional attachments include state and local rankings, and practice lists for the following three wildlife categories: Grassland Habitat, Riverine Habitat and Wildlife Habitat.

Resource priority area maps used during the ranking process may be found at <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/WHIPmaps.html>. More up-to-date information on priority areas may be used when it is available locally.

EQIP TIMELINE

The FY12 timeline for the EQIP Wildlife Habitat Initiative is as follows:

- April 20, 2012 Cutoff for batching first round applications.
- April 27, 2012 Deadline to enter first round rankings into ProTracts.
- June 1, 2012 Cutoff for batching second round applications.
- June 7, 2012 Deadline to enter second round rankings into ProTracts.
- July 2, 2012 National deadline to have 100 percent of the state allocation obligated.

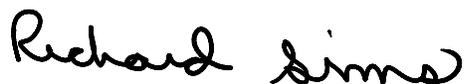
PAYMENT RATES/COST LIST

The payment rate for the FY2012 EQIP Wildlife Habitat Initiative is based on 50 percent of the average cost. The payment rate for Historically Underserved (HU) producers is based on 75 percent of the average cost. For the EQIP Wildlife Habitat Initiative use the same cost list previously provided for FY2012 EQIP.

EQIP Wildlife Habitat Initiative funds are not authorized for repair work to existing projects.

Financial assistance on fencing will be approved only in conjunction with other EQIP Wildlife Initiative practices that improve wildlife habitat and for the purpose of excluding domestic livestock or in association with permitted grazing systems.

The FY2012 EQIP Wildlife Habitat Initiative is limited to a maximum of \$30,000.00 of federal financial assistance per contract. A special request must be submitted to the State Conservationist for approval of any contract exceeding this amount.



Richard Sims
State Conservationist

Attachments