United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM 22 – Restoration and management of rare or declining habitats

Enhancement Description
This enhancement consists of restoring habitats recognized by NRCS State Offices as rare or declining.

Land Use Applicability
Cropland, pastureland, rangeland and forestland

Benefits
Restoring rare and declining habitats will provide food, cover, and nesting habitat for native adapted fish and wildlife species, especially grassland nesting birds.

Criteria

1. NRCS State Offices will identify the kinds of habitats applicable as well as the criteria needed (e.g., plant species needed, water depth, etc) to achieve the desired outcome(s). For example, how many acres of undesirable herbaceous species and brush control are needed as well as the frequency of prescribed burning to achieve the desired condition.
2. Acceptance of this enhancement requires that the client must comply with the requirements of Conservation Practice Standard, Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (643).
3. A pre-treatment habitat assessment of the affected area will be documented to provide a baseline for comparison with post-treatment conditions.
4. A management plan covering the length of the contract will be developed for this enhancement activity.
5. During the establishment period, periodic mowing can be used outside of the primary nesting and fawning seasons to help achieve the desired ecological outcome. Grazing may be permitted after establishment if grazing was a historical component of the ecological site. Other agricultural activities such as haying or cropping shall not be done on the site during the contract period.
6. All plant functional groups (species that respond in a similar way to environmental perturbations) native to a site must be restored.

Documentation Requirements

The landowner must document the restoration of rare and declining habitat by providing:

1. Brief written description of the actions taken;
2. Size of the area (acres)
3. Information on establishment of desired vegetation
4. Delineate on a map or aerial photograph the location of the restored habitat