

# Conservation Programs & Practices for: *Forest Interior* Wildlife Habitat

## Species of Benefit

Wildlife that benefit from forest interior habitat and forested corridors include:

- Wood thrush
- Kentucky and cerulean warblers
- Eastern box turtle
- Bats
- Frogs
- Salamanders

The purpose of habitat restoration and management is to maintain or re-establish the attractiveness and productivity of healthy wildlife systems. Effective wildlife management can add value to outdoor recreational activities and the aesthetics of your property, as well as ecological importance. Though no one acre or one area can be all things to all wildlife, through careful planning and discussion we can make the best management choices for species with declining populations.



Photo courtesy of USFWS.

The Wood Thrush breeds in deciduous and mixed forests where there are large trees, moderate understory and abundant leaf litter for foraging.



The Eastern Box Turtle will spend its entire life – which can exceed 100 years – within 250 yards of the nest where it was born.

Ninety-percent of Maryland forest is privately owned, making the decisions of private landowners critical to the future of Maryland forests and the wildlife that depends on them.

Large, contiguous tracts of forest provide habitat for forest interior dwelling species (FIDS). These habitats are typically composed of mature hardwoods and occur at distances of more than 300 feet from the forest edge. Forest habitat may also contain important isolated depressional wetlands.

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance to farmers to restore and manage forest interior habitat in Maryland through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

## What will EQIP pay for?

EQIP provides payments to restore and manage forest interior habitat through activities such as:

- Enhancing existing suitable forest habitat by increasing the total size of contiguous forest, closing gaps in large forest tracts, and increasing the interior-to-edge ratio.
- Establishing new forest plantings or augmenting existing forests.
- Improving forests by use of treatments to remove invasive species and increase vegetative diversity.
- Establishing corridors to large contiguous forest areas.

## Restoration Requirements

- Forests shall be restored to meet or exceed the following size requirements:
  - Forests of at least 50 acres with 10 or more acres of forest interior habitat,
  - Riparian forests of at least 50 acres containing streams, or
  - Forests of at least 10 acres containing isolated depressional wetlands of one acre or more.
- Forested corridors must connect areas meeting any of the priority habitats identified above, and have a minimum forested width of 100 feet.
- Areas established may augment existing suitable habitat areas to meet the minimum.
- Land must be planted to a permanent cover of native trees and shrubs that are similar in composition to local naturally occurring habitat.
- Plantings must be mixed throughout and limited to no more than 25% pine when restoring a mixed pine-hardwood plant community.
- Forested wetland habitats should not be converted to herbaceous or open water wetland habitats, except when the wetland habitat is being restored to its historic and naturally occurring condition.



# NRCS Conservation Programs for Forest Interior Habitat

## About NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with farmers, ranchers, and partners to ensure a sustainable, nutritious and abundant food supply, as well as ensure clean water and healthy soil for generations to come.

For over 75 years, NRCS has provided agricultural producers and private landowners with locally-led assistance to help them implement voluntary conservation practices that protect our state's natural resources while maintaining production and economic opportunities.

Contact your local NRCS service center for more information and assistance.

Allegany: 301-777-1494  
Anne Arundel: 410-571-6757  
Baltimore County: 410-527-5920  
Calvert: 410-535-1521  
Caroline: 410-479-1202  
Carroll: 410-848-6696  
Cecil: 410-398-4411  
Charles: 301-934-9588  
Dorchester: 410-228-5640  
Frederick: 301-695-2803  
Garrett: 301-334-6950  
Harford: 410-838-6181  
Howard: 410-489-7987  
Kent: 410-778-5353  
Montgomery: 301-590-2855  
Prince George's: 301-574-5162  
Queen Anne's: 410-758-1671  
St. Mary's: 301-475-8402  
Somerset: 410-651-0370  
Talbot: 410-822-1577  
Washington: 301-797-0500  
Wicomico: 410-546-4777  
Worcester: 410-632-5439

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by enhancing the environmental quality of soil, water, air, plants and animals.

Farmers can apply for financial and technical assistance for over 100 conservation practices to benefit their land and operations through EQIP.

## Conservation Practices for Forest Interior and Forested Corridor Habitat Restoration and Management

### Conservation Practice:

### Purpose:

Access Control	Restrict or control livestock access to wildlife habitat
Brush Management	Remove woody species using herbicides, mechanical methods, or grazing animals
Deep Tillage	Site prep on abandoned mines for cover establishment
Fence	Exclusion of livestock from wildlife habitat and sensitive areas
Field Border	Establish areas of grasses, forbs, and shrubs along field edges
Firebreak	Temporary or permanent firebreak installed to conduct prescribed burns
Forest Stand Improvement	Treatments to manage species diversity and control invasive species, and thinning to put forest on trajectory to a properly stocked mature forest
Herbaceous Weed Control	Mechanical or herbicidal treatment of invasive or undesirable herbaceous species, or treatment using grazing animals
Prescribed Burning	Site prep for tree and shrub establishment
Tree and Shrub Establishment	Establish areas of trees and shrubs
Tree and Shrub Site Preparation	Mechanical or herbicidal treatment to prepare a site for establishment of trees and shrubs
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	Install and maintain wildlife structures or control herbaceous or woody species that require successive yearly treatments
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	Install and maintain wildlife structures (usually nest boxes) or control herbaceous or woody species that require successive yearly treatments

*Helping People Help the Land*

[www.md.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.md.nrcs.usda.gov)

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.