



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E647C

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Maintain most soil vegetation on cropland edges to enhance waterfowl and shorebird habitat

Conservation Practice 647: Early Successional Habitat Development /Management

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed)

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Animal

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 5 year

Enhancement Description:

The wetter or more water saturated portions of cropland fields such as areas adjacent to field drains, have the potential to produce a significant amount of moist soil plants which are a tremendously valuable source of forage and cover for many waterfowl, shorebird and wading bird species, especially during a period when such plants may be limited. Under normal cropland production, the native vegetation is restricted on these sites through mechanical and/or chemical control. These maintained moist soil plants also will provide filtering and improve water quality.

Criteria:

This enhancement applies to cropland acres on soils that are hydric and/or significantly water saturated during the growing season and are located on the low side or down slope portion of a field that receives hydrologic surface flow from the remainder of the field. Surface flow could be a result of irrigation or rainfall. Selected areas should be capable of being flooded using a water control structure or other means.

- Develop a habitat management plan targeting waterfowl, shore birds and wading birds for the area enrolled under this enhancement.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- Maintain naturally occurring vegetation on the appropriate, selected area (minimum 20 feet wide and 500 feet long) to provide forage and cover for waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds.
- Manipulation (light disking, burning, mowing, or rolling) of the selected area will be allowed during early fall to increase attractiveness and use by targeted species. Otherwise, all mechanical disturbance and chemical treatments shall be excluded from the selected area and care should be taken to ensure that the area is not impacted by agricultural operations in the adjacent crop.
- Control of invasive species may be allowed with approval from local NRCS staff.
- A Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) specific to shallow water habitat on cropland must be used to show that implementation of the Enhancement will improve wildlife habitat value from fair (planning criteria = 0.5) to good (planning criteria greater than 0.5 and less than or equal to 0.6) or from good to very good (planning criteria greater than 0.6).



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Documentation and Implementation Requirements:

Participant Will:

- ☐ Prior to implementation, meet with NRCS to review results of wildlife habitat assessment conducted by NRCS and discuss range of management alternatives that would improve wildlife habitat conditions.
- ☐ Prior to implementation, meet with NRCS to obtain and review Wildlife Habitat Management Plan.
- ☐ During implementation, follow Wildlife Habitat Management Plan.
- ☐ During implementation, maintain field log to include:
 - Crops grown and the harvest date for the crops grown on the applicable acres;
 - Date/time and description of all habitat management actions taken;
 - Digital photographs documenting the condition of the habitat provided
- ☐ After implementation, provide the field log to NRCS for review to verify enhancement was implemented to meet criteria.

NRCS Will:

- ☐ As needed, provide additional technical assistance to the participant.
- ☐ Prior to implementation, verify this enhancement will be applied to crop acres on soils that are hydric and/or significantly water saturated during the growing season and are located on the low side or down slope portion of a field that receives hydrologic surface flow from the remainder of the field. Surface flow could be a result of irrigation or rainfall. Selected areas should be capable of being flooded through the use of a water control structure or other means.
- ☐ Prior to implementation, assess habitat condition using Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide to calculate current WHEG score and anticipated WHEG score after implementation of Enhancement. **Existing WHEG score = _____ Planned Post Implementation WHEG score = _____**
- ☐ Prior to implementation, review results of wildlife habitat evaluation with participant and discuss range of management alternatives that would improve wildlife habitat conditions
- ☐ Prior to implementation, develop Wildlife Habitat Management Plan for targeted suite of species
- ☐ Prior to implementation, meet with participant to review Wildlife Habitat Management Plan



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- ☐ After implementation, reassess habitat condition using Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide; **Post Implementation WHEG score** = _____
- ☐ After implementation, review field log to verify enhancement was implemented to meet criteria.

NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name _____

Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____

Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date

CSP 2020
Mississippi Supplement
E647C

**Establish And Maintain Moist Soil Vegetation On Cropland
Edges To Increase Wildlife Food Sources And Habitat Diversity**

Additional Documentation Requirements:

- **Targeted species: shore birds, wading birds, waterfowl, and amphibians requiring seasonal fish-free habitat.**
- **Mississippi Shallow Water WHEG evaluation must be completed for both before implementation and after implementation of this enhancement. Minimum WHEG value for after implementation must be greater than 0.50.**
- **Map(s) delineating the area that will be treated.**
- **Migratory bird hunting regulations allow hunting of waterfowl over standing crops, flooded standing crops, and harvested croplands. These crops may not be manipulated except by normal agricultural practices. Similar management activities not considered as normal agricultural practices used to produce and harvest a crop could be considered illegal baiting. Land managers should check with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks for applicable hunting and baiting regulations.**