



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E646139Z4

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Shorebird habitat, extended late season shallow water with manipulation to enhance habitat continuity and space

Conservation Practice 646: Shallow Water Development and Management

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed)

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Fish & Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 5 years

Enhancement Description:

Suitable shorebird habitat is limited during the summer and fall as birds migrate south post-breeding. Providing shallow water with manipulation of vegetation creates a network or continuity of habitat required by this suite of migratory birds during a time when it may otherwise be in low abundance. Optimal conditions are created when water levels are slowly reduced through evaporation, which allows for propagation of invertebrates (typically insect larvae) used as food by shorebirds. Manipulation of vegetation, preferably through rolling, creates open conditions required by this suite of birds as a means to detect and avoid predators, and provides nutrient inputs for invertebrate production.

Criteria:

This enhancement applies to crop land use acres with leveed fields that are capable of holding 8 to 18 inches of water mid-spring with capabilities for retaining that water until August 31, and will have less than 25 percent woody cover.

- Develop a wildlife habitat management plan for the targeted species suite.
- Water control structures affecting the subject land use acre are to remain closed catching and holding all available precipitation, until late-summer (i.e., August 31).
- Sites must contain 8 to 18 inches of water.



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- Manipulate vegetation on the site, if after June 15, the site becomes dry with emergent vegetation covering 50 percent or more, at a height of 6 inches or more. Manipulation by rolling or disking to bring the majority (75 percent or more) of the vegetation at or below the soil surface. Rolling is the preferred method of manipulation to maintain soil quality.
- The need for vegetative manipulation will be triggered by the above stated scenario. However, multiple manipulations may be needed to achieve the desired habitat response.
- 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).

Note: This Enhancement may be grouped with E646139Z2- Close structures and extend retention of captured rainfall to provided late winter habitat for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

Documentation Requirements:

- Copy of the wildlife habitat management plan for the targeted species suite (including the WHEG scores for present and planned conditions).
- Field log to include:
 - Crops grown and the harvest date for the crops grown on the applicable acres;
 - Date/time the water control structure was closed;
 - Date/time of each field visit and observed water levels;
 - Date/time when the water control structures were opened;
 - Date/time and method used to manipulate vegetation.
- The percent of field manipulated and the pattern in which it was manipulated.
- Digital photographs of the condition of the structures and the habitat provided.

The enhancement is considered adopted when the water control structure affecting the land use acre remains closed thus holding 8 to 18 inches of water thru late summer.