



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E647137Z2

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Establish and maintenance of moist soil vegetation on cropland edges to increase wildlife cover, shelter and habitat diversity

Conservation Practice 647: Early Successional Habitat Development /Management

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed)

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Fish & Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 5 years

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 of time 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 through the use of 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.



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- 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).

Documentation Requirements:

- Copy of the wildlife habitat management plan for the targeted species suite (including the WHEG scores for present and planned conditions).
- Digital photograph of the acreage depicting winter flooding.
- Map depicting location and dimensions of areas established in naturally occurring moist soil vegetation.

This enhancement is adopted after naturally occurring moist soil vegetation has been established and the area is flooded following harvest of adjacent cropland.