



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E647139Z2

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Provide early successional habitat between first rice crop and ratoon crop to support space and continuity for wildlife

Conservation Practice 647: Early Successional Habitat Development /Management

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed)

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Fish & Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Enhancement Description:

Many declining suites of wildlife species rely on early successional habitats for at least part of their life cycle needs. Migratory shorebird species in particular rely on open, moist soil or shallowly flooded conditions for foraging and security. Rice farms support many migratory and resident water bird species. The first rice crop harvest often coincides with the arrival of early migrating shorebirds and can provide necessary habitat continuity and space. If standing rice stubble from the first crop is rolled to push above-ground stalks level with the soil surface, the first component of this type of habitat is met. When moisture is added to this situation, short-term habitat is available until the ratoon crop initiates growth to a height beyond that which would provide benefit to the early successional species.

Criteria:

This enhancement applies to crop land use acres with leveed fields where a ratoon crop is grown.

- Develop a wildlife habitat management plan for the suite of species targeted.

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- Immediately after first crop rice harvest, the standing rice stubble is forced to the soil surface with a rolling implement.
- Close water control structure affecting the planned area no later than two days after harvest.
- Capture ephemeral moisture and/or encouraged moist soil conditions.
- 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 E646139Z1-Close structures to capture and retain rainfall for waterfowl and wading birds during winter or E646139Z2 -Close structures and extend retention of captured rainfall to provide enhanced food sources and late winter habitat for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.



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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 with leveed fields where a ratoon crop is grown.
- 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.
- 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.

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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.

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Participant Name _____

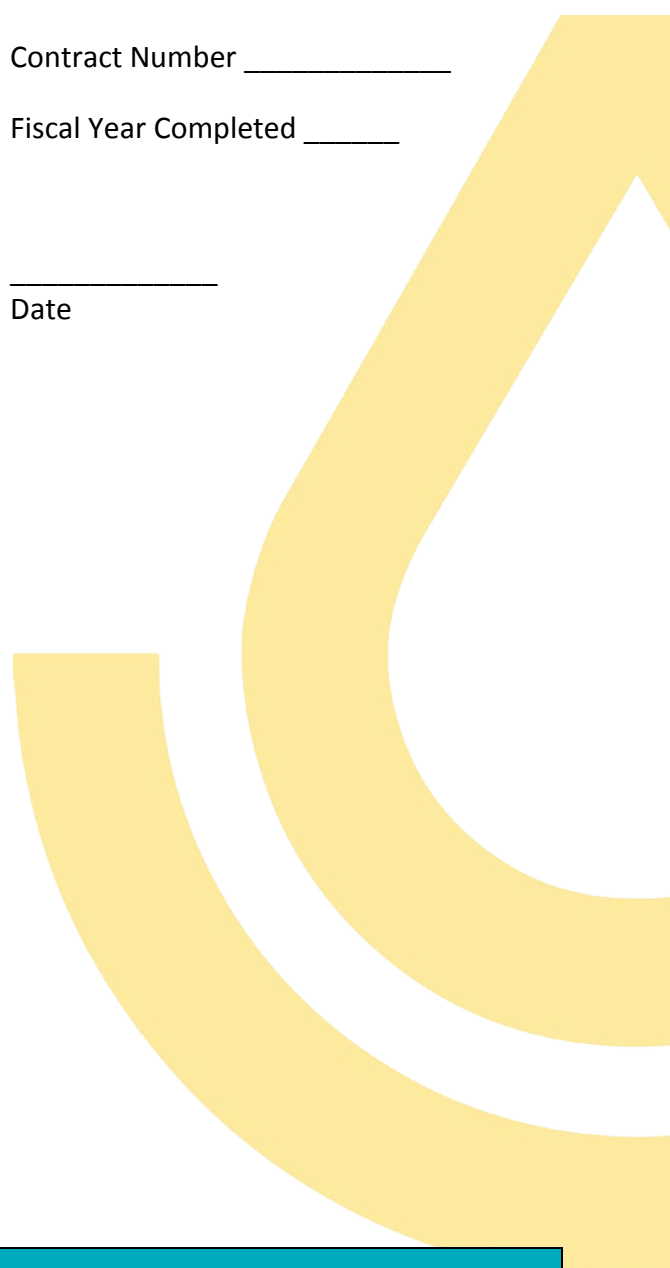
Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____

Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date



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