

# (327) Conservation Cover—Permanent Wildlife Planting

## FY 2017 Environmental Quality Incentives Program Requirement Sheet

A site- and species-specific wildlife habitat management plan is preferred for all EQIP applications. If no such plan has been approved by the NRCS area biologist or NRCS partner biologist, the conservation planners must follow this requirement sheet to address limiting habitat factors identified in the TN NRCS Wildlife Habitat Appraisal Guide (WHAG).

**Eligible lands:** Private agricultural land and private nonindustrial forestland using permanent herbaceous wildlife plantings consisting of either (1) native warm and cool season grass and forb mixtures, or (2) pollinator mixtures.

### EQIP Permanent Wildlife Planting Practice Requirements:

1. Soil test required for all permanent herbaceous plants and temporary cover using legumes. (University of Tennessee or any certified NAPTP Lab). Sample areas of contrasting soils, problem spots or portions of fields significantly different separately, provided the area can be fertilized separately (i.e. bottomland and upland soils). See UT publication PB 1061 ([UT PB1061](#)) for soil sampling information.
  - a. **For NWSG mixtures**, if pH is 5.0 or higher apply no lime; if lower apply 2 tons per acre. Do not apply fertilizer at planting.
  - b. **For pollinator mixtures, shrubs or temporary cover (unless legumes are used)**, apply no lime or fertilizer.
2. Do not hay seeded areas for the contract life. Areas may be grazed for wildlife habitat maintenance (outside of the nesting season) as approved by the NRCS area biologist.
3. **Pollinator Habitat with Shrub Component.** In conjunction with the pollinator mixture, establish a shrub component of at least 2.5% up to 30% of the pollinator acreage as either a thicket (block planting) or linear planting. Shrub block plantings shall be a minimum 0.06 acres (50-foot by 50-foot or equivalent size in different shape), not to exceed 0.25 acres. The shrub component must consist of at least three species (only one sumac species) planted on an 8x8 foot spacing between 12/1 and 4/1.
4. **Pollinator Species Minimum.** Planting must include (as a minimum) three early, three mid, and three late flowering species.
5. **Natural Regeneration.** Natural regeneration is acceptable on B slopes (5% or less). It's acceptable on C slopes (slopes of 5-12 percent) only if some ground cover is present to minimize soil erosion and other off-site impacts. However, natural regeneration may be allowed on steeper slopes if RUSLE2 indicates soil erosion is not a resource concern.
6. **Interseeding.** Payment includes proper seedbed preparation through use of disking and herbicide, if required. Areas will be seeded by using conventional till or no-till seeding methods. No fertilizer is required. A minimum 7 forb species of 2 PLS pounds of forbs shall be planted.
7. Use herbicides in accordance with the label. Tame grasses are required to be chemically eradicated prior to establishment of the field border. Tame grasses include any prostrate or sod-forming grasses including such species as tall fescue and Bermudagrass. NRCS will not provide herbicide recommendations.
8. **Data clearly show labeled native grasses and forbs are best able to establish following labeled imazapic applications and rates<sup>1</sup>. Its use will be required unless waived by the NRCS area biologist or NRCS partner biologist.**

### <sup>1</sup>REFERENCES

Harper, C.A., G.D. Morgan, and C.E. Dixon. 2003. Establishing native warm-season grasses using conventional and no-till technology with various applications of Plateau herbicide. Proceedings Eastern Native Grass Symposium 3:63-70.

Harper, C.A., G.E. Bates, M.P. Hansbrough, M.J. Gudlin, J.P. Gruchy, and P.D. Keyser. 2007. Native warm-season grasses: Identification, establishment, and management for wildlife and forage production in the Mid-South. UT Extension, PB 1752. Knoxville, TN. 189 pages. ISBN 978-0-9795165-0-4.

Harper, C.A. and J.P. Gruchy. 2009. Conservation practices to promote quality early successional wildlife habitat. In, Burger Jr., L.W. and K.O. Evans (eds.), Managing working lands for northern bobwhite: The USDA NRCS Bobwhite Restoration Project. Washington, D.C.

Follow FY 2017 Approved Seeding Mixtures document for species selection, rates, and mixtures. NRCS area biologist or NRCS partner biologist may approve alternative species, rates, and mixtures.