

Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative: Golden - Winged Warbler

General Guidance: The purpose of the Golden Winged Warbler Initiative (GWW) is to help participants develop and maintain GWW habitat on private agricultural land, or nonindustrial private forest land.

- Agricultural Land — refers to cropland, grassland, rangeland, pastureland, and other land determined by NRCS to be suitable for fish and wildlife habitat development on which agricultural and forest-related products or livestock are produced or have the potential to be produced. Agricultural land may include cropped woodland, wetlands, waterways, streams, incidental areas included in the agricultural operation, and other types of land used for, or that have the potential to be used for, agricultural production.
- Nonindustrial Private Forestland — refers to rural land that has existing tree cover or is suitable for growing trees and is owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian Tribe, or other private legal entity that has definitive decision making authority over the land.
- The term “wildlife” means non-domesticated birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, and mammals.
- The term “wildlife habitat” means the aquatic and terrestrial environments required for fish and wildlife to complete their life cycles, providing air, food, cover, water, and spatial requirements.
- An applicant proposing to implement a structural or vegetative practice funded through an EQIP agreement on rented or leased land must obtain written concurrence from the landowner or owners at the time of application that specifically grants the applicant permission to install, operate, and maintain the conservation practice for the lifespan of the conservation practice as defined in the cost-share agreement. This authorization is needed in addition to the evidence of control of land.

Practices:

- Application must contain at least one core practice

CORE PRACTICES	SUPPORTING PRACTICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 643 Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats• 644 Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management• 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management• 647 Early Successional Habitat Development/Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 314 Brush Management• 315 Herbaceous Weed Control• 324 Deep Tillage• 327 Conservation Cover• 338 Prescribed Burning• 342 Critical Area Planting• 382 Fence• 386 Field Border• 394 Firebreak• 472 Access Control• 484 Mulching• 490 Tree Shrub Site Preparation• 528 Prescribed Grazing• 612 Tree/Shrub Establishment

Supporting Practice and Conservation Measures - Guidance

314 - Brush Management

GWW Conservation Measures:

- Whenever possible avoid nesting season.
- Post implementation goal is patchy distribution of 30-60% tree sapling/shrub cover across the targeted work area.
- If trees are targeted for removal, maintain a minimum of 10-15 trees/acre of which no more than 4 should be conifers.

315 - Herbaceous Weed Control

GWW Conservation Measures:

- Preferably avoid nesting season.
- Herbaceous cover in silviculturally derived (from cutting trees) habitats, 5-25%; and in non-forested habitats, 10-30%. Note the grass component must not exceed 40% (of total herbaceous component). Ground cover (i.e., bare ground/leaf litter) in silviculturally derived habitats, 10-15%; and in non-forested habitats, 10-15%. In either scenario, no herbaceous patch should exceed a 20 ft x 20 ft dimension.

324 - Deep Tillage

Resource Concern: Only used in reclaimed mine sites. Tree/shrub site prep also used.

GWW Conservation Measures:

- Follow recommendations from Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative – Forest Reclamation Advisory No. 7 (ARRI-FRA protocol) for planting hardwoods (8 ft by 8 ft spacing). Contact ARRI for assistance.
- See Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative: www.arri.osmre.gov/fra
- If planting, favor a lower percentage of trees and a higher percentage of shrubs.
- Establish planting approximately 330 ft. distance from residual (existing) forest edge. Once established along forest edge, can establish plantings into the interior of the mine site. Do not plant open areas > 330 ft. from existing exterior forest edge.

327 - Conservation Cover

GWW Conservation Measures:

- Herbaceous planting should not exceed 20 x 20 ft dimension.
- Silviculturally derived management (from cutting trees): A minimum of 5-25% herbaceous ground cover; grass component not to exceed 40% (of the total herbaceous component)
- Shrubland creation/management: A minimum of 10-30% herbaceous ground cover; grass component not to exceed 40% (of the total herbaceous component).
- Grain crops such as wheat, corn, milo, millet are not appropriate and should not be planted.
- Seed mixes shall be state-certified, meeting the appropriate state certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material, if it exists.

338 - Prescribed Burning

Resource Concern: Fire has played an important role in creating and maintaining habitat for the GWW across many parts of its range. In the absence of wildfires, prescribed burns are a likely management tool for both creating and maintaining GWW habitat, particularly in upland sites.

Note: Potential Beneficial Effect(s) to GWW: Prescribed burning is used to maintain or restore forest conditions needed for GWW. Target areas and defined objective(s) will be clearly stated with intended goals to be addressed for each client defined management unit.

Note: Potential Adverse Effect(s) to GWW: Accidental injury or mortality of nesting bird or eggs may occur if the burn is conducted during the nesting or brood-rearing seasons. In addition, a temporary reduction of cover for GWW may occur for one to three years.

GWW Conservation Measures:

- If possible, defer implementation outside of the GWW nesting season (mid-April to July).
- From: Draft: Golden-Winged Warbler Status Review and Conservation Plan," 2012, Table 3-4, page 3-33. Suggested management techniques:
 - Use prescribed burning to thin excessive canopy cover of fire intolerant trees.
 - To favor high herbaceous cover with low woody cover, reduce frequency and/or intensity of burning.
 - Use late, growing season burns to promote grass and forb growth.
 - Use annual burning for 2 – 3 successive years, or until shrub cover is reduced to the desired amount. Once desired shrub cover is attained, discontinue annual burning and burn as regularly as needed.

342 - Critical Area Planting

Resource Concern: When concern over soil erosion trumps habitat (e.g. a steep skid trail) for treatment.

GWW Conservation Measures:

- Management plan should indicate that the area treated should not be managed following establishment, in order to allow (natural plant) succession to occur.
- Grain crops such as wheat, corn, milo, millet are not appropriate and should not be planted. Use annual rye (50lb/acre) to facilitate natural succession.

382 - Fence

GWW Conservation Measures: Only to be used with Access Control.

386 - Field Borders

Note: Potential Adverse Effect(s) to GWW: Creating sinks due to elevated predation associated with narrow strips of habitat.

GWW Conservation Measures:

- Field borders must be adjacent to mature forest and/or additional GWW habitat. Field borders extend into the field not into the forest.
- Planting must be in close proximity to a forest edge and must be >125 ft wide.
- Post implementation goal is patchy distribution of 30-60% tree sapling/shrub cover across the targeted work area, with a minimum of 10-30% herbaceous ground cover, and a grass component not to exceed 40% (of the total herbaceous component).
- If use of this practice results in less than 2 acres contiguous GWW habitat, it shall not be used. It is recommend that ANY (overall) project should result in no less than 10 acres of (contiguous) GWW habitat. It was the consensus of the Service (FWS), NRCS, and partners team reviewing and conditioning the proposed practices that all NRCS landowner plans associated with WLFW - GWW will require no less than 10 acres of GWW habitat, either 10 acres of new habitat, or 5 acres of existing treated and 5 acres of new habitat, or a similar combination equaling 10 acres.
- When possible, use this practice in conjunction with forest management practices that will create additional GWW habitat.

394 - Fire Break

GWW Conservation Measures: If possible, avoid nesting season.

472 - Access Control

GWW Conservation Measures: None necessary.

484 - Mulching (484)

Resource Concern: Facilitating practice used in conjunction with critical area planting.

GWW Conservation Measures: None necessary.

490 - Tree Shrub Site Preparation (490)

GWW Conservation Measures:

- When doing site preparation on compacted mine soils, follow :
“Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative – Forest Reclamation Advisory No. 7,” (ARRI-FRA protocol) for planting hardwoods (8 ft by 8 ft spacing). Also see also Conservation Practice 324 above).
Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative www.arri.osmre.gov/fra.
Contact ARRI for assistance.
- When possible, avoid GWW nesting season if working on a site with existing GWW.

528 - Conservation Practice Standard: Prescribed Grazing (528)

GWW Conservation Measures:

- In existing GWW habitat, avoid grazing during the GWW nesting season unless it is low intensity grazing (1 animal unit per 5 to 10 acres). When using this practice to create habitat in areas currently lacking GWW, use the US Forest Service’s grazing allotment criteria with GWW that allows “3-6 acres per animal unit from 15 May to 1 October”.
- Prescribed grazing plans should target creation or maintenance of GWW habitat. To create high herbaceous cover but low woody cover, reduce frequency and intensity of grazing since grazing can reduce shrub density.
- Use in conjunction with stream fencing (Conservation Practices 382 or 472) to create permanently ungrazed areas which will allow for additional habitat patchiness.
- Every 2 years cease grazing completely for 1-2 years to allow vegetation to recover.

612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment

GWW Conservation Measures:

- Conifers shall not be used.
- Use native deciduous trees and shrubs. Preferred species for planting will be identified by the NRCS State Biologist and results from range-wide GWW breeding range study.
- Ultimate goal is a minimum of 10-15 surviving trees per acre. If planting, factor in survival rates.
- Post implementation goal is patchy distribution of 30-60% tree sapling/shrub cover across the project area.
- Select a suite of shrubs that will enhance vertical diversity (a mix of short and tall statured shrubs).
- If possible, >50% of planted shrubs should be planted in clumps (<7 ft. apart).
- Shrub management composition target: tall woody, 7 ft at maturity, 5-25%; and short woody, <3 ft at maturity, 5-15%.
- In silviculturally derived habitats (from cutting trees) composition target: tall woody, 5-35%, and short woody, 10-30%.

Screening Tool:

- High Priority - Applications within the target species “Focal Area” where a Core practice will be applied on all treated acres OR in instances where a Supporting practice is necessary to implement the Core practice, where a Core or Supporting practice will be applied on all treated acres.
- Medium Priority - Applications outside the target species “Focal Area”, where a Core practice will be applied AND in accordance with the state determined criteria that identifies which applications are likely to rank highly and benefit the species. This category also includes those applications within the “Focal Area” where a core practice will not be installed on the entire contract acres.
- Low Priority – Applications where a Core practice will not be applied and any other application.

Approved Land Types:

- Forest - Nonindustrial Private Forestland — refers to rural land that has existing tree cover or is suitable for growing trees and is owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian Tribe, or other private legal entity that has definitive decision making authority over the land;
- Cropland,
- Pasture.

ProTracts Guidance:

- Application Type: Conventional



Toolkit Guidance:

- 647 Narrative for ESH Forest Opening

GWW-To create healthy young forest habitat to benefit the Golden-Winged Warbler ensure that desirable seedlings are present before overstory trees are removed. Trees and invasive shrubs will be cut in these areas, leaving 10 to 15 trees of 9 inches diameter or greater (at breast height) per acre and leaving all non-invasive shrubs. Trees to be retained in the stand will be marked by a qualified forester and include oak, cherry, hickory, black locust, sugar maple, serviceberry, and snags. The trees left will be evenly spaced throughout the cut area, or where sunscald or wind-throw is of concern, small islands of trees will be created

within the cut area. Where possible, the amount of edge will be increased by adjusting the shape of the cut area and/or creating feathered edges of gradual transition from cut area to mature forest. Maximizing irregularity of the perimeter increases available forest edges. Consult NRCS before beginning cutting operations. Save any large dead trees (snags) that have cavities and/or loose bark to provide habitat for bats and cavity nesters (woodpeckers, squirrels, raccoons, and some songbirds). Retain, if available, a minimum of six snags greater than 9 inches in diameter per acre. In order to minimize accidental felling or damage to residual trees and snags, all snags should be marked by a qualified forester. If no snags are present create at least two snags per acre by hack and squirt or girdling. Operation and Maintenance: Periodic inspections after treatment activities are necessary to ensure that purposes are achieved. The results of inspections shall determine the need for additional treatment under this practice. To minimize disturbance during the breeding season, when possible, management activities for Golden-winged Warbler should occur from April through August. See job sheet for practice specifications and Operation and Maintenance.

[Print](#) [Close](#)

Ranking Tool Summary

for FY2016 - Golden Winged-Warbler

(Released 01/07/2016)

Description:

WLFW – GWW Implementation WLFW - GWW is structured to facilitate landscape-level improvements across the species’ eastern range while recognizing that threats and opportunities differ among ecological zones and within the focal area, Close collaboration of many stakeholders, including local, State, and Federal agencies, tribes, and NGOs, and the Golden-winged Warbler Working Group will ensure that NRCS activities complement efforts already underway. WLFW - GWW provides a multi-tiered framework that allows coordination and implementation in the eastern portion of the GWW’s range. It was the consensus of the Service, NRCS, and partners team reviewing and conditioning the proposed practices that all NRCS landowner plans associated with WLFW - GWW should result in no less than 10 acres of GWW habitat, either 10 acres of new habitat, or 5 acres of existing treated and 5 acres of new habitat, or a similar combination equaling 10 acres. In addition, the conservation measures described for each conservation practice should be implemented in order to achieve the goals of the WLFW-GWW.

Land Uses:

Crop, Farmstead, Forest, Pasture

Efficiency Score:

Scoring Multiplier: 100.000

Optional Notes:

National Priorities:

Scoring Multiplier: 1.000

Questions:

Number	Question	Points
1	a. Is the program application to support the development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)? If answer is "Yes", do not answer any other national level questions. If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250
2	a. Implementing the practices in a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)?	15
2	b. Implementing the practices in a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)?	10
2	c. Reducing impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides on land adjoining a designated "impaired water body" (TMDL, 303d listed waterbody, or other State designation)?	10
2	d. Reducing the impacts from sediment, nutrients, salinity, or pesticides in a "non-impaired water body"?	10
2	e. Implementing practices that improve water quality through animal mortality and carcass management?	10
3	a. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce aquifer overdraft.	15
3	b. Implementing irrigation practices that reduce on-farm water use?	10
3	c. Implementing practices in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?	10
3	d. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm water use as a result of changing to crops with lower water consumptive use, the rotation of crops, or the modification of cultural operations?	10
4	a. Meeting on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	10

4	b. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm emissions of particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10)?	10
4	c. Implementing practices that reduce on-farm generated greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), and nitrous oxide (N2O)?	10
4	d. Implementing practices that increase on-farm carbon sequestration?	10
5	a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?	10
5	b. Increasing organic matter and carbon content, and improving soil tilth and structure?	10
6	a. Implementing practices benefitting threatened and endangered, at-risk, candidate, or species of concern.	10
6	b. Implementing practices that retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or other set-aside program?	10
6	c. Implementing practices benefitting honey bee populations or other pollinators?	10
6	d. Implementing land-based practices that improve habitat for aquatic wildlife?	10
7	a. Implementing practices that result in the management control of noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?	10
7	b. Implementing practice in an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM)?	10
8	a. Reducing on-farm energy consumption?	10
8	b. Implementing practice(s) identified in an approved AgEMP or energy audit, which meet ASABE S612 criteria?	10
9	a. Enhancement of existing conservation practice(s) or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is received?	10
Total Points		500

State Issues:

Scoring Multiplier: 1.000

Questions:

Sub-heading Number	Question Number	Question	Points
	1	a. Is there credible verification of species occurrence (for example, photos, Heritage Database, USFWS, NRCS or State fish and wildlife agency documentation)? This should not be taken to imply that a site visit is required.	200
	1	b. Based upon available species occurrence data and information, can the target species reasonably be assumed to occur within the offered area?	100
	2	a. The offered area shares a common border with an area with known populations of the target species.	50
	2	b. The offered area is proximal to an area with a known population of the target species. Proximal means within the accepted normal species dispersal ability	35
	3	Will 75% or more of the practices be located within the "Focal Area"?	15
Maximum Points: 400			Total Points: 400

Local Issues:

Scoring Multiplier: 1.000

Questions:

Sub-heading Number	Question Number	Question	Points
1		General Questions	

	1	For a forested project area, is it adjacent to suitable GWWA early successional open land habitat? For an open land project area, it is adjacent to appropriate GWWA forest habitat?	75
	2	The project is in the counties of Lee, Buchanan, Tazewell or Bland (These counties border focal areas in other states but are not part of VA's focal area)	50
	3	The project site is located in a Virginia Important Bird Area	25
2		Elevation of project site - Pick only one elevation	
	1	Project site is =>2200 feet	100
	2	Project site is => 2000 feet, but < 2200 feet	75
		Maximum Points: 250 Total Points	325

Selected Resource Concerns and Practices:

Degraded Plant Condition: Excessive Plant Pest Pressure

- Access Control (472)
- Brush Management (314)
- Conservation Cover (327)
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Early Successional Habitat Development/M (647)
- Field Border (386)
- Firebreak (394)
- Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
- Mulching (484)
- Prescribed Burning (338)
- Prescribed Grazing (528)
- Restoration and Management of Rare and D (643)
- Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)

Degraded Plant Condition: Inadequate Structure and Composition

- Access Control (472)
- Brush Management (314)
- Conservation Cover (327)
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Early Successional Habitat Development/M (647)
- Field Border (386)
- Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
- Prescribed Burning (338)
- Prescribed Grazing (528)
- Restoration and Management of Rare and D (643)
- Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)

Degraded Plant Condition: Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health

- Access Control (472)
- Brush Management (314)
- Conservation Cover (327)
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Deep Tillage (324)
- Early Successional Habitat Development/M (647)
- Fence (382)
- Field Border (386)
- Firebreak (394)
- Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
- Mulching (484)
- Prescribed Burning (338)

- Prescribed Grazing (528)
- Restoration and Management of Rare and D (643)
- Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
- Degraded Plant Condition: Wildfire Hazard, Excessive Biomass Accumulation
 - Access Control (472)
 - Brush Management (314)
 - Firebreak (394)
 - Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
 - Prescribed Burning (338)
 - Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)
- Fish and Wildlife - Inadequate Habitat: Inadequate Habitat - Cover/Shelter
 - Access Control (472)
 - Brush Management (314)
 - Conservation Cover (327)
 - Critical Area Planting (342)
 - Early Successional Habitat Development/M (647)
 - Field Border (386)
 - Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
 - Mulching (484)
 - Prescribed Burning (338)
 - Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - Restoration and Management of Rare and D (643)
 - Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
 - Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
- Fish and Wildlife - Inadequate Habitat: Inadequate Habitat - Food
 - Access Control (472)
 - Brush Management (314)
 - Conservation Cover (327)
 - Critical Area Planting (342)
 - Early Successional Habitat Development/M (647)
 - Field Border (386)
 - Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
 - Mulching (484)
 - Prescribed Burning (338)
 - Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - Restoration and Management of Rare and D (643)
 - Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
 - Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
- Fish and Wildlife - Inadequate Habitat: Inadequate Habitat - Habitat Continuity (Space)
 - Access Control (472)
 - Brush Management (314)
 - Conservation Cover (327)
 - Critical Area Planting (342)
 - Early Successional Habitat Development/M (647)
 - Field Border (386)
 - Firebreak (394)
 - Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
 - Prescribed Burning (338)
 - Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - Restoration and Management of Rare and D (643)
 - Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
 - Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
- Fish and Wildlife - Inadequate Habitat: Inadequate Habitat - Water
 - Access Control (472)

- Restoration and Management of Rare and D (643)
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
- Livestock Production Limitation: Inadequate Feed and Forage
 - Access Control (472)
 - Brush Management (314)
 - Deep Tillage (324)
 - Early Successional Habitat Development/M (647)
 - Fence (382)
 - Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
 - Prescribed Burning (338)
 - Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - Restoration and Management of Rare and D (643)
 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
 - Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
- Livestock Production Limitation: Inadequate Shelter
 - Access Control (472)
 - Prescribed Burning (338)
 - Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
- Livestock Production Limitation: Inadequate Water
 - Access Control (472)
- Soil Erosion: Sheet and Rill Erosion
 - Access Control (472)
 - Brush Management (314)
 - Conservation Cover (327)
 - Critical Area Planting (342)
 - Fence (382)
 - Field Border (386)
 - Firebreak (394)
 - Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
 - Mulching (484)
 - Prescribed Burning (338)
 - Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - Restoration and Management of Rare and D (643)
 - Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
 - Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)
 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- Soil Erosion: Streambank, Shoreline, Water Conveyance Channels
 - Access Control (472)
 - Conservation Cover (327)
 - Critical Area Planting (342)
 - Field Border (386)
 - Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
 - Mulching (484)
 - Prescribed Burning (338)
 - Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- Soil Erosion: Wind Erosion
 - Access Control (472)
 - Brush Management (314)
 - Conservation Cover (327)
 - Critical Area Planting (342)
 - Field Border (386)
 - Firebreak (394)
 - Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
 - Mulching (484)
 - Prescribed Burning (338)
 - Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - Restoration and Management of Rare and D (643)
 - Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)

5.2.1.22776