



TWRA NEWS

CONTACT: Lee Wilmot
P.O. Box 40747
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
615-781-6508

615-781-6543 (fax)
E-Mail: lee.wilmot@state.tn.us
Hearing Impaired TDD # 615-781-6691
Website: www.tnwildlife.org

---For Immediate Release:

NEW QUAIL HABITAT PRACTICE IN STATE IS GAINING INTEREST

NASHVILLE --- The new SAFE (State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement) CP38E Bobwhite Habitat Restoration practice in Tennessee is gaining interest among cropland owners and operators in 20 middle and west Tennessee counties. Last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) granted approval for some new state-specific wildlife practices in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Submitting offers is easy as enrollment is open on a continuous (ongoing) basis in 10 to 15 year contracts, and attractive due to great incentive payments and resulting wildlife habitat.

This new CRP practice is targeted to provide critical habitat to help recover declining populations of bobwhite quail and other native grassland and shrubland birds, such as field sparrows, eastern meadowlarks, loggerhead shrikes, and dickcissels. With limited acres currently allocated by USDA (6,000 acres in Tennessee), counties with the highest perceived potential for quail response were chosen as the focus area for this practice. The eligible area includes Carroll, Coffee, Crockett, Dyer, Fayette, Franklin, Gibson, Giles, Haywood, Henry, Lauderdale, Lincoln, Madison, Maury, Montgomery, Obion, Robertson, Sumner, Tipton and Weakley counties.

Cropland producers can offer whole or partial field enrollments to be established in native grasses and broadleaf plants, plus native shrub thickets and/or hedgerows of species like wild plum and crabapple. Optional food plots of up to 10 percent of the enrolled acreage can also be established.

“Aside from the attractive financial incentives, the beauty of this Bobwhite Habitat practice for farmers is the flexibility to enroll an entire field or selected partial field sections, such as several acres of rolling land in the middle, while continuing to keep the best areas in crop production,” West Tennessee NRCS biologist Mike Hansbrough said. “Previous to now, whole field enrollments were restricted to general CRP signups, where the farmer’s offer was in competition with offers from other farmers around the country.”

As long as the land and the landowner/producer meet eligibility requirements, offers are automatically approved.

In addition to an annual CRP rental payment based on the predominant soil rental rates, SAFE participants will also receive 50 percent cost-share for cover establishment, an extra 40 percent cover establishment Practice Incentive Payment, and a \$100 per acre Signing Incentive Payment that is received up-front upon contract approval.

“For persons with eligible land, this is by far the best practice we have combining great financial incentives along with the ability to incorporate the best all-around wildlife habitat in a comprehensive approach,” Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) Private Lands Biologist Clint Borum said. “With over one-third of the practice acres enrolled so far, interested landowners need to apply for this practice soon.”

Producers can learn about their eligibility and offer land for enrollment in SAFE and other CRP practices at their local USDA Service Center.

---TWRA---