

GAME BIRD HABITAT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

THE OBJECTIVE

Since 96 percent of the land in Indiana is privately owned, the majority of our game bird populations are dependent on the availability of habitat on private lands for their survival. Unfortunately, this habitat is in short supply. The main objective of the Game Bird Habitat Development Program is to encourage landowners to develop game bird habitat by reducing the cost of its development and management. Landowners may receive reimbursement for up to \$100 per acre for creating and/or maintaining game bird habitat.

DO YOU QUALIFY?

You are eligible if:

1. You own or exercise control over 10 or more acres; and
2. You are willing to protect and maintain the habitat improvement for a period of 3 or more years; and
3. The parcel to be developed is a minimum of five acres and a maximum of 40 acres in size; and
4. The habitat created through this program is designed to improve habitat for bobwhite quail, ring-necked pheasant, ruffed grouse or wild turkey; and
5. The parcel to be developed is not part of a licensed or commercial hunting preserve.

WHAT TYPES OF PRACTICES ARE ELIGIBLE?

Permanent Herbaceous Cover - the establishment of cool season grasses, warm season grasses, legumes, and forbs (wildflowers) to provide nesting, brood-rearing, and loafing/roosting cover. Payment may be provided for seed, ground preparation, lime, fertilizer, herbicide and the cost of planting, rental of equipment, or contracting for a completed project.

Permanent Woody Cover - the establishment of tree and shrub windbreaks, corridors, and coverts to provide protective nesting, brood-rearing, loafing/roosting, and winter cover. Payment may be provided for planting materials, ground preparation, herbicide and the cost of planting, rental of equipment, or contracting for a completed project.

Vegetation Management - the application of practices that modify succession or the existing vegetation to improve game bird habitat, such as strip disking, strip spraying, fescue eradication, woodland edge enhancement and the creation of forest regeneration openings. Cost-sharing may be provided for ground preparation, herbicide and the cost of planting, rental of equipment, or contracting for a completed project.

Fencing - Payment may be provided for fencing where the exclusion of livestock will substantially improve game bird habitat.

Other Practices - Payment may be provided for other practices if they are determined by the inspecting district wildlife biologist to be of value in improving and maintaining game bird habitat on private land.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

1. A person wishing to apply funding must first contact their District Wildlife Biologist and make arrangements to discuss the wildlife practices to be developed at an on-site visit.
2. The District Wildlife Biologist will then prepare a development agreement listing the specific practices that both parties agree need to be implemented; including the estimated costs of materials and contracted services. All payments will be based on prevailing local prices for labor, materials or services. The applicant or landowner may be required to show purchase receipts and may be requested to obtain written quotes for materials and services.
3. Upon receipt of the agreement, the applicant should review the practice specifications, estimated costs, and the dollar amount the Division of Fish and Wildlife agrees to pay the landowner or applicant upon completion of the practices. If the applicant agrees with its contents, the applicant should then sign the development agreement and return it to the District Wildlife Biologist.
4. The biologist will then forward the agreement to the Private Lands Program Coordinator for final approval. Upon approval, the Coordinator will send a notification letter and a signed copy of the development agreement to the landowner or applicant, signifying the Division's commitment to provide game bird habitat development funding.
5. Upon completion of the practices outlined in the agreement, the applicant must contact the District Wildlife Biologist for a final inspection of the completed work. Applicants should retain a copy of all receipts for materials and services for the biologist's review.
6. Payment will be made according to the amount agreed upon in the contract. The applicant should receive payment within 3 to 4 weeks after the final inspection.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE PROGRAM?

1. All practices must be completed by December 15 of the following year.
2. The Division of Fish and Wildlife will not be liable for any non-payment of charges for materials, labor or services contracted by the landowner or applicant in response to the game bird habitat development agreement.
3. Agreements extending beyond one project year will be considered; however, the extension beyond one year will be subject to a yearly review and approval by both parties.
4. No payment will be made without final inspection and certification by the District Wildlife Biologist.
5. The maximum payment for any practice will not exceed \$100 per acre per year.

6. The practice lifespan must be a minimum of three years.
7. If additional cost-share funding for the same practice development is received from other sources (including other State, Federal, or private sources) payment through this program will be reduced so that the total of all cost-share assistance received does not exceed 100 percent of the project's total cost.
8. Practice sites must be a minimum size of 5 acres and a maximum size of 40 acres.
9. The landowner does not relinquish ownership or control of his property.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. *Are private groups and organizations eligible?*
ANSWER: Private groups or organizations are eligible for the program if the practice occurs on private land.
2. *What happens if a landowner fails to comply with the cost-share agreement?*
ANSWER: The penalty for failure to comply with the development agreement will be no payment and potential loss of eligibility for future financial habitat development assistance.
3. *Can areas developed with game bird habitat development funds be hunted?*
ANSWER: Landowners taking part in the Game Bird Habitat Development Program do not relinquish ownership or control of their property. According to state law, hunters must obtain the landowner's permission before hunting on private land.
4. *What happens if the actual expenses exceed the estimated practice costs?*
ANSWER: According to the agreement, the Division of Fish and Wildlife will pay the landowner or applicant only the amount equal to the estimated cost of the practice or the actual cost, whichever is less. The applicant should obtain written quotes for all estimated costs to reduce the chance of increased costs later on.
5. *What happens if only a portion of the practices specified in the agreement are completed?*
ANSWER: If only a portion of the practices specified in the agreement are completed, then the Division of Fish and Wildlife will pay the applicant an amount equal to the estimated cost of the practices that have been completed.
6. *I would like to develop game bird habitat on my land, but I don't know what is needed. Is there someone who can help me?*
ANSWER: Our District Wildlife Biologists are competent, technically trained biologists. One of their duties is to assist landowners with wildlife management. They will be able to make helpful suggestions for improving game bird habitat on your property.