

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**  
**CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**UPLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT**

(Ac.)  
**CODE 645**

**DEFINITION**

Provide and manage upland habitats and connectivity within the landscape for wildlife.

**PURPOSE**

Treating upland wildlife habitat concerns identified during the conservation planning process that enable movement, or provide shelter, cover, and food in proper amounts, locations and times to sustain wild animals that inhabit uplands during a portion of their life cycle.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

Land where the decision maker has identified an objective for conserving a wild animal species, guild, suite or ecosystem.

Land within the range of targeted wildlife species and capable of supporting the desired habitat.

**CRITERIA****General Criteria Applicable to all Purposes**

A habitat evaluation or appraisal, approved by the NRCS state office, shall be used to identify habitat-limiting factors in the planning area.

The following habitat elements will be considered when assessing wildlife habitat. Not all may apply to every habitat type.

1. Food

- a. Type
- b. Amount
2. Cover
  - a. Type
  - b. Amount
3. Water
  - a. Quality
  - b. Accessibility
  - c. Seasonal availability
4. Interspersion and Distance to
  - a. Crops
  - b. Grasses or legumes
  - c. Shrubs and trees
  - d. Water
5. Migration
  - a. Routes
  - b. Corridors
  - c. Season of use

Application of this practice shall remove or reduce limiting factor(s) in their order of significance, as indicated by results of the habitat evaluation.

Application of this practice alone, or in combination with other supporting and facilitating practices, shall result in a conservation system that will enable the planning area to meet or exceed the minimum

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quality criteria for wildlife habitat established in Section III of the FOTG.

Establish additional criteria for components of this practice including, but not limited to:

- vegetation establishment for shelter, food and to enable movement;
- structural measures to provide shelter, food or enable movement; and
- manipulation of vegetation to sustain desirable habitat conditions over time.

Plant material specifications shall include only high quality and adapted species.

Site preparation, planting dates, and planting methods shall optimize vegetation survival and growth.

Equipment travel, grazing, haying and other disturbance to habitat shall be restricted during critical periods such as nesting, brood rearing, fawning or calving seasons. States may establish exceptions when certain disturbance causing activities are necessary to maintain the health of the plant community and control noxious weeds.

Control of regulated noxious weeds and invasive plants shall be specified.

## CONSIDERATIONS

This practice may affect the target species as well as non-target species through mechanisms such as hunting, predation, disease transmission, nest parasitism, etc. Consider effects of this practice on species with declining populations.

Wildlife population control may be necessary to protect and maintain certain habitats. This is a responsibility of the landowner. State and federal regulations may apply to population control methods.

Undisturbed areas conserved at a sufficient extent during management activities, may sustain disturbance-intolerant animals and plants.

Other conservation practices that may be utilized in conjunction with this practice to create a wildlife management plan include:

Pasture & Hay Planting (512)

Wildlife Watering Facility (648)

Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647)

Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (643)

Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

Range Planting (550)

Prescribed Grazing (528)

Prescribed Burning (338)

Forage Harvest Management (511)

Use Exclusion (472)

Riparian Forest Buffer (391)

Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)

Forest Stand Improvement (666)

## PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

NRCS shall ensure that plans and specifications for this practice are prepared by persons with adequate training in the fields of wildlife management, biology or ecology.

Written specifications, schedules and maps shall be prepared for each planning area and each habitat type.

Specifications shall:

- Identify the amounts and kinds habitat elements, locations and management actions necessary to achieve the client's management objectives.
- Describe the appropriate method, timing and intensity of management needed to produce the desired habitat conditions and sustain them over time.

Specifications shall be transmitted to clients using NRCS approved specifications sheets, job sheets, or customized narrative statements included in the conservation plan.

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## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

The following actions shall be carried out to ensure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life:

- Evaluate habitat conditions on a regular basis in order to adapt the conservation plan and schedule of implementation.
- Annually inspect and repair structural or vegetative components of this practice.

## **REFERENCES**

Bolen, Eric and William Robinson. 2002. Wildlife Ecology and Management 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Prentice Hall, 656 pp.

Bookhout, T.A. (ed.). 1996. Research and Management Techniques for Wildlife and Habitats, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Wildlife Society, 740 pp

Rayne, Neil F. and Fred C. Bryant. 1994. Techniques for Wildlife Habitat Management of Uplands. McGraw-Hill, Inc., 841 pp.

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