

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

UPLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT

(Acre)

CODE 645

DEFINITION

Creating, restoring, maintaining, or enhancing areas for food, cover, and water for upland wildlife and species which use upland habitat for a portion of their life cycle.

PURPOSE

Several conservation practices may be applied as part of a wildlife system to accomplish one or more of the following resource management objectives:

- Provide a variety of food for desired wildlife species.
- Provide a variety of cover types for the desired wildlife species. Examples include nesting, fawning, loafing, resting, escape, travel lanes, and thermal/protection.
- Provide drinking water for the desired wildlife species.
- Arrange habitat elements in proper amounts and locations to benefit desired species.
- Manage the wildlife habitat to achieve the wildlife population within a certain geographic area.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On lands that are suitable for the kinds of wildlife habitat that are needed by the desired species or the natural community under consideration.

CRITERIA

General

Food and cover requirements for wildlife may be provided by habitat elements that are part of other existing or proposed management systems or land uses. The habitat elements fulfilling the

food and cover requirements and their management must be identified in the management plan.

Development and management options to achieve the above will be based on the Kansas Wildlife Habitat Assessment Guide (KWHAG) in the Wildlife Interpretations Section that is found in Kansas Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) Section II. For information on the species of choice, refer to the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management (FWHM) leaflets that are posted under the Technical Notes Section on the homepage of the Wildlife Habitat Management Institute:

<http://www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov/whmi/>

The appraisal or evaluation procedure(s) will be used to determine habitat value for individual fields, operating units, farms, entire properties, watersheds, home range areas, habitat types, and ecosystems.

In addition to KWHAG, Form KS-ECS-17, an appraisal for the ring-necked pheasant, and Form KS-ECS-18, an appraisal for the bobwhite quail, are optional species-specific appraisals for use, where applicable, by wildlife planners.

All Kansas field offices have the publication, Private Lands Wildlife Management (PLWM). It is a technical reference and a correspondence course. This reference is available for optional use by wildlife planners. In addition to these tools, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks biologists provide technical expertise to field offices through local coordination.

Habitat Assessment

The wildlife habitat development plan area will be assessed using the KWHAG. The evaluation will result in a quality rating. This will consider

existing conservation practices that provide habitat value and provide a list of practices that can improve habitat conditions. The quality rating will be compared to the quality criteria in Section III of the FOTG.

1. If the evaluation indicates a level below the acceptable quality, alternatives will be recommended that result in the necessary changes in habitat elements or their management to bring the rating up to the minimal acceptable or above.
2. If the evaluation is at the minimum or above, alternatives will be recommended that will result in the necessary management to preserve, maintain or improve the existing habitat in its present state or toward optimum conditions. Various combinations of criteria, described under the habitat elements in KWHAG, may be used to preserve, or improve an area for the food, cover, and water component of an ecosystem.

When the necessary measures or criteria required in items 1 or 2 above have been established, Conservation Practice Standard 645, Wildlife Upland Habitat Management, will be considered to be applied for that property or operating unit.

CONSIDERATIONS

Most land uses provide habitat for wildlife, but there is great variability in the quality (condition)

of the land to support wildlife. A land use may provide one or more of the habitat elements in KWHAG that are necessary for a species during seasons of the year.

Manipulation of habitat may impact more than the desired species of wildlife. These possible effects should be evaluated and taken into consideration during the planning process. Impacts on the conservation of declining species, including threatened and endangered species, must be considered.

Where the primary land use is wildlife, the number of target species of wildlife should be considered and management geared toward this end.

Where wildlife land is considered as a secondary land use (i.e., where the primary land use is cropland and the secondary is wildlife or the primary is rangeland and the secondary is wildlife), the kind of wildlife species and the desired population will be included in the design of the primary management system (i.e., include animal unit months of deer use in a livestock forage balance sheet or include delaying the cutting of hay when birds are nesting.)

The key element in upland wildlife habitat management for some species is interspersion or the intermixing of the various habitat types. Numerous habitat types in small units provide a maximum amount of edge. The amount of edge between food and cover is generally proportionate to wildlife population numbers.