

Quail Covey Headquarters

Job Sheet

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)
University Outreach and Extension – The School of Natural Resources

QUAIL COVEY HEADQUARTERS ARE IMPORTANT FOR QUAIL SURVIVAL

PURPOSE:

Covey headquarters are clumps of dense shrubby cover with a canopy at least three feet high and little vegetation at ground level. Quail need and use this type of patchy “escape” cover on a daily basis. They use headquarters to avoid hot summer sun and seek protection from predators and harsh weather. Without this habitat component, few quail will be present. This habitat component should be placed next to early-successional vegetation such as managed wildlife friendly grasses/legumes and tilled soil in order to be most effective.



SPECIFICATIONS:

- Headquarters should be located every 5-40 acres adjacent to wildlife friendly grasses/legumes and tilled soil.
- Maintain natural headquarters by removing trees that overtop the shrubby area.
- Edge feathering can be used in areas of older trees to restore and enhance shrubby habitats.
- Headquarters shrub plantings should be at least 30 feet wide and 1,500 square feet.
- Plant shrubs 5 X 5 feet.
- Plant shrub gray or roughleaf dogwood, American or Chickasaw plum, blackberry, hazelnut, false indigo bush, elderberry, chokecherry, nannyberry, shrub lespedeza, or aromatic sumac. A mix of plants provides vegetative diversity.
- Entire planting area needs to be free of existing vegetation. Remove unwanted cover either by disking or chemical treatment during the fall prior to shrub planting.
- Prior to spring shrub planting, broadcast ladino clover at 2 ¼ lbs./acre or annual lespedeza at 5.6 lbs./acre to suppress annual weeds in the planting area. The shrub area may also be sprayed with an approved herbicide for at least two growing seasons after planting.

MAINTENANCE:

- Exclude livestock from natural headquarters and plantings.
- Use herbicides to suppress invasive vegetation and to control noxious weeds.

PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide natural cover sources for quail and other wildlife.

Consult with NRCS or MDC wildlife biologists and private land conservationists, or University Extension for additional recommendations.

