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Helping People Help the Land...

RHODE ISLAND BULLETIN No: 300-7-5

DATE: December 13, 2006

SUBJECT: LTP – Cost Sharing WHIP Funds for Early Successional Shrubland, Grassland and Interior Forest Habitats

Purpose: To provide guidance on cost sharing of practices through the WHIP program for Early Successional Shrubland, Grassland and Interior Forest Habitats in Rhode Island.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2007

Background: The WHIP program in Rhode Island has provided funding for the restoration, creation, and enhancement of Early Successional Forest, Shrubland, Grassland and Forest Habitats. This bulletin will clarify under which situations these habitat restoration projects will be approved. The goal of this bulletin is to limit funding for early successional shrubland, grassland, and interior forest habitats to projects that will have significant impacts on wildlife species in decline in Rhode Island. A list of species in decline can be found in the “State of Rhode Island, Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy”, Appendix 1c, [Rhode Island GNC Species](#).

Grassland Habitat:

The following criteria will be followed when approving grassland restoration projects. It is not the goal of NRCS to create, restore, or enhance grassland habitat at any cost. NRCS’s goal is to get the most wildlife benefits for the least cost with projects located in the most suitable locations.

1. The minimum size of any created, restored or enhanced grassland will be 15 acres of contiguous grassland area. Existing grasslands may be expanded to a minimum of 15 acres.
2. No grassland will be located where there is existing coastal maritime shrubland habitat or potential coastal maritime shrubland habitat. Grasslands can be included as an enhancement to the coastal maritime shrubland habitat where site conditions and regulatory authorities allow. The total area of shrubland/grassland in a maritime area will equal a minimum of 15 acres.
3. The area for potential restoration needs to have been in grassland/herbaceous cover in 1976 as shown by the base aerial photographs used in the published Rhode Island Soil Survey. Additionally, the majority of the soils in the area need to be conducive to

grassland according to the RI Soil Survey. Existing gravel pits are exempt from this criteria.

4. Clearing for grasslands will be limited to "Light or Heavy Brush Management" depending on site specific conditions.
5. If needed, light obstruction removal, to remove stumps or boulders, will be provided but will not exceed 25% of the total acreage (i.e., 20 acre created grassland can get 5 acres of light obstruction removal)

Early Successional Forest and Shrubland Habitat:

The following criteria will be used when approving early successional forest and shrubland habitat:

1. Minimum individual opening size will be 2.0 acres.
2. The total area of openings will not exceed 20% of the total forested area covered under the WHIP contract.
3. Minimum forested parcel size to be entered into WHIP will be 10 acres
4. There will be no minimum acreage for early successional habitat created or restored around existing hayland, grassland or pastureland. Existing non-forested shrub successional habitat will not be subjected to the 20% criteria listed in number 2.

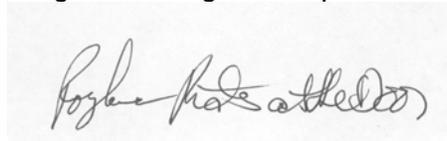
Prescribed Forestry Management

The following criteria will be used when applying for projects benefiting Interior Forest Habitat:

1. Minimum land unit size will be 10 acres of forested area.
2. Landowners will be required to implement the Prescribed Forestry Practice, by developing a Forest Management/Stewardship Plan, as detailed in the NRCS Technical Guide Section IV.
3. The primary purpose of the Forest Management/Stewardship Plan will be for wildlife habitat improvement to benefit State or Federally listed T&E Species or species listed in the State of Rhode Island, Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy", Appendix 1c, Rhode Island GNC Species. Landowners will be required to document the species being benefited.

These policies may be waived by the State Conservationist on a case by case basis if the project in question provides significant habitat benefits as calculated by the Habitat Suitability Index (HIS) for the habitat in question.

Contact: If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the Rhode Island WHIP Program Manager, Joseph Bachand, at 401-822-8818



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State Conservationist