



# Upland Bird Habitat Buffer

Conservation Reserve Program CP33 Jobsheet

- Automatic enrollment for eligible acres
- Signing and cost-share bonuses
- Easy enrollment at any time
- Land owners or renters may enroll
- Low cost to establish
- 10-year rental contracts
- Maintains agricultural use value
- Increased wildlife values

**Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds are strips of volunteer vegetation around field edges that provide valuable nesting and brood cover for bobwhite quail and other wildlife, protect water quality and support integrated pest management.**

**The CRP Continuous Signup allows enrollment of land throughout the year in this important wildlife conservation practice.**

## **How Much Money is at Stake?**

In Alabama, FSA bases maximum CRP rental rates for each offer on the dryland cash rental rate of the soil type of offered acreage. Soil types and rental rates per type are posted in County FSA Offices where the land is physically located. Rental payments are made each year for the duration of the 10 year contract. In addition, each landowner will also receive a Signing Incentive Payment of \$100 per acre as soon as the contract is approved.

## **Who and What's Eligible?**

Land owners or tenants may enroll in CRP. Land must have been row cropped in at least four years during 1996 to 2001.

## **What's Expected?**

\*Enroll crop field edges consisting of volunteer vegetation buffer strips. Landowners can enroll widths of between 30 and 120 feet. Although the examples below show buffers on only two sides of a field, they can be placed on any or all sides of a field. For best quality wildlife habitat, buffers should be maximized. In some cases, however, landowners may choose only to enroll the two sides of a field that are parallel to the crop rows as shown on the examples. This will eliminate problems associated with turning equipment over buffers (*not allowed*) at the end of rows.

\*Manage habitat using one or more of the following methods on 1/3 of the buffer each year (excluding shrub patches):

- light fall or winter disking, or
- prescribed burning,
- and spot-applied herbicide (as needed)

\*Install solid metal "T" posts every 333 feet for identification of buffer edges and to provide "aiming sticks" for equipment operators. Shrub patches may be substituted in place of posts if they are placed along the buffer/crop field edge and pin flags mark their outer location.

\*Herbaceous plantings may be recommended in some situations, but will

often be unnecessary. Natural succession will be used in most situations, as wild ragweed, partridge pea, beggarweed, native grasses, and many other species become established through the natural seed bank.

\*Shrub patches are highly encouraged. These provide wildlife cover for many species. The minimum size shrub patch will be 20 feet by 20 feet, although larger plantings are recommended for optimum wildlife cover. No more than 10% of the contract acres may contain shrubs. Eligible shrubs are wild plum, wax myrtle, hawthorn, crabapple, native blueberry and sumac.

\*Controlling woody plants, and exotic grasses like tall fescue, bermuda grass, and bahia grass are essential in order to provide the best quality wildlife habitat. These plants, as well as other invasive plants like cogongrass and kudzu will have to be controlled while in the program. Landowner's conservation plan will specify whether these species are a problem and need to be controlled.

\*Use a grain cover crop like wheat or millet (if specified in the conservation plan), where needed to protect soil from erosion until native plants have a chance to reclaim the area.

### **How much will it cost?**

Cost-share will be provided for shrub planting, forb/grass/legume planting, eradication of "tame" pasture grasses, and boundary markers including posts and signs in accordance with the CP33 conservation plan. The cost-share rate is set at 50%, but CP33 adds a Practice Incentive Payment of an *additional 40%*, so landowner out of pocket expenses are minimal.

### **Important Facts**

- \* Buffers are **not** wildlife food plots.
- \* Buffers are **not** for production of hay, forage, or crops
- \* Buffers are **not** turn rows or field roads
- \* Buffers are **not** storage areas for crops or equipment.

\*Buffers must be protected from all equipment, as well as discing, mowing, and fire during the growing season.

### **Need More Information?**

Contact your local USDA Service Center for information about eligibility, annual payments from a CP33 contract, and other questions about upland bird habitat buffers.



**Specification for CP33 “wide” buffers (total width 90 feet or greater)**  
 The planner must ensure these specifications meet CP33 guidelines and applicable criteria of NRCS e-FOTG 645.

Landowner \_\_\_\_\_ Field number \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Specifications</b> (locations indicated on map, below)	<b>Buffer Zone 1</b>	<b>Buffer Zone 2</b>	<b>Buffer Zone 3</b>	<b>Total</b>
Buffer width (average)	ft.	ft.	ft.	ft.
Buffer length	ft.	ft.	ft.	ft.
Buffer area	ac.	ac.	ac.	ac.
Seed with: (if applicable)				
Seeding rate: (if applicable)	/acre	/acre	/acre	/acre
Lime (if applicable)	tons/acre	tons/acre	tons/acre	tons/acre
Fertilizer formula: __- __ - __ (if applicable)	lbs./acre	lbs./acre	lbs./acre	lbs./acre
<b>(Check this row when furnishing specifications for perennial wildlife vegetation)</b>  Specifications are provided on the attached Upland Wildlife Habitat Management jobsheet				
Convert existing exotic vegetation to habitat by applying an approved herbicide according to its label’s instructions.				
Landowner will mark cropland edge of buffer with solid steel “T” post every 333 feet and at each corner.				
Landowner will mark cropland edge of buffer with shrub patch and wire flag every 333 feet.				

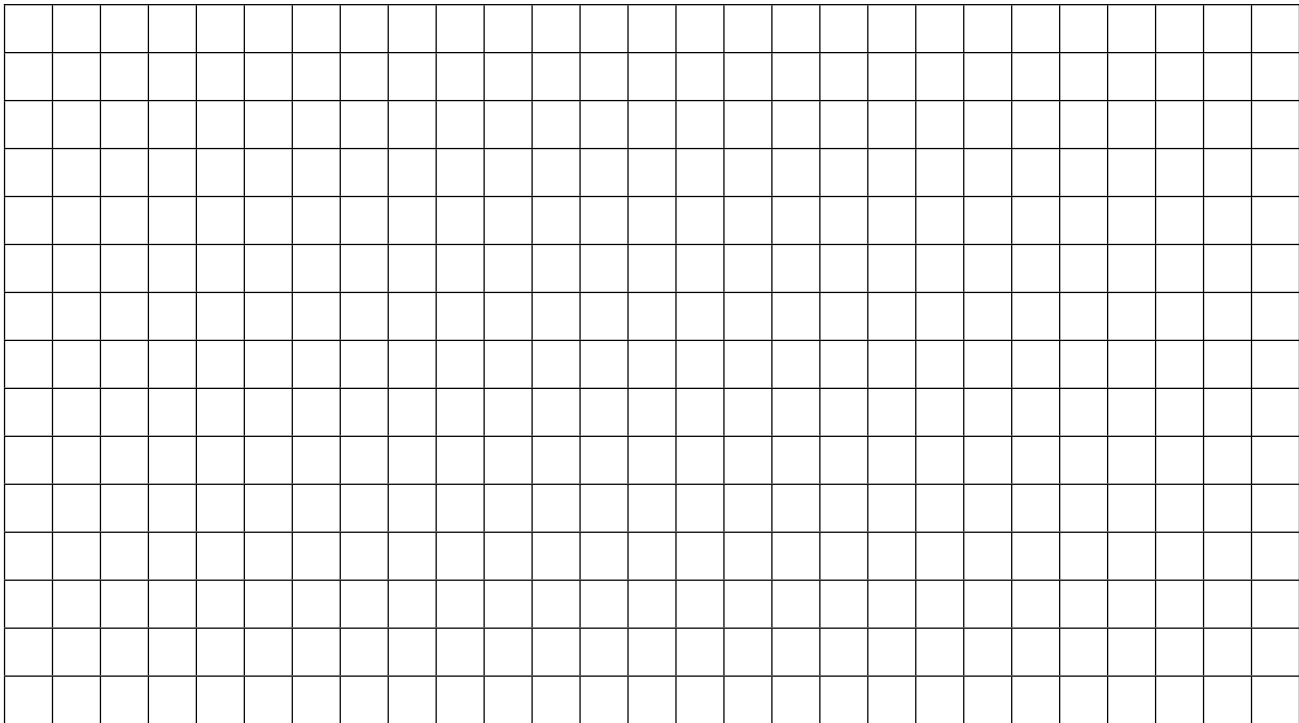
\*Note—Herbaceous planting should only be done in zones 2 and 3 to ensure establishment before disturbance is begun.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

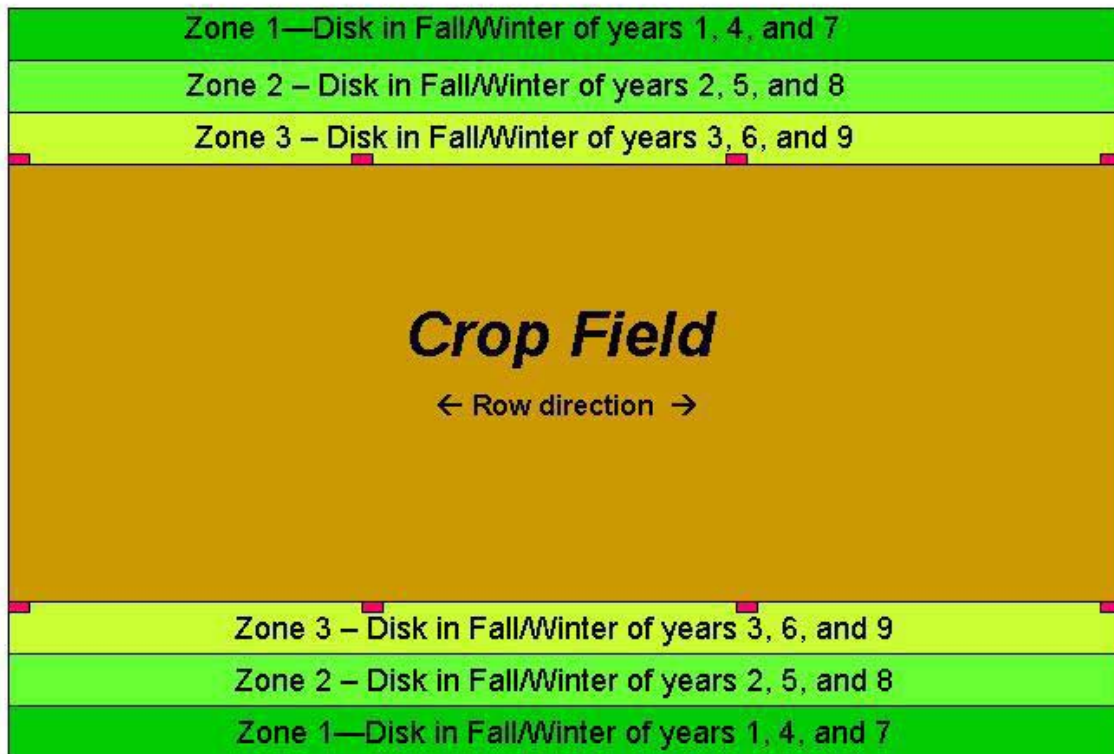
To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14<sup>th</sup> and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Specification for CP33 “wide” buffers (total width 90 feet or greater)**

**Map** Scale 1”=\_\_\_\_\_ ft. (N/A indicates sketch is not to scale.) Grid size is ¼” x ¼”. Check here \_\_\_\_\_ if a photo map is attached.



**\*Note—Aerial photograph with borders delineated can be substituted for map above.**



■ = solid metal “T” post OR small shrub patch every 333 feet along field edge

**Specification for CP33 “narrow” buffers (total width less than 90 feet)**  
 The planner must ensure these specifications meet CP33 guidelines and applicable criteria of NRCS e-FOTG 645.

Landowner \_\_\_\_\_ Field number \_\_\_\_\_

Establishment				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establish Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds at locations indicated on the attached layout map, according to the specifications provided below.				
Specifications (locations indicated on map, below)	Bobwhite Buffer			
Buffer width (average)	ft.			
Buffer length	ft.			
Buffer area	ac.			
Seed with: (if applicable)				
Seeding rate: (if applicable)	/acre			
Lime (if applicable)	tons/acre			
Fertilizer formula: __ - __ - __ (if applicable)	lbs./acre			
<b>(Check this row when furnishing specifications for perennial wildlife vegetation)</b> Specifications are provided on the attached Upland Wildlife Habitat Management jobsheet				
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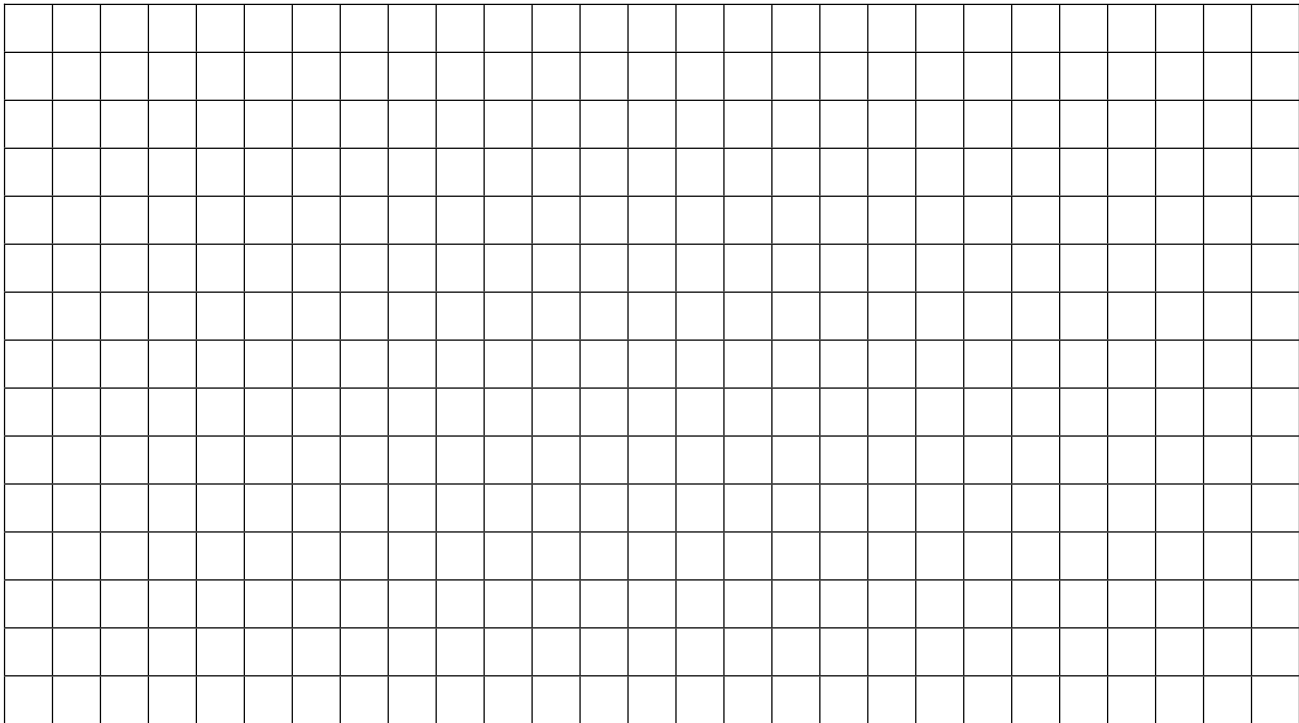
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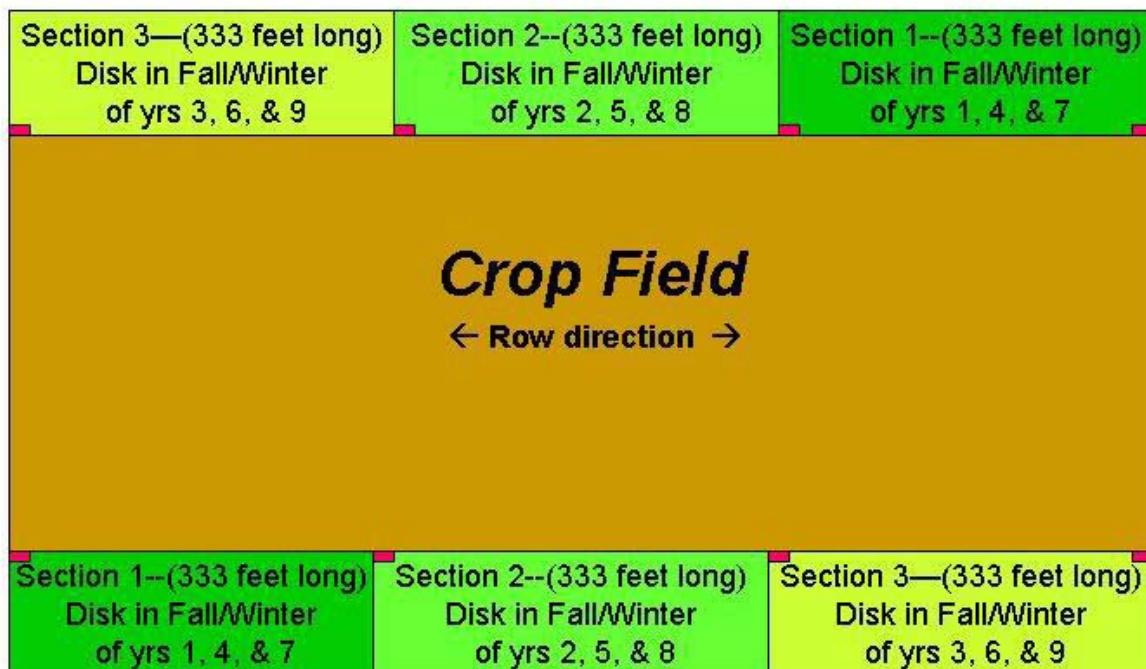
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**Specification for CP33 “narrow” buffers (total width less than 90 feet)**

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