



# 2001 Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

## Customer Focus—

Mr. Francisco Murphy has been managing a 17 acres farm in road #526, km. 2.2; Ward Yayales; Adjuntas, Puerto Rico since 1999. The owner is a two-fold decision-maker. First, he is a medicine doctor who cares for human health. Second, he is an environmentalist who cares for the whole farm well being. He installed conservation practices to reduce erosion problems and to improve wildlife habitat.

Land in the farm requires intensive and special management maintenance to produce coffee for local consumption, due to highly erodible soils. The following conservation practices were installed to reduce soil erosion in shade coffee and adjacent fields to improve wildlife population: residue management, no-till, conservation crop rotation, filter strip, fence, forest stand improvement, and critical area planting. As a result of this, soil erosion from cropland will be reducing from 25 tons/acre/year to 5 tons/acre/year. Soil erosion from acres under contract will be reducing from 34 tons/acre/year to 3 tons/acre/year.

One of his goals is to increase tree species diversity on the property, especially those that provide both food and shelter to local and migratory birds and protection to farm water resources. Traditionally, coffee has been cultivated under a shading canopy of natural forest or planted shading trees. Shade coffee fields are a simplified but stable ecosystem. By providing a very high structural diversity these agro-ecosystems provide nesting and feeding habitat for wildlife. Coffee has also helped develop the environment for other important areas under contract for enhancing wildlife habitat.

Their land is 122 acres of gorgeous forestland complete with a healthy creek running through it, a large stocked pond, wildflowers, and lots of history. Charming homemade wooden signs mark the way to trails and other points of interest. The health of the land is a

## Puerto Rico Summary

### Overview

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program that helps landowners develop and improve wildlife habitat on private lands. Interested landowners seek natural resource planning assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other federal, state, and private organizations to develop conservation plans that improve wildlife habitat. WHIP funds help implement the actions identified in the plan by providing financial assistance up to 75 percent of the cost for their projects.

The topographical structure that affects the Caribbean area is climate and soils. Over use of soils, especially in the hilly regions and mountainous interior, has contributed to erosion of hillsides and gully formations. Intensive conservation practices are encouraged in order to limit land use to pasture and forest development to conserve wildlife, water, and related resources.

In the US Virgin islands, native tropical forest is found only in St. Thomas. Only five percent of the total land is forested, efforts are being made by the government to protect St. Croix and St. Thomas from deforestation. The islands are surrounded by coral reefs. Forest development is needed to conserve wildlife, water, and related resources.

### Accomplishments

A number of WHIP participants enrolled in the year 2001. Practices included: wildlife upland habitat management, forest stand improvement, tree/shrub establishment, fence, and protection of the water resource base. This will provide food and shelter to local and migratory bird species.

### Outlook

Wildlife upland habitat management is important to protect wildlife as well the environment in the Caribbean Area. WHIP funds are necessary to help wildlife archive the expected program objectives throughout the Caribbean Area.

### State contact

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## Caribbean Area WHIP Dollars and Contracts



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Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2001		Cumulative Total (97-01)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
1	\$12,220	3	\$83,691	13

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