

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD  
WETLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT

(Acre)  
CODE 644



#### DEFINITION

Retaining, developing, or managing wetland habitat for wetland wildlife.

#### PURPOSE

To maintain, develop, or improve wetland habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, fur-bearers, or other wetland dependent or associated flora and fauna.

#### CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On or adjacent to wetlands, rivers, lakes and other water bodies where wetland associated wildlife habitat can be managed. This practice applies to natural wetlands and water bodies as well as wetlands that may have been previously restored (Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Code 657), enhanced (Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Code 659), or created (Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Code 658).

#### CRITERIA

##### General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Identify wildlife species management goals and objectives. For the desired species, identify the types, amount, and distribution of habitat elements and the management actions necessary to achieve the management objectives. Use the habitat evaluations for Florida (FL-CPA-33a through k) located in Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide to identify habitat-limiting factors in the planning area.

Application of this practice alone, or in combination with other supporting and facilitating practices, will result in a conservation system that will enable the planning area to meet or exceed the minimum quality criteria ( $\geq 0.50$ ) for wildlife habitat established in Section III of the FOTG.

Identify wildlife species management goals and objectives. For the desired species, identify the types, amount and distribution of habitat elements and the management actions necessary to achieve the management objectives.

Planting may be required to provide the desired habitat feature. Supplemental watering may be necessary to ensure adequate survival of plantings.

Site preparation, planting dates and methods, and plant material care and handling shall optimize vegetation survival and growth.

For information regarding site preparation, species selection, seeding rates, and post planting management refer to:

- Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Critical Area Planting, Code 342; Forest Site Preparation, Code 490; Filter Strip, Code 393; Field Border, Code 386; Forage and Biomass Planting, Code

512; Range Planting, Code 550;  
Tree/Shrub Establishment, Code 612;

- accompanying guidance information; and
- Florida NRCS Plant List for Conservation Alternatives, Florida NRCS Field Office Technical Guide Section II (G) (1 + 2).

Control all invasive-exotic plant species, as listed by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, and state and federal noxious weeds (see NRCS FOTG Section I, Laws, 4). Refer to the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, , <http://www.fleppc.org/>

Plan site preparation and planting at a time and manner to ensure establishment, survival and growth of selected species for achieving the intended purpose(s). Follow current Florida Forest Service (FFS) *Silviculture Best Management Practices* (BMPs) "primary zone" harvest and site preparation criteria: [http://www.floridaforestservice.com/forest\\_management/bmp](http://www.floridaforestservice.com/forest_management/bmp).

Clean up sites containing hazardous waste prior to the installation of this practice.

The landowner needs to have all necessary local, state and federal permits that apply.

Impact to cultural resources, wetlands, and Federal and State protected species need to be avoided or minimized to the extent practical during planning, design, and implementation of this conservation practice in accordance with established National and Florida NRCS policy; General Manual (GM) Title 420-Part 401, Title 450-Part 401, and Title 190-Parts 410.22 and 410.26; National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH) FL Supplements to Parts 600.1 and 600.6; National Cultural Resources Procedures Handbook (NCRPH); and The National Environmental Compliance Handbook (NECH).

## CONSIDERATIONS

Evaluate energy consumption when developing the conservation plan; plan and design practices in a manner that requires the least amount of energy to accomplish the desired outcomes.

Planning considerations include:

- Effects of movement of dissolved substances on groundwater and on downstream surface waters.

- Effects of volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, evaporation, and transpiration on the water budget.
- Effects on downstream flows or aquifers that would affect other water uses or users.
- Effects on movement of sediment and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff and/or wind.
- Effects of any livestock grazing on runoff, infiltration, and wetland vegetation.
- The nutrient and pesticide tolerance of the desired wetland plant species where known contamination exists.
- Effects of microtopography and different hydrology levels on the desired wetland plant species.
- Effects of management on non-target and invasive fish, plant and wildlife species and Threatened and Endangered Species.
- Effects of management actions on compliance with state and federal hunting regulations (e.g., baiting).
- Use of artificial nesting structures that are designed for the region.
- The impact of increased wildlife uses on adjacent lands (e.g., crop depredation).
- Adding or leaving snags, tree trunks or logs to provide structure and cover for wildlife and serve as a carbon source for food chain support.
- Adjacent wetlands or water bodies that contribute to wetland system complexity and diversity, decrease habitat fragmentation, and maximize use of the site by wetland-associated wildlife.
- Use native plants wherever possible.
- Pollinator needs and opportunities to enhance pollinator habitats

## PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specific information shall be provided using appropriate job sheets or written documentation in the conservation plan.

Record targeted species of wildlife.

Document how habitat needs of the desired kinds of wildlife is to be provided including:

- depth of water needed during the different seasons;
- types, locations and sizes of any water control structures required;
- desired plant species and the means of establishing and maintaining them.

See “Management for Wildlife,” A Supplement To Wildlife Standards and Specifications for Florida and “Wood Duck,” “Wading Birds” and “Wetland Mammals”, NRCS Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Leaflets for guidance on habitat needs. Contact a wildlife biologist for guidance on species not included in these documents.

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An operation and maintenance (O&M) plan shall be prepared and provided to the landowner to ensure that the practice functions as intended over time.

If vegetation becomes undesirable for utilization by target species, renovate by grazing (Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed

Pest Management, Code 595; follow current Univ. Florida, IFAS recommendations (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/WG006>); and adhere to label instructions.

## REFERENCES:

Helmets, D.L. 1992. Shorebird management manual. Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, Manomet, MA 58 pp.

Payne, Neil F. 1992. Techniques for wildlife habitat management of wetlands. McGraw-Hill, Inc. 549 pp.

Smith, Loren M. and Roger L. Pederson. 1989. Habitat management for migrating and wintering waterfowl in North America. Texas Tech University Press, 574 pp.

“Management for Wildlife,” A Supplement To Wildlife Standards and Specifications for Florida

“Wood Duck,” NRCS Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Leaflet:  
<http://www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/leaflet.htm>

“Wading Birds,” NRCS Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Leaflet:  
<http://www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/leaflet.htm>

Grazing, Code 528), burning (Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Burning, Code 338), and/or mechanical means (Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Forage Harvest Management, Code 511; Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment, Code 548; and

Implement biological control of undesirable plant species and pests (e.g., using predator or parasitic species) when available and feasible. See Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Brush Management, Code 342 and the University of Florida, Invasive Plant Laboratory webpage (<http://ipm.ifas.ufl.edu/>) for information regarding biological control applications.

Utilize increased water depth and duration as a method to control unwanted vegetation.

Control noxious weeds and/or exotic invasive plants as needed. If herbicides are needed, refer to Florida NRCS conservation practice standard Brush Management, (Code 314). Livestock grazing plans will be developed and implemented following Florida NRCS conservation practice standard Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) if used as a management tool.

“Wetland Mammals,” NRCS Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Leaflet:  
<http://www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/leaflet.htm>