

CRP – CP-4B and CP-4D Wildlife Plan Recommendations June 2006

The planning considerations noted below may be used to compliment existing plan development methods.

The two practices available in the Conservation Reserve Program for Permanent Wildlife Habitat (CP-4B and CP-4D) are intended to be used to develop and manage specific and/or unique wildlife habitats that cannot be typically achieved through the other commonly used practices such as CP-1, CP-2, CP-25, etc. A wildlife plan must be developed with the participant to meet their objectives and the needs of the wildlife species being targeted. It is preferred that this process involve input from a wildlife biologist.

In most cases, it is expected that two or more plant communities or habitats will be “sculpted” or arranged within the offered lands to maximize benefits to targeted wildlife species and provide the various life requisites needed for survival. The use of sculpted plantings with two or more different mixtures can also be used on other CRP plantings (CP-1, CP-2, CP-25, etc.) to maximize wildlife benefits provided that all mixtures used meet the practice requirements.

All wildlife plans should include the following: (40 acre bobwhite quail example attached)

- 1) Objective which identifies the target wildlife species or suite of species (i.e. northern bobwhite quail or grassland songbirds). A focus on “at-risk” wildlife is encouraged.
- 2) Brief description of each plant community or habitat being used in the plan and the purpose it serves for the targeted wildlife species. Examples might include a cool-season dominated grass/legume mixture to serve as dense nesting cover for waterfowl or a low density seeding with high forb composition to serve as brood rearing cover for upland game birds. Provisions such as species composition, planting density, juxtaposition relative to adjacent habitats, and other pertinent factors need to be specified.
- 3) Management prescriptions to maintain high quality habitat conditions for the targeted wildlife species. Options available through Mid-Contract Management should be prioritized and considerations for the use of Managed Haying and Managed Grazing should also be outlined. (Note: These recommendations will not be binding beyond the overall restrictions or provisions within the Conservation Reserve Program.)
- 4) Map or aerial photo showing the location for different plant communities or habitats to be installed on the offered lands.

In order to qualify for the 50 point option under N1a of the Environmental Benefits Index, a minimum of 5 species must be used with an emphasis on native species (including only native grasses). The 40 point option allows introduced grasses to be used and a minimum of 4 species (grasses, trees, shrubs, forbs, and legumes).

Mixtures that meet the requirements of Early Successional Habitat Management / Development (647) – Low Density Seeding may be used provided they do not occupy more than 25% of the offered acres and they are not located within 50 feet of property boundaries and public road right-of-ways.

EXAMPLE BOBWHITE QUAIL CP-4D CONSERVATION PLAN

OBJECTIVE: To develop and manage high-quality wildlife habitat for Northern Bobwhite Quail and using the CP-4D practice of the Conservation Reserve Program by establishing a mosaic of essential plant communities. (All seed mixtures indicate pounds of pure live seed per acre.)

Nesting Cover – Approximately 20 acres will be seeded with a mixture of native grasses (seeded at 20 PLS/ft²) with an emphasis on cool-season species; plus the addition of introduced legumes which equals 25% of the seeding rate for grasses. Once established, this area will provide preferred nesting conditions due to moderate structure and early green-up of vegetation.

Canada Wildrye	2.7	35% of grasses
Western Wheatgrass	2.0	25% of grasses
Virginia Wildrye	2.4	20% of grasses
Little Bluestem	0.3	10% of grasses
Sideoats Grama	0.4	10% of grasses
Alfalfa	0.6	50% of forbs
Red Clover	0.4	50% of forbs

Management – Every four to five years a treatment to remove thatch build up and rejuvenate legumes will be implemented. No more than 50% of the nesting cover should be treated in one year. Suggested methods include prescribed burning (prior to April 1st) or high intensity, short duration grazing (in late July or early August) with legumes interseeding conducted following treatment as needed.

Brood-Rearing Cover – Approximately 10 acres will be seeded with a low-density mixture consisting of 50% native grasses and 50% forbs and legumes (seeded at 10 PLS/ft² for all species combined). Immediately following the seeding (during the first growing season), this area will provide preferred brood-rearing conditions in close proximity to nesting cover due to a closed-canopy of herbaceous plants over relatively open or bare-ground strands of vegetation.

Little Bluestem	0.3	20% of mix
Sideoats Grama	0.3	15% of mix
Big Bluestem	0.3	10% of mix
Western Wheatgrass	0.4	10% of mix
Indiangrass	0.1	5% of mix
Alfalfa	0.3	15% of mix
Illinois Bundleflower	0.7	10% of mix
Maximiliarn Sunflower	0.3	10% of mix
Red Clover	0.1	5% of mix

Management – Every three to four years a treatment to maintain high forb/legume composition and relatively open conditions at ground level will be implemented. No more than 50% of the brood-rearing cover should be treated in one year. Suggested method is disking (in March or early April) combined with interseeding desired forbs and legumes.

Winter Cover – Approximately 5 acres will be seeded with a mixture consisting of predominately native, tall, warm-season grasses (seeded at 20 PLS/ft²); plus legumes and forbs added at 25% of the rate for grasses. These areas will be established in close proximity to shrub thickets and grain food plots to serve as emergency winter cover during harsh conditions.

Switchgrass	1.1	50% of grasses
Big Bluestem	1.6	30% of grasses
Indiangrass	1.0	20% of grasses
Maximilian Sunflower	0.4	25% of forbs
Missouri Goldenrod	0.04	25% of forbs
Alfalfa	0.3	25% of forbs
Sweet Clover	0.2	25% of forbs

Management – Every five to six years a treatment to prevent encroachment by undesirable cool-season grasses and to remove thatch build-up will be implemented. No more than 50% of the winter cover should be treated in one year. Suggested method is prescribed burning (in late April) but adjacent shrub thickets must be protected from fire.

Covey Headquarters (shrub thickets) – Approximately one acre of shrub thickets consisting of a mixture preferred native shrub species will be established with several small thickets divided and scattered across the tract. Each shrub thicket will be a minimum of 30' x 50' and will not exceed 1/8th acre. Once established, these acres will provide important roosting and loafing sites on a daily basis.

Recommended Species: American plum, chokecherry, golden currant, elderberry, skunkbush sumac, woods rose

Management – No specific management is recommended other than protection from prescribed burning and managed grazing events.

Food Plots – (enrolled as CP-12) Approximately four acres will be managed as food plots with 2.5 acres of a mixture of perennial and biennial introduced legumes (which also will function as a firebreak) and the other 1.5 acres planted to a mixture of annual grains (millet, milo, sorghum and sudan). The grain food plot will be split into two parts with each one planted in alternate years and the remaining one left idle for volunteer grain and annual weeds.

Legume Mix: Alfalfa (3.3 lb/ac); Red Clover (1.2 lb/ac); Birdsfoot Trefoil (0.5 lb/ac); Sweet Clover (0.5 lb/ac)



Example Bobwhite Quail CP4D Conservation Plan - Before -

Approximate Acres: 40

Agency: NRCS



Legend

- CRP CP4D Boundary
- Section Lines





Example Bobwhite Quail CP4D Conservation Plan - Implemented -

Approximate Acres: 40

Agency: NRCS



Legend

Section Lines

CRP CP4D

Practices - Cover Type

- Brood Rearing Cover
- Nesting Cover
- Winter Cover
- Shrub Thickets
- Annual Grain Food Plot
- Perennial Legume Food Plot / Firebreak

