

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
PRACTICE SPECIFICATION GUIDE SHEET
WETLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT
(Ac.)
CODE 644

PURPOSE OF SPECIFICATION

This Specification provides guidance for the installation of the practice Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management. Guidance may include information about applying different methods listed in the Conservation Practice Standard, details of site preparation and protection, instructions for use of materials described in the Standard, and other information not directly addressed in the Standard.

Specifications for the installation, operation and maintenance of the practice shall be prepared for each habitat type and treatment unit in accordance with the requirements in the Conservation Practice Standard and the guidance in this Specification. The site specifications shall be recorded in the Conservation Practice Jobsheet and provided to the client.

HABITAT ELEMENTS

The types, amount, and distribution of the following wetland habitat elements have been identified for wildlife including all native fish, mammals, birds, especially waterfowl and shorebirds, reptiles, amphibians, some invertebrates including pollinators and insects beneficial to crop production, and non-native upland game birds that may use wetlands in Washington:

- Food (type)
- Nesting cover (types of trees, shrubs, forbs, grasses, etc.)..
- Escape cover (types of trees, shrubs, forbs, grasses, etc.)
- Resting cover (types of trees, shrubs, forbs, grasses, etc.)
- Elevation range (where found)
- Breeding habits as it relates to habitat
- Threats (disease, habitat loss, competition by other animal species, etc.)

The habitat vegetation restoration for the animal species in Washington is included in the Habitat Restoration links in Plant Material Technical Note #1 Washington Guide for Vegetative Plantings and Seedings, available online through Section I of the eFOTG.

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

The Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management practice may include the implementation of the following types of management actions:

- Vegetation establishment for shelter, food and to enable movement with preference for use of native plants.
- Installation of structural measures to provide shelter, food or enable movement and/ or
- Manipulation and protection of vegetation to sustain desirable habitat conditions over time.

SUPPORT PRACTICES FOR WETLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT	SUPPORT PRACTICE CATAGORIES		
	VEGETATION WOODY	VEGETATION HERBACEOUS	STRUCTURAL MEASURES
Access Control (472)	X	X	X
Brush Management (314)	X	X	
Conservation Cover (327)	X	X	
Conservation Crop Rotation (328)*		X	
Early Successional Habitat Management (647)		X	
Fence (382)			X
Forage Harvest Management (511)		X	
Forest Stand Improvement (666)	X		
Hedgerow Planting (422)	X	X	
Mulching (484)	X		
Pasture & Hay Planting (512)		X	
Pest Management (595)	X	X	
Pond (378)			X
Prescribed Grazing (528)	X	X	
Range Planting (550)	X	X	
Restoration & Management of Rare and Declining Habitat (643)	X	X	X
Riparian Forest Buffer (391)	X		
Riparian Herbaceous Buffer (390)		X	
Spring Development (574)			X
Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)	X		
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)	X		
Watering Facility (614)			X
Wetland Creation (658)	X	X	X
Wetland Enhancement (659)	X	X	X
Wetland Restoration (657)	X	X	X

* For food plots.

VEGETATION ESTABLISHMENT & ENHANCEMENT (WOODY)

Other conservation practices that may be utilized in conjunction with the Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management practice to establish (preferably native) woody vegetation to provide shelter, food and to enable movement. Where applicable, these practices include:

Access Control (472)

This practice may be used to temporarily or permanently exclude animals, people or vehicles from an area. Use exclusion involves the installation of barriers which may consist of either natural and/or artificial structures such as logs, vegetation, earth-fill, boulders, fences, gates, electronic and sonic devices, or signs.

Brush Management (314)

This practice may be used to enhance Wetland wildlife habitat by removing, reducing, or manipulating non-herbaceous plants through mechanical or chemical treatment.

Conservation Cover (327)

This practice may be used to establish and maintain permanent vegetative cover to protect soil and water resources.

Forest Stand Improvement (666)

This practice may be used to improve forested habitat, restore natural plant communities, achieve a desired native understory plant community, or to improve wildlife habitat.

Hedgerow Planting (422)

This practice may be used to create habitat that is linear, such as a corridor. Hedgerows may be as narrow as a single row or they may be multiple rows depending on the purpose and the resources available. Hedgerows may be used as living fences, visual screens, a source of food and cover or as a travel lane.

Mulching (484)

Use this practice to support tree and shrub establishment. Mulching, especially fabric mulch, reduces competition from herbaceous vegetation, helps conserve water, and improves survivability of newly established woody plant material.

Pest Management (595)

This practice should be included as part of the conservation plan or Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management plan to ensure that environmentally sensitive prevention, avoidance, monitoring and suppression strategies are used to manage weeds, insects, diseases, and other organisms (including invasive and non-invasive species), that directly or indirectly cause damage or annoyance.

Prescribed Grazing (528)

Prescribed Grazing (528) is defined as managing the controlled harvest of vegetation with grazing animals. Purposes include: to improve or maintain the health and vigor of plant communities and to improve or maintain the type, quantity and quality of food and/or cover available for wildlife.

Domestic ungulates will be removed and excluded from the management area during the establishment of plant materials. Once established, domestic ungulates should be excluded

from the management area during nesting or roosting times and will only be used as a tool to meet the management objectives of 645.

Grazing should take place after the area has been inventoried and determined to have no impacts to threatened and endangered plant species.

Range Planting (550)

This practice may be used to establish adapted perennial vegetation such as grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs and trees.

Restoration & Management of Rare and Declining Habitat (643)

This practice may be used to restore and manage habitat uniquely important to wildlife that is rare and/or in decline. This practice is also appropriate when planning for species who are missing an important element of their lifecycle, such as, cavities for cavity nesting birds, mammals, or insects, bat boxes for bats, brush piles for wildlife, flowering plants for pollinators, etc.

Riparian Forest Buffer (391)

This practice may be used to establish and manage an area predominantly trees and/or shrubs located adjacent to and up-gradient from watercourses or water bodies.

Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

This practice may be used to establish woody plants by planting seedlings or cuttings, direct seeding, or natural regeneration.

Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)

Use this practice to prepare a site for establishing trees or shrubs. This practice may be used to encourage the natural regeneration of desirable woody species or to permit the planting of trees and shrubs. Site preparation is an important step in establishing woody plant materials and care should be taken to ensure that it is done properly. Be sure to consider the effects this practice may have on wildlife and plan accordingly.

Wetland Creation (658)

This practice may be used on a site that is non-wetland, but may be altered to provide adequate hydrology so that hydrophytic vegetation can, over time, be established and become the dominant plant community on the site. This site may then provide the area with the wetland functions and values that are important to humans and wildlife.

Wetland Enhancement (659)

This practice may be used to improve naturally occurring wetlands that may provide water during a portion of the year. Wetlands in their natural state are an important resource to wildlife, maintaining the hydrology and plant life shall be addressed when the enhancement of a wetland is planned.

Wetland Restoration (657)

This practice may be used to restore wetlands that may be degraded to make water available to wildlife during a portion of the year. Wetlands in their natural state are an important resource to wildlife, restoring the hydrology and plant life shall be addressed when applying this practice.

VEGETATION ESTABLISHMENT & ENHANCEMENT (HERBACEOUS)

Other conservation practices that may be utilized in conjunction with the Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management practice to establish (preferably native) herbaceous vegetation to provide shelter, food and to enable movement. This section includes practices needed to establish a Food Plot. Where applicable, these practices include:

Access Control (472)

This practice may be used to temporarily or permanently exclude animals, people or vehicles from an area. Use exclusion involves the installation of barriers which may consist of either natural and/or artificial structures such as logs, vegetation, earth-fill, boulders, fences, gates, electronic and sonic devices, or signs.

Brush Management (314)

This practice may be used to enhance Wetland wildlife habitat by removing, reducing, or manipulating non-herbaceous plants through mechanical or chemical treatment.

Conservation Cover (327)

This practice may be used to establish and maintain permanent vegetative cover to protect soil and water resources.

Conservation Crop Rotation (328)

Use this practice to identify areas of a field that may be left unharvested to provide food for wildlife over winter or to identify an odd area that has been planted and left as a food source for wildlife. Food plots, especially ones in regular cropped fields, should be no larger than one acre. Plots are to be rotated each year to a new location prevent a possible increase in weeds and disease. Food plots work best near cover and should be at the edge of a field, or next to a waterway, brow, field border, hedgerow, or grassed terrace.

Early Successional Habitat Development & Management (647)

Use this practice to develop and maintain early serial habitat. This is usually done by introducing disturbance to the site at some interval allowing pioneer species of plants to compete while preventing or greatly slowing the establishment of more climax species.

Forage Harvest Management (511)

This practice is the timely cutting and removal of forages from the field as hay, green-chop or ensilage. Purposes include: to promote vigorous plant re-growth; maintain stand life; manage for the desired species composition; control insects, diseases and weeds; and/or maintain and/or improve wildlife habitat.

Hedgerow Planting (422)

This practice may be used to create habitat that is linear, such as a corridor. Hedgerows may be as narrow as a single row or they may be multiple rows depending on the purpose and the resources available. Hedgerows may be used as living fences, visual screens, a source of food and cover or as a travel lane.

Pasture & Hay Planting (512)

This practice may be used to establish native or introduced forage species that may benefit wildlife.

Pest Management (595)

This practice should be included as part of the conservation plan or Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management plan to ensure that environmentally sensitive prevention, avoidance, monitoring and suppression strategies are used to manage weeds, insects, diseases, and other organisms (including invasive and non-invasive species), that directly or indirectly cause damage or annoyance.

Prescribed Grazing (528)

Prescribed Grazing (528) is defined as managing the controlled harvest of vegetation with grazing animals. Purposes include: to improve or maintain the health and vigor of plant communities and to improve or maintain the type, quantity and quality of food and/or cover available for wildlife.

Domestic ungulates will be removed and excluded from the management area during the establishment of plant materials. Once established, domestic ungulates should be excluded from the management area during nesting or roosting times and will only be used as a tool to meet the management objectives of 645.

Grazing should take place after the area has been inventoried and determined to have no impacts to threatened and endangered plant species.

Range Planting (550)

This practice may be used to establish adapted perennial vegetation such as grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs and trees.

Restoration & Management of Rare and Declining Habitat (643)

This practice may be used to restore and manage habitat uniquely important to wildlife that is rare and/or in decline. This practice is also appropriate when planning for species that are missing an important element of their lifecycle, such as, cavities for cavity nesting birds, mammals, or insects, bat boxes for bats, brush piles for wildlife, flowering plants for pollinators, etc.

Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)

This practice may be used to establish and manage grasses, grass-like plants and forbs that are tolerant of intermittent flooding or saturated soils in the transitional zone between terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

Wetland Creation (658)

This practice may be used on a site that is non-wetland, but may be altered to provide adequate hydrology so that hydrophytic vegetation can, over time, be established and become the dominant plant community on the site. This site may then provide the area with the wetland functions and values that are important to humans and wildlife.

Wetland Enhancement (659)

This practice may be used to improve naturally occurring wetlands that may provide water during a portion of the year. Wetlands in their natural state are an important resource to wildlife, maintaining the hydrology and plant life shall be addressed when the enhancement of a wetland is planned.

Wetland Restoration (657)

This practice may be used to restore wetlands that may be degraded to make water available to wildlife during a portion of the year. Wetlands in their natural state are an important resource to wildlife, restoring the hydrology and plant life shall be addressed when applying this practice.

STRUCTURAL MEASURES

Structural practices that may be utilized in conjunction with the Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management practice to provide shelter, food and to enable movement. Where applicable, these practices include:

Access Control (472)

This practice may be used to temporarily or permanently exclude animals, people or vehicles from an area. Use exclusion involves the installation of barriers which may consist of either natural and/or artificial structures such as logs, vegetation, earth-fill, boulders, fences, gates, electronic and sonic devices, or signs.

Fence (382)

The practice Fence is defined as a constructed barrier to animals or people. Fence may be installed to protect Wetland wildlife habitat from damage by ungulates, including pigs, goats, deer, sheep, horses, and cattle. They may also serve to restrict the introduction of non-native, invasive plants, which may be spread by animals or people.

Pond (378)

Ponds for wildlife may be constructed, where appropriate, to meet the water requirements of the wildlife species being managed and to supplement existing habitat conditions.

Design and application assistance can be coordinated with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to insure that locations and designs will complement the habitat of the wildlife species of concern.

Restoration & Management of Rare and Declining Habitat (643)

This practice may be used to restore and manage habitat uniquely important to wildlife that is rare and/or in decline. This practice is also appropriate when planning for species that are missing an important element of their lifecycle, such as, cavities for cavity nesting birds, mammals, or insects, bat boxes for bats, brush piles for wildlife, flowering plants for pollinators, etc.

Spring Development (574)

This practice may be used to provide water to livestock and is commonly applied along with the Watering Facility Practice Standard. Springs will be developed in such a manner so has to only utilize the water needed by the livestock. Watering facilities need to be installed far enough away from the spring to ensure minimal livestock damage. If necessary, springs should be excluded from livestock access using wildlife friendly fence. Springs in their natural state are an important resource to wildlife, maintaining the hydrology and plant life shall be addressed when the utilization of spring water is planned. See also Wetland Enhancement and Wetland Restoration since springs are wetlands, these Standards may apply.

Watering Facility (614)

This practice may be used to provide water for livestock that is safe for wildlife to access and/or come in contact with. Watering facilities will be designed to be wildlife friendly and will aid in the dispersion of livestock across the landscape which improves wildlife habitat on land uses where livestock are present. Watering facilities also allow livestock to be watered without relying on wetlands, lakes or streams, which should be excluded from livestock use whenever feasible. Watering facilities installed exclusively for wildlife is discouraged since wildlife is adapted to obtain water from natural sources.

Wetland Creation (658)

This practice may be used on a site that is non-wetland, but may be altered to provide adequate hydrology so that hydrophytic vegetation can, over time, be established and become the dominant plant community on the site. This site may then provide the area with the wetland functions and values that are important to humans and wildlife.

Wetland Enhancement (659)

This practice may be used to improve naturally occurring wetlands that may provide water during a portion of the year. Wetlands in their natural state are an important resource to wildlife, maintaining the hydrology and plant life shall be addressed when the enhancement of a wetland is planned.

Wetland Restoration (657)

This practice may be used to restore wetlands that may be degraded to make water available to wildlife during a portion of the year. Wetlands in their natural state are an important resource to wildlife, restoring the hydrology and plant life shall be addressed when applying this practice.