



Getting Started with a Wildlife Habitat Management Plan

Conservation planning uses the best available science to identify which species and habitats to target and which parts of the landscape are the most important.

Identifying these conservation priorities helps NRCS work together with landowners and other entities toward a common goal.

Farmers and ranchers in Colorado are participating in programs to restore wetlands, protect habitat, conserve natural resources, and reduce agricultural runoff.

That makes agricultural land incredibly important for conservation efforts.

Wildlife, humans, and the environment all benefit from a sustainable and viable wildlife population.

Therefore, wildlife habitat management requires thoughtful, long-term planning for wildlife and habitat on Colorado's land.

It considers the landscape that your land lies in and what habitat management practices are most appropriate and effective for plants and animals.

Development of long term, realistic goals is very important. Also, an ecosystem approach provides a comprehensive look at conservation needs.

Your local NRCS Service Center can help you develop a wildlife habitat management plan through sound conservation planning.



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The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and others care for the land.

NRCS has six mission goals that include:

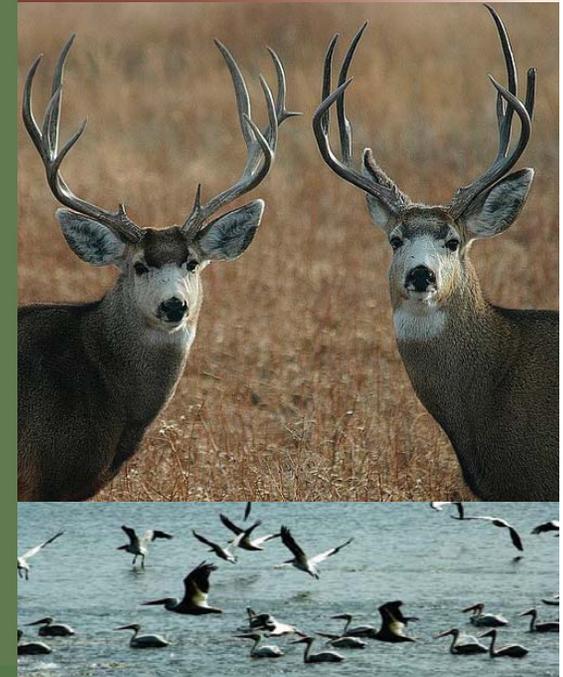
- High quality, productive soils
- Clean and abundant water
- Healthy plant and animal communities
- Clean air
- An adequate energy supply; and
- Working farm and ranch lands

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Facts about Wildlife Habitat Management in Colorado



Helping People Help the Land

Overview

Wildlife habitat is a combination of food, water, cover, space, and other resources needed by wildlife species in order to survive and sustain viable populations.

In Colorado, wildlife includes both aquatic species, such as fish, and terrestrial species, such as elk and burrowing owl.

Wildlife habitat is important in order to continue to have wildlife species exist in Colorado. The health of wildlife populations indicates the health of the environment.

For example, many people enjoy hunting, fishing, and/or watching wildlife. If the habitat is lost, so are these types of recreation.

Everyone can develop or improve wildlife habitat. Even homeowners who are interested in enjoying wildlife from the comfort of their own property can take some simple steps to improve the habitat in their own backyard by planting flower and berry-producing plants to attract birds, squirrels, and other wildlife.

People with large acreages can do even more by managing their land for both wildlife and economic gain.

Wildlife habitat management is important in reducing threats to wildlife due to habitat loss, disease, and invasive species, to name a few.

Practices



The Following Practices may be Used in the Development of Wildlife Habitat:

- **Upland Wildlife Habitat Management** - managing terrestrial areas to provide proper amounts of food, cover, space, and water for wildlife that use the area
- **Early Successional Habitat Development** - maintains vegetation in a condition found shortly after disturbance
- **Fish Passage** - removes barriers to fish migration up and downstream
- **Riparian Forest Buffer** - an area of trees/shrubs adjacent to a body of water such as a stream, river, pond, or lake
- **Wetland Enhancement** - improving a wetland to provide better habitat
- **Shallow Water Development and Management** - putting water on dry ground at a scheduled frequency and depth to make habitat for water birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, etc.

These are only a few of the many biology practices that are used to develop and manage wildlife habitat.

Types

Uplands Habitat

Shrub, grass, and forest lands, collectively known as “uplands” are the most common habitat type in Colorado. Uplands support a diversity of wildlife including deer, pronghorn, sage grouse, pheasant, songbirds, and swift fox.

Practices to improve wildlife habitat in uplands vary depending on the target species. Some practices may include: prescribed grazing, range planting, field windbreaks, prescribed burning, and brush management.

Riparian Habitat

Riparian Habitat is the transitional area between a stream, river, or waterbody and the adjacent upland habitat.

Practices may include: riparian livestock fencing, livestock stream crossing, streambank stabilization, and in-stream habitat improvement.

Wetland Habitat

Wetland Habitat is an area that is permanently or seasonally saturated by surface or ground water and are able to support vegetation that is adapted to saturated soil conditions.

Wetlands are important for capturing and slowing floodwater, filtering pollutants and run-off, and providing areas of high biological productivity.

Practices include: shallow water development, wetland enhancement, wetland restoration, and wetland habitat buffer.



Wildlife Habitat Management - Habitat is a combination of food, water, shelter, and space arranged to meet the needs of wildlife.

Farm Bill Programs that Can Help:

- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)