

# FISCAL YEAR 2008 MINNESOTA WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM (WHIP) PROGRAM PROVISIONS, CONSERVATION PRACTICE PAYMENT SCHEDULE AND PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS

## **PROGRAM PROVISIONS**

Conservation Practice Payments are authorized for practices:

1. Implemented following the contents of the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide,
2. Implemented following:
  - general provisions, and,
  - specific provisions for each practice included in the docket,
3. Where a positive environmental benefit from the benchmark condition can be documented. Payments are not authorized for, or on, existing, in place practices unless approved by the State Conservationist.
4. Land enrolled in EWP, CRP, or WRP are not eligible for cost share.
5. Minimum individual applicant land ownership is 5 acres.
6. Applicant must provide evidence of ownership or control of the land for the duration of the contract.
7. The maximum NRCS payment rate is 75% of the typical practice cost, or otherwise specified by practice in the docket.
8. NRCS-CPA-052 Environmental Evaluation shall be completed for each contract.

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. An applicant may choose to obtain technical assistance from NRCS or from a technical service provider. If an applicant chooses to use a technical service provider (TSP) with technical assistance dollars, the TSP must be registered in TECHREG and certified to provide technical assistance for the specific practice or plan.
2. Pesticides used as a component of any practice will be state approved for the use involved. These pesticides will also be applied according to registered uses, label directions, and other applicable federal or state regulations.
3. Soil testing - Any practice which includes the application of liming materials and/or commercial fertilizer shall be prescribed based on a soil test taken during the current year or the two preceding calendar years from a soil testing laboratory shown on the attached list. Application rates of lime and fertilizer shall be based on University of Minnesota recommendations, those from an adjoining state's Land Grant University, or those from the MN Department of Agriculture Soil Testing Certification Program.
4. Liming Materials - Lime refers to Agricultural Liming Material (ALM). All liming material must meet the label information required by Minnesota Statue Section 18C.545 and include: 1) ALM type and; 2) ALM quality rating (minimum pounds of effective neutralizing power (ENP) per ton). The University of Minnesota soil test reports provide ALM recommendations in pounds of ENP per acre.

5. NRCS Wetland Policy as found in the General Manual 190, Part 410 must be followed. This policy provides direction to the agency for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This policy prohibits NRCS from providing technical or financial assistance to producers that will adversely affect wetlands, unless the lost functions are fully mitigated.
6. The payment schedule amount will be limited to that required by the practice being installed. When additional or alternative work or material is performed or used at the landowner's request, any costs greater than that required for the practice will be borne by the producer.
7. Payment is not authorized where offsite or onsite impacts from the contributing watershed would prevent a practice from achieving its intended purpose with normal operation and maintenance during its intended lifespan.
8. Applicants wanting to perform practices on land they do not own, or to install practices that require permits are responsible for obtaining easements, permits, rights-of-way, water rights or other permission necessary to perform and maintain the practices. The permission from the authority must be in writing and a copy must be provided to the NRCS field office prior to payments being made on the practice.

## **CONSERVATION PRACTICE PAYMENT SCHEDULE AND PRACTICE PROVISIONS**

The WHIP Conservation Practice Payment Schedule lists practices that have been authorized for payments under the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) in Minnesota. The payment schedule is a complete listing of primary practices and payment rates. The narrative lists additional program provisions that must be followed.

NRCS Field Office Technical Guide conservation practices not listed in the schedule, and new practices may be added upon review and approval by the WHIP Program Manager **AND** State Conservationist. Written justification must be included in requesting a practice be added to the docket. This justification should include why the addition of the practice is required, including evidence that the practice has potential to address the resource concern, and identification of who will provide technical assistance in implementing the practice.

The MN State WHIP payment schedule lists primary practices authorized for conservation practice payments, the maximum payment rates and limits, and the program specific provisions for various practices. The maximum payment is not more than 75% of the typical practice cost. The NRCS state office will solicit changes from the local work groups to the NRCS program payment schedules, on an annual basis. All locally submitted recommendations or requested changes should be submitted with adequate documentation.

### **Conservation Practice Payment Methods:**

#### **1. Practice Payment Schedule:**

Practice payments are authorized based on the typical cost of implementing a practice. The practice payment shall be the program cost share rate applied to the typical practice cost.

#### **2. Incentive Payments:**

WHIP funds may not be used for incentive payments. WHIP funds may, however, be combined with other, non USDA, funds. The total payment to the landowner must not exceed the total cost of implementing the practice.

Producers wanting to perform practices on land they do not own, or to install practices that require permits are responsible for obtaining the: easements, permits, right-of-way, water rights or other permission necessary to perform and maintain the practices. The permission from the authority must be in writing and a copy must be provided to the local office prior to payments are made on the practice.

## **SPECIFIC PRACTICE PROVISIONS**

### **CRITICAL AREA PLANTING - 342**

**REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Establishment clipping allowed up to 5 times during the first 24 months, shall be scheduled as Pest Management – 595.

	Unit	Method	Payment Rate \$	Lifespan 20 years
Seeding of slopes and spillway – Introduced grasses	Ac.	PR	\$139.73	
Seeding of slopes and spillway – Native grasses	Ac.	PR	\$245.08	

### **EARLY SUCCESSIONAL HABITAT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT - 647**

**REQUIREMENTS:**

1. A detailed plan is required.

**BRUSHLAND AND BROWSE MANAGEMENT:** - To develop and maintain brushland and browse in transition and forest areas to benefit deer, moose, sharp-tail grouse, and other wildlife. To control encroachment of undesirable woody vegetation into existing grasslands (see also 388 prescribed burning). NOTE: this practice is not to be utilized as site preparation for permanent vegetative cover plantings.

**WILDLIFE OPENINGS:** - To construct new openings or maintain existing openings in forested areas to improve habitats for deer and other species which utilize openings. Cost includes site preparation, seed and seeding.

	Unit	Method	Payment Rate \$	Lifespan 15 years
<b>Brushland and Browse Mgt.</b>				
Mowing or Shearing	Ac.	PR	\$149.91	
<b>Wildlife Openings</b>				
Mechanical – Trees less than 8" DBH	Ac.	PR	\$593.82	
Mechanical – Trees 8" DBH or greater	Ac.	PR	\$681.05	
Mechanical – Mowing	Ac.	PR	\$244.55	

**1/** Large mowers > 140 horsepower, capable of mowing brush and softwood trees 4-6 inches in diameter.

## **FENCE - 382**

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. Cost share is eligible for existing livestock operations. Establishment of fencing is limited to permanent fences utilizing new materials, excluding property boundary and road fences.
2. Cost share is not authorized unless the purpose of the fence is documented as providing resource protection. Cost share amounts listed include all appurtenances.
3. Cost share is not authorized for removal of existing fence, clearing obstructions, providing powers sources, or removal of woody vegetation.
4. Cost share is not authorized when the primary purpose is of the fence is for keeping livestock off roads or marking property boundaries.
5. When fencing is a component of a prescribed grazing system, applicant must have a NRCS approved grazing plan.

				<b>Lifespan</b>
	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Payment Rate \$</b>	<b>20 years</b>
Perimeter barbed wire	Ft.	PR	\$0.89	
Perimeter woven wire	Ft.	PR	\$1.32	

## **FOREST SITE PREPARATION - 490**

				<b>Lifespan</b>
	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Payment Rate \$</b>	<b>1 year</b>
Chemical – Existing cropland, grassland, sod, pasture	Ac.	PR	\$20.41	
Chemical – Existing shrub/brush	Ac.	PR	\$51.15	
Mechanical – Existing cropland, grassland, sod, pasture	Ac.	PR	\$18.06	
Mechanical - Existing shrub/brush	Ac.	PR	\$125.90	
Mechanical tree removal - Shelterbelts	Ac.	PR	\$1031.42	

## **FOREST STAND IMPROVEMENT - 666**

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Technical Responsibility is assigned to the MN/DNR Division of Forestry, or qualified planner.**
2. All improvements will be accomplished according to a detailed forest management plan.
3. Cost sharing is not authorized for pruning trees.

				<b>Lifespan</b>
	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Payment Rate \$</b>	<b>10 years</b>
Thinning	Ac.	PR	\$89.06	
Release	Ac.	PR	\$60.47	

## **MULCHING – 484**

	Unit	Method	Payment Rate \$	Lifespan 10 years
Erosion control blanket with staples	Sq. Yd	PR	\$1.09	
Grass hay/straw – Anchored with a disk	Sq. Yd.	PR	\$0.17	
Tree fabric - Mat	Ea.	PR	\$1.82	
Tree fabric - Roll	Ft. of Row	PR	\$0.47	

## **PEST MANAGEMENT – 595**

	Unit	Method	Payment Rate \$	Lifespan 10 years
Bud caps <u>1/</u> or Spray repellent <u>2/</u>	Ac.	PR	\$0.22	
Chemical weed control - Tree planting	Ac.	PR	\$45.95	
Mechanical weed control – Clipping mowing	Ac.	PR	\$10.91	
Mechanical weed control – Tree planting between row	Ac.	PR	\$14.85	
Mechanical weed control – Tree planting in row	Ft. of Row	PR	\$0.09	

1/ Cost share includes materials and annual installation costs for the first 48 months.

2/ Not to exceed 2 applications per year, performed during the first 48 months after planting as needed for establishment. The only eligible products are Plantskydd or Deer Away Big Game Repellent.

## **POND - 378**

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Cost share is restricted to upland embankment type ponds, excavated ponds are not eligible for cost share. Projects involving the restoration or enhancement of former or existing wetlands shall be considered under practice 657 – Wetland Restoration.**
- Applicants are responsible for securing all applicable permits prior to construction.
- Livestock must be excluded from pond.

	Unit	Method	Payment Rate \$	Lifespan 20 years
Embankment – ADA 0–10.0 acres	Ea.	PR	\$2500.00	
Embankment – ADA 10.1-20.0 acres	Ea.	PR	\$4000.00	
Embankment – ADA >20.0 acres	Ea.	PR	\$7500.00	

## **PRESCRIBED BURNING - 338**

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. A burn plan describing the practice objective, species to control and species to be benefited, timing, weather conditions and management guidelines will be developed.
2. Technical assistance will be provided through technically qualified individuals.
3. All laws and regulations pertaining to burning will be followed.
4. **The conservation plan must document that the landowner has been notified in writing that they are subject to all liability due to damages caused by out of control fire.**
5. It is the landowner's responsibility to obtain all permits and notify surrounding landowners who may be affected.
6. Cost share is eligible up to three times for the same area for the life of the contract.
7. Associated costs with obtaining and notification of neighbors, units of government, and agencies is entirely the landowners expense.

				<b>Lifespan</b>
	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Payment Rate \$</b>	<b>5 years</b>
Prescribed Burn – Private vendor	Ac.	PR	\$56.25	
Prescribed Burn – Landowner or govt. agency	Ac.	PR	\$45.00	
Prescribed Burn – Openland special project area	Ac.	PR	\$22.50	

## **PRESCRIBED GRAZING - 528**

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. A detailed pasture management plan is required.
2. The life span of this practice is 5 years.
3. No cost share authorized for technical assistance.

## **RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT OF DECLINING HABITATS - 643**

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. A detailed plan is required, in accordance with the specifications outline in the standard.
2. Tallgrass Prairie Restoration:
  - a. Eligible costs include seedbed preparation, seeding and seed.
  - b. Establishment weed control allowed up to 5 times during the first 24 months shall be scheduled as 595 - Pest Management.
3. Oak Savanna and Red/White Pine Restoration:
  - a. Eligible costs include trees, shrubs, planting and tree shelter installation as appropriate.
  - b. Site preparation shall be scheduled as 490 – Forest Site Preparation
  - c. Weed control allowed during the first 24 months after planting, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management.
  - d. Bud caps as needed, includes materials and annual installation costs for the first 48 months, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management.
  - e. Spray repellent as needed not to exceed 2 applications per year applied during the first 48 months after planting, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management. The only eligible products are Plantskydd or Deer Away Big Game Repellent.

				<b>Lifespan</b>
	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Payment Rate \$</b>	<b>15 years</b>
<b>Oak Savanna Restoration</b>				
Oak savanna with tree shelters	Ac.	PR	\$583.75	
Oak savanna without tree shelters	Ac.	PR	\$253.75	
<b>Red and White Pine Restoration</b>				
Red and White Pine Establishment - Seedlings	Ac.	PR	\$364.97	
Red and White Pine Establishment – Seedlings with shelters	Ac.	PR	\$584.97	
Red and White Pine Establishment – Transplants without shelters	Ac.	PR	\$535.97	
Red and White Pine Establishment – Transplants with shelters	Ac.	PR	\$755.97	
<b>Tallgrass Prairie Restoration</b>				
Tallgrass Prairie – Conventional - Grass	Ac.	PR	\$161.64	
Tallgrass Prairie – Conventional – High Residue Crop or No Till Grass	Ac.	PR	\$118.50	
Tallgrass Prairie – No Till Grass – Soy Beans	Ac.	PR	\$111.14	
Tree removal	Ac.	PR	\$506.10	
<b>Weed Control – See Practice 595 – Pest Management</b>				
<b>Site Preparation - See Practice 490 - Forest Site Preparation</b>				
<b>Bud caps or Spray repellent – See Practice 595 – Pest Management</b>				

## **STREAMBANK AND SHORELINE PROTECTION - 580**

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. Applicant is responsible for obtaining all applicable permits prior to construction activities.
2. The project shall be coordinated with MDNR – Fisheries.

				<b>Lifespan</b>
	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Payment Rate \$</b>	<b>20 years</b>
Biomaterials	Sq. Ft.	PR	\$1.19	
Rock rip-rap	Sq. Ft.	PR	\$4.19	
Stream barbs	Cu. Yd.	PR	\$46.67	

## **STREAM HABITAT IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT - 395**

**PURPOSE:** To improve or restore aquatic ecosystem functions and values within a stream corridor for one or both of the following purposes: to increase survival and/or production of desired fish including resident or anadromous fish, or increase diversity and/or abundance of fish in a stream ecosystem.

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. **NRCS conservationist will consult with MDNR Area Fisheries Manager for a feasibility determination and preliminary plan prior to approval.**
2. Applicant is responsible for obtaining all applicable permits in advance of final contract approval and construction activities.

3. Cost share is for in -stream structure cost and installation only. Measures to control stream bank erosion shall be addressed by practice 580 – Stream bank and Shoreline Protection. Riparian herbaceous or woody plantings shall be addressed by practice 645 – Upland Wildlife Habitat Management.

	Unit	Method	Payment Rate \$	Lifespan 15 years
Lunker Structures or Set of 3	Ea.	PR	\$399.41	
Woody Debris Dam – ¼ mile section	Ft.	PR	\$4.74	

### **TERRESTRIAL INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES MANAGEMENT – 797**

#### REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Technical Responsibility is assigned to the MN/DNR Division of Forestry, or qualified planner.**
2. All improvements will be accomplished according to a detailed forest management plan.
3. **Terrestrial invasive species control is eligible only where competition has become a significant threat to the regeneration of the native plant community.**
4. Practice may be cost shared only once on the same acres during contract life.

	Unit	Method	Payment Rate \$	Lifespan 10 years
Woodland - Chemical	Ac.	PR	\$74.78	
Woodland – Chemical and Mechanical	Ac.	PR	\$91.98	

### **TREE/SHRUB ESTABLISHMENT - 612**

#### REQUIREMENTS:

1. Cost share assistance is only available for establishing and restoring **mixed native hardwood and conifer species in historically forested landscapes.**
2. **Technical responsibility for this practice is assigned to the MN/DNR-Forestry.**
3. Mixed plantings **shall not be more than 550, or less than 300 stems per acre.**
4. Eligible costs include trees, shrubs, seed, planting and tree shelter installation as appropriate.
5. Site preparation shall be scheduled as 490 – Forest Site Preparation.
6. Weed control allowed during the first 24 months after planting, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management.
7. Bud caps as needed, includes materials and annual installation costs for the first 48 months, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management.
8. Spray repellent as needed not to exceed 2 applications per year applied during the first 48 months after planting, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management. The only eligible products are Plantskydd or Deer Away Big Game Repellent.

				Lifespan
	Unit	Method	Payment Rate \$	15 Years
Conifer Planting - Seedlings	Ac.	PR	\$164.25	
Conifer Planting - Transplants	Ac.	PR	\$297.75	
Direct Seeding	Ac.	PR	\$254.54	
Hardwood Planting – without tree shelters	Ac.	PR	\$155.25	
Hardwood Planting - with tree shelters	Ac.	PR	\$490.82	
<b>Weed Control – See Practice 595 – Pest Management</b>				
<b>Site Preparation - See Practice 490 - Forest Site Preparation</b>				
<b>Bud caps or Spray repellent – See Practice 595 – Pest Management</b>				

## **UPLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT - 645**

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. This practice applies to native tree/shrub plantings on sites  $\leq 10.0$  acres in size per contract. **Tree/shrub plantings greater than 10.0 acres per contract will be planned and cost shared in accordance with practice standard Tree Planting - 612.**
2. For introduced grasses and legumes, a soil test during the year of seeding or the preceding two calendar years is required to determine the needs of commercial fertilizer and liming materials. The rate of application of commercial fertilizer and lime shall not be less than 75% of the recommended rate per acre of total available plant food. Small grain nurse corps must be left unharvested until August 1 of the establishment year to be eligible for cost share reimbursement.
3. Individual grass, tree and shrub plantings should be designed with a diverse mix of grass, trees and shrubs to restore natural plant communities or maximize wildlife benefits.
4. Practice will be protected from mowing, grazing and uncontrolled fire for the duration of the contract unless specifically identified in the management plan.
5. Grasses, legumes and forbs:
  - a. Eligible costs include seedbed preparation, seeding, seed and lime.
  - b. Establishment weed control allowed up to 5 times during the first 24 months, shall be scheduled as 595 - Pest Management.
6. Tree and shrub planting:
  - a. Eligible costs include trees, shrubs, planting and tree shelter installation as appropriate.
  - b. Site preparation shall be scheduled as 490 – Forest Site Preparation
  - c. Weed control allowed during the first 24 months after planting, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management.
  - d. Bud caps as needed, includes materials and annual installation costs for the first 48 months, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management.
  - e. Spray repellent as needed not to exceed 2 applications per year applied during the first 48 months after planting, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management. The only eligible products are Plantskydd or Deer Away Big Game Repellent.

				Lifespan
	Unit	Method	Payment Rate \$	
<b>Permanent Vegetative Cover- grasses, legumes, forbs.</b>				<b>10 years</b>
Introduced grasses and legumes	Ac.	PR	\$110.71	
Native grass and forb – Conventional - Grass	Ac.	PR	\$147.52	

Native grass and forb – Conventional – High Residue Crop or No till - Grass	Ac.	PR	\$129.37	
Switchgrass	Ac.	PR	\$89.87	
Native grass and forb – No Till - Soybeans	Ac.	PR	\$107.08	
<b>Permanent Vegetative Cover - Trees &amp; Shrubs</b>				<b>15 years</b>
Direct seeding	Ac.	PR	\$381.81	
Tree and shrub planting - with shelters	Ea.	PR	\$2.15	
Tree and shrub planting - without shelters	Ea.	PR	\$0.98	
<b>Weed Control – See Practice 595 – Pest Management</b>				
<b>Site Preparation - See Practice 490 - Forest Site Preparation</b>				
<b>Bud caps or Spray repellent – See Practice 595 – Pest Management</b>				

### **USE EXCLUSION - 472**

#### REQUIREMENTS:

1. The operator must not graze, hay, or harvest the area to be excluded unless specifically authorized by the plan.
2. Practice is only authorized in conjunction with practices benefiting riparian areas where the current condition shows environmental damage and the exclusion directly results in environmental benefits.
3. Practice lifespan is 10 years.
4. This practice not authorized for cost share.

### **WETLAND RESTORATION - 657**

#### REQUIREMENTS:

1. The producer is responsible for obtaining easements, rights of way, local, state and federal permits and other permission necessary to perform and maintain the practice. Contract will not be approved until proof of necessary permits has been provided.
2. **NOTE:** Wetland enhancement (type conversion) applications shall be reviewed in consultation with the DNR Area Wildlife Manager and FWS local private lands coordinator as appropriate, to determine whether significant wetland functions will be adversely effected. Where inter-agency concurrence is secured, the application shall be considered eligible. Where inter-agency concurrence is not reached locally, the application shall be submitted to the NRCS State Conservationist for a final eligibility determination.
3. The restored area shall not be used to produce agricultural commodities or for irrigation water purposes.
4. Seeding of embankments, ditch plugs, spoil etc. shall be scheduled with practice 342 – Critical Area Planting.

	Unit	Method	Payment Rate \$	Lifespan
Scrapes	Ac.	PR	\$4500.00	
Tile break	Ea.	PR	\$375.00	
Ditch plug	Ea.	PR	\$375.00	
Embankment	Cy.	PR	\$4.50	
Water control structure	Ea.	PR	\$1875.00	

## **WINDBREAK/SHELTERBELT - 380**

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. Farmstead shelterbelts shall be a minimum of 10 rows. See Biology Technical Note #MN-4 for wildlife considerations.
2. Tree and shrub planting:
  - a. Eligible costs include trees, shrubs, planting, grass establishment and tree shelter installation as appropriate.
  - b. Site preparation shall be scheduled as 490 – Forest Site Preparation
  - c. Weed control allowed during the first 24 months after planting, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management.
  - d. Bud caps as needed, includes materials and annual installation costs for the first 48 months, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management
  - e. Spray repellent as needed not to exceed 2 applications per year applied during the first 48 months after planting, shall be scheduled as 595 – Pest Management. The only eligible products are Plantskydd or Deer Away Big Game Repellent.

	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Payment Rate \$</b>	<b>Lifespan</b>
Farmstead shelterbelt with tree shelters	Ft. of Row	PR	\$0.93	15 years
Farmstead shelterbelt without tree shelters	Ft. of Row	PR	\$0.43	15 years
<b>Weed Control – See Practice 595 – Pest Management</b>				
<b>Site Preparation - See Practice 490 - Forest Site Preparation</b>				
<b>Bud caps or Spray repellent – See Practice 595 – Pest Management</b>				