

# Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

## Kansas State Plan



# **Kansas Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program Plan**

## **Introduction**

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Bill program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist landowners and other participants who want to develop or enhance aquatic or terrestrial wildlife habitat on private land. Participants can receive both technical and financial assistance to improve or develop terrestrial or aquatic habitat on their land. Most land is eligible for WHIP, which provides the opportunity to improve wildlife habitat on land that may not be eligible for other programs.

## **Objectives**

General WHIP objectives are to restore, enhance, and manage plant communities and aquatic resources for the purpose of improving fish and wildlife resources through the development of a Wildlife Habitat Development Plan (WHDP).

## **Wildlife Priorities**

The NRCS, with advice from the Kansas Technical Committee (KTC), identified the following priorities for the Kansas WHIP plan:

- Grassland birds with emphasis on bobwhite quail, ring-necked pheasant, and prairie chicken (lesser and greater).
- Threatened and endangered (T&E) species and species in need of conservation (SINC).
- Natural communities to include prairies, wetlands, and riparian areas.

These priorities are consistent with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' (KDWP) Strategic Plan. The KDWP has identified upland birds as a priority through their Upland Bird Initiative.

## **Partnership Involvement**

Funding for WHIP and other conservation programs was greatly increased in the 2002 Farm Bill and requires additional wildlife technical assistance from partner agencies. Several wildlife groups and agencies have ongoing working relationships with the NRCS and can assist with the increased technical assistance demands.

The KDWP has a cooperative agreement with the NRCS whereby the KDWP provides biologists to the NRCS area office staffs for biological assistance to the field offices.

The NRCS and the KDWP entered into a contribution agreement for technical services. Through this contribution agreement, KDWP biologists will be available to assist landowners in the development of WHDPs on their lands. The biologists will assist and guide landowners through the planning process as well

as through the procedures involved in applying for, implementing and maintaining a WHIP contract.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is involved in a three-way agreement with the KDWP and the NRCS to provide technical assistance through their Partners for Wildlife Program.

A contribution agreement also exists with the Kansas Forest Service (KFS) whereby the KFS provides technical assistance to the NRCS primarily for forestry activities through their district foresters, some of which are located in the NRCS area offices.

The Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams (KAWS) also assists with program outreach efforts for riparian and aquatic habitat.

Private organizations such as Ducks Unlimited (DU), Pheasants Forever (PF), and Quail Unlimited (QU) have a large presence in the state. Through their local chapters, these groups work with private landowners and managers providing financial assistance for local wildlife habitat projects. The NRCS has a national Memorandum of Understandings with DU, PF, and QU. PF is developing Habitat Crews across the Midwest to complete habitat projects resulting primarily from Farm Bill programs. The National Wild Turkey Federation, Audubon of Kansas, Kansas Ornithological Society, Kansas Wildlife Federation, and The Nature Conservancy also have a presence in the state. Any other group that has a wildlife interest is invited to be a partner in WHIP.

Types of assistance provided by partners are shown in the following chart:

Partners	Technical Assistance	Financial Assistance	Education and Outreach
KDWP	X	X	X
USFWS	X	X	X
SCC	X	X	X
KAWS			X
PF	X	X	X
QU	X	X	X
DU	X	X	X
KFS	X		X
TNC	X		X
AOK	X		X
KOS			X
KWF			X
KACD			X
WMI			X

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|-------|--|-----|-------------------------------|
| KDWP  | Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks      | KFS | Kansas Forest Service         |
| USFWS | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service               | TNC | The Nature Conservancy        |
| SCC   | State Conservation Commission                | AOK | Audubon of Kansas             |
| KAWS  | Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams     | KOS | Kansas Ornithological Society |
| PF    | Pheasants Forever                            | KWF | Kansas Wildlife Federation    |
| QU    | Quail Unlimited                              | DU  | Ducks Unlimited               |
| KACD  | Kansas Association of Conservation Districts | WMI | Wildlife Management Institute |

### **Ranking Criteria**

The Kansas WHIP ranking worksheet criteria was developed by the WHIP Sub-Committee of the KTC in conjunction with the NRCS staff using the National Wildlife Habitat Priorities as outlined in the Conservation Programs Manual, WHIP, Part 517. In addition, upland bird habitat assessment worksheets were developed for bobwhite quail, ring-necked pheasant, and lesser/greater prairie chicken.

### **Evaluation**

Data on program participation along with the location, extent and type of habitat developed through WHIP will be collected and assembled in a performance and accountability report. This report will be forwarded to NRCS national headquarters and used internally.

There is information available to indicate which habitat components are needed for many wildlife species, especially for the targeted upland bird species. If these components are provided, it can be assumed that numbers of the targeted species will increase accordingly under normal conditions. The KDWP conducts wildlife population surveys, but it may be some time before statewide population trends resulting from WHIP habitat practices are noticed. The exception may be critical habitat for T&E species.