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WOODY HABITAT ESTABLISHMENT

Quality woody cover is needed to ensure winter survival of resident wildlife species during the harshest winter weather. The goal of the woody habitat component of the GFP private lands program is to increase wildlife populations by enhancing their winter survival. Dense woody plantings of shrubs and small trees can also provide protection from aerial predation. When most producing species of trees and shrubs are incorporated woody plantings also provide food for wildlife.

Most of the wildlife species of interest live on the ground and woody habitat should be designed to create cover at ground level. Consequently, only low-growing trees and shrubs should be planted in most wildlife shelterbelts. However, to accommodate alternate objectives such as providing farmstead wind protection, GFP program guidelines allow for 1 or 2 rows of tall trees to be planted in some shelterbelts. In addition, no woody habitat applications will be funded when trees and shrubs are to be planted in native prairie or other rangeland.

The annual deadline for submitting applications for cost-share is **November 1st** of the year preceding the scheduled planting of the woody cover. If applications exceed planting goals, applications will be ranked according to the potential wildlife benefits of plantings and funding will be allocated from highest to lowest ranked plantings until available funding is exhausted.

To enroll in this practice you will need to develop a woody-planting plan with your local forester, local wildlife conservation office, or local district conservationist. GFP is responsible for reviewing the management plans before the contract can be signed. Each contract must have an outline of the work schedule and cultivation payment schedule for a 10-year period (the life of the contract). Payments are processed in October with cost share expected by November 1.

[Woody Habitat Program Guidelines at a Glance \(PDF\)](#)

GFP Woody Habitat Program Guidelines

- ☛ **GFP will reimburse producers for 75% of costs incurred for planting woody habitat for wildlife.** Alternate cost-shares received by producers will be subtracted prior to calculating the GFP 75% reimbursement.
- ☛ GFP payment per producer per year is \$3,000 unless at least one shelterbelt to be planted is 8-12 rows wide and at least 3 acres, then the payment maximum is \$4,000.
- ☛ If at least one shelterbelt is 13 or more rows wide and at least 5 acres, the cost-share maximum is \$5,000.

WILDLIFE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Cost Share Habitat Practices

- ☛ [Dense Nesting Cover Establishment](#)
- ☛ [Warm Season Native Grass/Forb Establishment](#)
- ☛ [Woody Habitat Establishment](#)
- ☛ [Food Habitat Plots](#)
- ☛ [Habitat Fencing](#)
- ☛ [Learn more about how to develop your property for pheasants and other wildlife.](#)

Eligible Species

Shrubs

American Plum
Golden Currant
Lilac
Silver Buffaloberry
Caragana
European Cotoneaster
Peking Cotoneaster
Skunkbush Sumac
Mongolian Cherry
Western Sandcherry
Nanking Cherry
Redosier Dogwood

Mid-Sized Tree

Eastern Red Cedar
Rocky Mountain Juniper
Common Chokecherry
Amur Maple
Siberian Crabapple
Bur Oak
Boxelder
Siberian Apricot
Hansen Hedge Rose
Manchurian Apricot
Manchurian Crabapple
Arnold Hawthorne
Ussurian Pear

WILDLIFE

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Woody wildlife habitat planting criteria are as follows:

- At least half of all rows planted in each woody habitat planting must be shrub, cedar or juniper rows.
- Sites must be fallowed the year prior to planting
- Woody plantings that are less than 3 acres and less than 9 rows wide may only contain shrubs and mid-sized trees.
- Shelterbelts that are at least 3 acres may include 1 or 2 rows of tall trees as long as at least 4 rows of shrubs and/or mid-sized trees are planted immediately adjacent to each side of the tall tree row(s).
- Cottonwoods may not be planted in any woody habitat planting.
- No woody habitat plantings will be funded in native prairie or rangeland
- South Dakota law (SDCL 41-2-23) requires that reasonable public hunting shall be provided when habitat management funds are expended on private lands.
- Demand for these programs is such that funding is reserved for producers that are not involved in any type of fee hunting operation.
- Applications consist of sending a planting description and aerial photograph noting the project location to the Project Coordinator at Game, Fish and Parks, 895 3rd St., Huron, SD 57350

Amur Honeysuckle

Tall Tree

Green Ash
Hackberry
Ponderosa Pine
Austrian Pine
Scotch Pine
Silver Maple
Blue Spruce
Black Hills Spruce
White Spruce
Honeylocust
White Poplar
Siberian Elm
Russian Mulberry

[Wildlife Partnership Program Guidelines at a Glance Handout \(PDF\)](#)

Contact A GFP Wildlife Habitat Biologist...

[For more information on any of these programs.](#)



Private Lands Habitat Projects Guidelines at a Glance

The goal of GFP habitat programs on private land is to help interested producers establish habitat that will enhance survival and reproduction of desired wildlife species. These programs are designed to complement grassland habitat created by various USDA programs like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Program options include Food Habitat Plots, Habitat Fencing, Nesting Cover Planting. GFP also has programs to help producers establishing woody wildlife habitat. Guidelines for these projects are described in a separate guideline card.

Food habitat plots (or food plots) provide pheasants protected areas to feed and can improve their winter survival. Food plots can also reduce damage of big game on stored feeds by providing an alternate source of food. Crops typically planted in food plots are corn, sorghum, and/or sunflowers. Some of the best food plots contain a mixture of these crops. Food plots should be located as near as possible to dense winter cover such as wetlands or dense shelterbelts.

Producers interested in habitat projects should contact their local GFP office or Wildlife Conservation Officer. Due to the high demand for these programs, funding is reserved for producers that are not involved any type of fee hunting operation. In addition, because funding for these projects comes entirely from sales of hunting licenses, producers must agree to allow reasonable free public hunting access. However, producers retain and may regulate all hunting access privileges on enrolled lands.

Food Habitat Plots

- \$40 per acre if planted on Walk-In Areas (WIA).
- \$20 per acre for plots not located on WIA's.
- Minimum size, 1 acre; Maximum size, 10 acres.
- Maximum of 10 acres per quarter section.
- Cooperators must leave crops unharvested through winter.
- Maximum enrollment of 30 acres per landowner.
- Annual enrollment period is March through May.
- Payments are made in **February**.

Nesting Cover

- Limited emphasis due to CRP and WRP programs.
- Plantings must be 10-160 acres in size.
- Cost-share is NOT available on CRP or WRP plantings.
- Cooperator will be reimbursed for 100% of the costs they incur for materials and planting of grass habitat in cropland only.
- Cooperators must agree not to hay or graze cost-shared acres for a minimum of 5 years.
- May be used as a snow trap on the north or west sides of shelterbelts.
- One-time payment made upon project completion.

Habitat Fencing

- Intended to protect either existing or new habitat.
- Use this practice to enhance the value of an overall habitat program.
- Cooperators will be reimbursed for 100% of the costs that they incur for fencing materials.
- Annual cost-share limit is \$1000 per producer.
- Payments made upon project completion.