



Natural Resources Conservation Service
6013 Lakeside Blvd.
Indianapolis, IN 46123

December 7, 2004

INDIANA BULLETIN NO. IN300-5-1

SUBJECT: LTP – Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) Ranking for 2005

Purpose: To inform Field Offices of WHIP ranking process for 2005

Expiration Date: September 30, 2005

Action Required By: February 18, 2005

This bulletin is to inform you that we would like to begin taking WHIP applications for funding. The ranking sheet to be used for ranking WHIP applications in 2005 has been revised from the 2004 WHIP Ranking Worksheet. This notice will outline those changes. The guidance document has also been revised to reflect changes in the ranking sheet and in policy for administering the program.

The following revisions were made:

1. The Not to Exceed (NTE) amount for any practice involving tree or shrub establishment has changed from \$400 per acre to \$300 per acre. This was done to better reflect the rates used under the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). WRP uses the rate of \$400 per acre and is cost shared at 100 percent. WHIP uses a 75 percent cost share rate so the NTE rate was lowered to reflect 75 percent of the actual cost or \$300 per acre ($\$400 \times 75\%$).
2. This is not a change in the ranking sheet. It is to re-emphasize the issue. In order to match the national standard, the unit of measure for Field Border was changed from acres to linear feet. In order to correctly calculate the points, a width column was added. The minimum width according to the standard and specifications was entered in the width column. This can be changed, if necessary. After a length is entered, the worksheet will automatically calculate the points and cost. The points are based on the same level as last year. Using the width and length, the worksheet will calculate the acreage and convert that to points.
3. Item 4a under Field Border (386) and Item 15a under Upland Wildlife Habitat Management were changed to allow you to use the seeding mixture calculator or Table 10 to plant cool season grass mixes.

The Priorities worksheet has the following revisions:

1. A new priority was added. P9 was added to give points to anyone who is located in an identified habitat priority area as defined by IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife. These areas provide valuable habitat to quail and pheasants. Maps of these designated areas can be obtained from IDNR.

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The Guidance Document was revised to reflect the above changes. It was also revised to explain the use of mid-contract practices for weed control for tree or shrub establishment.

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE ENTERED INTO PROTRACTS. Entry of new WHIP applications should begin in January of 2005.

The revised application ranking sheet is attached along with the guidance document. Any questions regarding the completion of the ranking sheet should be directed to John Poenisch at extension 357.

The first ranking period will end on February 18, 2004. All applications should be entered into ProTracts by this date to be considered in the initial ranking period. After the initial ranking period, subsequent ranking periods will end every two weeks until all funds are obligated.

Those applications that are determined to be eligible for funding will need to have the conservation plan loaded into Toolkit and then uploaded into ProTracts by March 18, 2005. Instructions for this process will be sent out at a later date. All eligible WHIP applications will be funded by March 31, 2005.

The documentation that needs to be sent to the State Office includes the following: Ranking Criteria Worksheet and the AD-1200. The IDNR District Wildlife Biologist or their designate must also complete a Wildlife Habitat Development Plan (WHDP). This plan does not need to be sent to the State Office but retained in the case file.

Hopefully, these changes will make the ranking process a little easier. If you have any questions, please contact John Poenisch at (317) 290-3200, ext. 357.

/s/

JANE E. HARDISTY
State Conservationist

Enclosure