



Defenders of Wildlife

Agricultural Stewardship in America



GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN © GEORGE LAVENDONSKI/USFWS

Promoting Public and Private Partnerships Through The Farm Bill

Taking care of the land and its wildlife is a big endeavor. Many people—both individuals and groups, private and public—work every day to create new and innovative ways to improve wildlife habitat, water quality and ecosystem health. Farm Bill conservation programs offer farmers and ranchers the opportunity to partner with the U.S. government to restore and protect habitat and wildlife. In return, participating farmers and ranchers receive financial incentives and assistance in implementing conservation measures.

The Farm Bill's conservation programs create partnerships that promote good stewardship and healthy ecosystems. These partnerships are an investment in our natural infrastructure and the future of our agricultural communities.

Healthy Grown Potatoes

Wisconsin Partnership

A great example of a public-and-private partnership is the new Healthy Grown Potatoes brand developed in Wisconsin. Through a partnership that includes Wisconsin potato farmers, the World Wildlife Fund and the University of Wisconsin, research led to the development of a new eco-label, Healthy Grown, potatoes, certified by Protected Harvest. This initiative reduces the use of toxic pesticides by using integrated pest management, making the industry healthier for farmers, consumers and wildlife habitat. Defenders is supporting Healthy Grown producers' efforts to restore and conserve native habitats for at-risk species by helping them market their product and estimate the economic benefits of their restoration efforts.

CSP Can Help

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) offered through the Farm Bill is another partnership that farmers could use for Healthy Grown Potatoes. CSP provides payments for good farmland stewardship. Some Healthy Grown farmers are already working on projects to restore habitat on their lands. Although CSP has not yet been offered in the region where Healthy Grown Potatoes are produced, Congress can act to extend the program to additional regions and create a partnership with Healthy Grown farmers that would benefit the producers and the environment.

FARM BILL SOLUTIONS: Public and Private Partnerships

North Carolina's Red Wolf

The red wolf is native to the southeastern United States. Like many other predators, the red wolf nearly went extinct. Following the passage of the 1973 Endangered Species Act, the red wolf was declared an endangered species and a recovery plan was developed. In 1987, a restoration program began in North Carolina's Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge with the release of captive-bred red wolves. Now that a small population has been re-established, pups born in captivity are placed in the dens of wild red wolf families to learn how to survive in the wild. Over 100 red wolves now live in the North Carolina; the goal of the recovery program is 550.



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WRP Can Help

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program offered in the Farm Bill. It pays landowners to restore wetlands that have been converted to agriculture or pasture and make them more suitable for plants and wildlife. In North Carolina, landowners have seen the value of this program and the number of applications to WRP exceeds the amount of funding available each year. North Carolina Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) officials believe WRP partnerships can also be used in the recovery of the red

wolf, as red wolf habitat includes wetlands. Suitable habitat for the red wolf in WRP projects will be created in the next few years, according to NRCS.

CRP Helps Illinois River

The Illinois River in north-central Illinois has been targeted for extensive restoration efforts, thanks to a partnership that includes federal and state agencies, private organizations and farmers. These groups work together in a cost-share arrangement

through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This incentive-based program provides funding to farmers to help reduce erosion and pollutants from reaching the Illinois River. Based on the restoration of 110,843 acres of bottomlands, it is estimated that soil erosion is being reduced by 2.5 million tons per year. Waterfowl numbers are also growing since restoration began.

CSP Helps St. Joseph Watershed

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is funding hundreds of landowners working to improve the ecological health of the St. Joseph watershed across parts of Indiana, Ohio and Michigan. The 694,000-acre watershed has been degraded by sediment pollution, pathogens from waste and excess nutrients from farming.

Fortunately, the watershed is undergoing cleanup. Over \$4 million was awarded to landowners in 2004. CSP contracts cover 111,123 acres of land, with 218 landowners participating in the program.

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