

2017 Corners For Wildlife



Program Guidelines

1. Allotment of Funds:

Funding for the program will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. This is done to speed up the enrollment process. This means that materials are also ordered and delivered to landowners in a timelier manner. Currently, funding for program enrollment is available through the Nebraska Environmental Trust, Pheasants Forever, and the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission for 2015, 2016 and 2017.

2. Landowner Contract Payments:

Available contract rates:

- a) Planting a selected nesting cover mixture without trees and shrubs = up to \$60 per acre.
- b) Planting a PF/QF biologist designed nesting cover mixture with at least 400 shrubs and trees in a traditional row planting = up to \$75 per acre.
- c) Planting a PF/QF biologist nesting cover mixture with 2 shrub plantings that are each 1,500 ft² in size (a total of 267 shrubs/thicket) = up to \$100 per acre.

Similar to the program in the past, contract payment rates will be determined by each NRD participating in the program. In other words, if you feel that interest would be just as high at a lower contract rate, then please lower the rate. From a Pheasants Forever standpoint, the more corners enrolled, the better!

If you wish to lower contract rates from the contract enclosed in this packet, please contact Mary at 308-428-3062 or mnoable@pheasantsforever.org as soon as possible so a new contract can be generated for your use in signing up landowners.

3. Sign-up Dates:

There will be no official sign-up period for the programs since funds are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact the Pheasants Forever State Office at 308-428-3062 if you have questions on the availability of funds as signups progress. For 2017, the program enrollment is happening exceedingly fast. Please contact the PF State Office as soon as possible.

4. Contract Approval:

As you receive landowner interest in Corners For Wildlife enrollment, please use the Notice of Interest (NOI) form provided. Send the NOI to Mary at mnoble@pheasantsforever.org. Mary will let you know if there is funding available for the project. After receiving project approval, a contract, plan, shrub plan, and aerial photograph for each project should then be submitted as soon as possible.

When funding for the year is exhausted, we will be happy to continue accepting NOI forms and hold them on a waiting list for the next year's program enrollment. In that case, those contracts will be the first ones accepted for the new program year. Interested landowners may also be able to plant their nesting cover mixture in the fall before their contracts starts. In many cases, landowners are interested in planting grasses at this time of the year to help establishment and fitting the field work into a time with greater flexibility. A Corners for Wildlife Notice of Interest Form should be filled out for each landowner interested in being added to the waiting list. If funding is available the following year, these landowners will be accepted into the program in the order that the Notice of Interest Forms were received. To obtain a copy of the Notice of Interest Form, contact the PF State Office at 308-428-3062.

5. Enrollment Reporting:

In order to ensure that planting materials are distributed in a timely manner, we are asking that all proposed contracts and plans be submitted to the Pheasants Forever State Office as soon as possible. Please make sure the following information is included with each contract:

- Landowner name and address
- Name and address to ship the grass seed to (no P.O. Boxes)
- Seed mixture
- Number of acres of seed needed

That information will allow us to place orders and have the seed delivered as quickly as possible. The seed vendor will ship the grass seed mixture directly to the landowner. Landowners are not required to order seed from Pheasants Forever. If seed is ordered from Pheasants Forever, the PF/QF biologist can place the order through the PF State Office and the landowner will be invoiced for 25% of the total cost (PF covers 75% of the total cost). If seed is not ordered through Pheasants Forever, the landowner will need to submit a copy of the invoice, the seed mixture, and a W9 form to the PF State Office for 75% reimbursement. The landowner will need to pay the alternative seed vendor 100% of the total cost and submit the paperwork to PF for reimbursement.

Unless otherwise specified, all seed orders will be delivered with the fluffy seed separated from the small, slick seeds. This seed mixing combination is designed for projects that will be planted using a no-till grass drill. There are many PF chapter drills across the state, to obtain local drill contact information visit www.NebraskaPF.com and click on the county on the map found on the home page of the website.

6. NRD Participation:

NRD participation in Corners For Wildlife has not changed over the years. As a full partner in the program, NRD's agree to:

- Promote the Corners For Wildlife program and enroll landowners.
- Plant the trees and shrubs free of charge to the landowner when 400 or more shrubs and trees are included in the plan.

- Invoice Pheasants Forever for 100% of the cost of shrubs and trees. Participating landowners should not receive any bill for materials from the NRD for these projects.
- Place two project signs on every corner enrolled in the program. Signs can be obtained from PF and PF biologists can assist with sign posting.
- Complete a project evaluation form for projects when they are visited periodically throughout the year.
- Administer landowner contract payments.

7. Grass Mixtures:

Grass mixtures have to be designed by a Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist to ensure that maximum wildlife benefits are being obtained. Contact your local FBWB for a grass seed mixture.

8. Materials and Planting Costs:

Landowners receive cost-share assistance on project materials. Eligible items include:

- Grass seed = 75% cost share from PF
- Shrubs = 75% cost share from PF
- Shrub planting = 75% cost share from PF
- Project signs = 100% cost share from PF
- Tree planting (when planting 400 or more shrubs or trees) = 100% cost share from the NRD

Expenses that are not eligible for cost share are: drill rental, site preparation and planting costs, fencing, shrub spraying and weed control. These are all landowner costs.

Some of these expenses may be cost-shared through a local Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever chapter, contact your local Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist for assistance.

9. Landowner Cost Share:

Landowners entering the program will receive a 75% cost-share assistance for materials from Pheasants Forever and are responsible for 25% of the seed mixture and shrubs. Site prep and project maintenance costs are the responsibility of the landowner. The NRD should send an invoice to PF for the shrubs/trees for payment. PF will then invoice the landowner for their 25% share.

10. Tree and Wildlife Shrub Plantings:

In order to comply with the wishes of the Nebraska Environmental Trust board and provide greater wildlife benefits for native wildlife like bobwhite quail and grassland songbirds, an increased emphasis is now being placed on the establishment of wildlife shrub thickets. A shrub thicket is a planting that is a minimum of 1,500 ft² in size and contains wildlife shrubs that tend to sucker. Examples of preferred wildlife shrubs includes: American Plum, Common Chokecherry, Sand Cherry, Skunkbush Sumac and Silver Buffaloberry.

A shrub thicket planting plan is included with your NRD's contract that demonstrates how two thickets can be machine planted on each project that are 30' x 50' in size and plant 267 shrubs at a 2.5' x 2.5' spacing. Spacing shrub plantings at this density is required to ensure

the thicket is able to out-compete cool-season grasses in the future and provide maximum wildlife benefits.

In order to help ensure quality wildlife shrub and tree plantings, landowners are required to make an investment in the future management of the planting. Landowners are responsible for mechanical or chemical maintenance for the life of the contract.

When planting a shrub thicket, the application of fabric weed barrier is no longer practical. In order to properly establish thickets, a non-selective herbicide should be applied before the nesting cover planting if weeds or grass (especially non-natives such as smooth brome) are present. The planting sites should be prepared according to NRD instructions.

Continued control of grass competition in shrub thickets can be accomplished with the use of a grass selective herbicide during the first 2 years. In situations where smooth brome or bluegrass is present, this is vitally important to the proper establishment and growth of shrub thickets.

Since the tree and wildlife shrub plantings are one of the most important aspects related to the permanency of the project, it is important to ensure the greatest survival and growth rate of tree and shrub plantings as possible.

11. No-till Seed Drills:

For landowners that are having difficulty in locating a no-till seed drill, their local Pheasants Forever or Quail Forever chapter may have one available. The location of these drills and information about using them can be obtained through our website at:

www.NebraskaPF.com.

12. General Program Requirements:

- The project must be located on or adjacent to a center pivot irrigation field. We have lots of flexibility with this partnership, but according to the terms of the grant, the project will need to be associated in some way with a center pivot irrigation system.
- The goal of the program is to establish new wildlife habitat in an area that did not have wildlife habitat. Corners that are in existing grass cover can qualify if the current cover will be completely removed through chemical application (fall and spring spraying of a non-selective herbicide) and re-established to an available habitat mixture.
- If the landowner desires to plant trees instead of shrub thickets, Pheasants Forever will need to approve the tree planting plan prior to enrollment of the project. The main emphasis of the program is now to encourage the establishment of shrub thickets on the projects.
- Maintenance of tree and wildlife shrub plantings is required each year for the life of the contract, or the use of fabric weed barrier.
- Project signs (2) are required on each project. These signs will be supplied by Pheasants Forever and are to be placed at shrub and tree planting time.
- We are most interested in those corners that are being enrolled with two shrub thickets greater than 1,500 ft² on each corner.

- Violation of the contract will result in forfeiture of funds. Past cost share paid by PF and past contract payments made will have to be re-paid to PF.

13. Landowner Contract Payments:

The first landowner contract payments will be issued one year after the establishment of the project. For example, if a project is planted in the spring of 2017, the first annual contract payment will be issued in June 2018. A check for all the contract payments due and a summary will be sent to the NRD; the NRD will then issue the individual landowner payments.

14. Materials needed with each Project form the NRD:

To administer the program and complete Environmental Trust Fund progress reports, Pheasants Forever will need certain information regarding each project in the program after sign-ups are completed.

- Fully signed contract by all 3 parties (Landowner, NRD and Pheasants Forever)
- Fully completed project plan
- Aerial photograph with project location highlighted
- Shrub plan
- Comments or suggestions for improving the program in the future

Program Contacts

Mary Noble
Habitat Partnerships Specialist
1718 4th Avenue #305
Plattsmouth, NE 68048

308-428-3062

mnoble@pheasantsforever.org

Kelsi Wehrman
Stat Coordinator
3452 Road R
Nelson, NE 68961

402-621-0744

kwehrman@pheasantsforever.org