

# 2020 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 timely manner. Funding for the program comes from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, Pheasants Forever, Nebraska's Natural Resource Districts, and the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission.

## 2. Annual Landowner Contract Payments:

Contracts are five-year contracts and cannot be renewed after expiration. This program is designed to enroll new areas every year and provide the maximum amount of wildlife benefit across the state.

- Planting a nesting cover seed mixture without trees and shrubs = \$60 per acre
- Planting a nesting cover mixture with shrub plantings (at least 2 shrub thickets per corner, number of thickets to be determined depending on area size) = up to \$100 per acre

## 3. Sign-up Dates:

There will be no official sign-up period for the program since funds are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact your local Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist at <http://nebraskapf.com/contact/> or the Pheasants Forever State Office at 308-428-3062 if you have questions on the availability of funds as signups progress.

## 4. Contract Approval:

A Notice of Interest (NOI) form should be sent to your local Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist, your local NRD, or the PF State Office at [mpatten@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:mpatten@pheasantsforever.org). The PF State Office will notify the NRD and FBWB of project approval. After receiving project approval, a

contract, shrub plan, and aerial photograph for each project should then be sent to [mpatten@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:mpatten@pheasantsforever.org) 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. In that case, those contracts will be the first ones accepted for the next program year. Interested landowners may also be able to plant their nesting cover mixture in the fall before their contracts start. In many cases, landowners are interested in planting their seed mixture at this time of the year to help establishment and fitting the field work into a time with greater flexibility.

## **5. Contracts:**

Please make sure the following information is included with each contract:

- Contract fully filled out & signed by the landowner & the NRD when applicable
- Aerial map
- Shrub plan
- POA (if it's in a POA, which one)
- When the seed and shrubs will be planted

## **6. Seed Mixtures:**

Seed 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.

Landowners can order their seed through Pheasants Forever or any other vendor they want. If ordering through PF, the Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist can place the order on their behalf and the seed will be delivered directly to the landowner and the landowner will receive an invoice for their 25% of cost.

If not ordering through PF, the landowner will need to ensure that no species substitutions are made, unless approved by the biologist. Landowners can get 75% reimbursement for the seed by submitting a copy of the seed invoice, seed mixture description, and a W9 to [mpatten@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:mpatten@pheasantsforever.org).

## **7. 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 = 100% cost share from participating NRD's  
Shrub planting = 75% cost share from PF in the Lower Loup NRD area only
- Drill rental, site prep, fencing, and all other site prep and maintenance costs = 0% cost share

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.

### **8. 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 placed on the establishment of wildlife shrub thickets. A shrub thicket is a planting that is a minimum of 1,500 ft<sup>2</sup> 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 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. The quantity, size, and spacing of shrub thickets shall be determined by the PF Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist.

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. 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 PF biologist 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.

### **9. No-till Seed Drills:**

In order to plant the high diversity seed mixture, a no-till grass drill will be needed. Many PF chapters have no-till grass drills available for rent. Contact information for drills can be found at <http://nebraskapf.com/chapter-equipment/>

### **10. 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 approved habitat mixture.

Maintenance of the seeding and shrub plantings is required each year for the life of the contract.

Two project signs are required on each project area. Signs will be supplied by Pheasants Forever. Each pivot corner is considered a separate project area.

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 refunded to Pheasants Forever.

**11. Landowner Contract Payments:**

The first landowner contract payment will be issued one year after the grass seed is planted. For example, if a project is planted in the spring of 2020, the first annual contract payment will be issued in June 2021. In participating NRD's, annual payments are sent to the NRD and the NRD issues the individual landowner checks. In the Lower Loup NRD area and the Middle Republican NRD area, landowners will receive checks directly from PF. Landowners receiving payments directly from PF will need to provide PF with a W9 form before payments are made. Participating NRD's may need additional paperwork.

## Program Contacts

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