

NEWS RELEASE



6013 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis, IN 46278
www.in.nrcs.usda.gov

Wildlife Habitat Program Raises Limits and Tackles Invasive Plants

INDIANAPOLIS, February 28, 2007—In an effort to provide more support for wildlife habitat in Indiana, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has raised dollar limitations on large projects, and allocated money for treating invasive plant infestations.

“These changes are good news for wildlife”, says Xavier Montoya, Acting State Conservationist for NRCS. “Where we previously had a limit of \$25,000 per applicant under the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), we now have increased the limit to \$50,000 in cost-share payments. This is effective immediately and applies to existing applications and new applications. It opens the door to funding larger wildlife habitat development and enhancement projects.”

“We also opened the program up to treat some Invasive plants in Indiana too. These plants often invade woodlands and other areas that wildlife use, and they eliminate or limit growth of native plants that the wildlife rely on for food and habitat,” says Montoya. “We included Kudzu to support IDNR’s Division of Entomology & Plant Pathology’s Kudzu eradication initiative. Kudzu has gotten a toe-hold on some private land plots here in Indiana. By working through WHIP those landowners can eradicate those infestations with limited out of pocket expense.” The invasive plants that are targeted include Kudzu, Asian bush Honeysuckle, Autumn Olive, Multiflora Rose, Japanese Honeysuckle, Tree of Heaven, Glossy Buckthorn and Periwinkle. NRCS will set up a multi-year plan with landowners for treating these plants.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program is voluntary and is designed for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. Through WHIP NRCS provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. By targeting wildlife habitat projects on all lands and aquatic areas, WHIP provides assistance to conservation minded landowners that are unable to meet the requirements of other USDA conservation programs that work on farm lands.

To find out more, or to apply, contact NRCS at the nearest USDA Service Center, or your local Soil and Water Conservation District.

More information about WHIP can be found on-line at
<http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/whip.html>

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Contacts:

Xavier Montoya, Acting State Conservationist (317) 290-3200
Mike McGovern, Public Affairs Specialist, (317)290-3200, ext 324

