



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

*Working through partnerships to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat on private lands*

Stewardship. Partnership. Fish and wildlife. Future generations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) Program embraces each of these themes. It's about working together in a voluntary pro-active manner with private landowners to restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitat. It's about sharing resources of time, energy, and funds to help ensure that elements of our common heritage -- wildlife, fish, and a healthy ecosystem -- will be there for our kids, and their kids.



The Partners Program focuses on improving habitat for federal trust resources: migratory birds, federally-listed endangered or threatened species, and interjurisdictional fish. In Michigan, restoration of wetlands has been, and remains, the primary focus for the Partners Program. The program also includes restoration of grasslands, streams (both in the channel and within the riparian corridor), and specific habitats used by federally-listed endangered or threatened species. Since this program began in Michigan in 1988, more than 2,400 projects have been completed, totaling approximately 25,000 acres. Partners include, but are not limited to, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Conservation Districts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Michigan Department of Natural Resources.



#### Wetland Restoration

Wetland restorations are generally focused where previous agricultural drainage provides an opportunity to restore hydrology, or put the "wet" back into altered wetlands. Projects often involve breaking or plugging a portion of a tile line, blocking a ditch, or building a low berm or embankment. Restorations are designed to re-establish shallow-water wetlands (depth of 3 feet or less) containing a mixture of open water and vegetated areas. The program does not create farm ponds and does not alter existing natural, undisturbed wetlands.

#### Grassland Projects

Grassland habitat provides a buffer around wetland areas and nesting cover for some waterfowl and a number of declining grassland birds such as bobolinks and meadowlarks. The Partners Program is working with others in Michigan's agricultural counties to promote the establishment of mixed stands of warm-season grasses and native wild flowers. Partners can help both with site preparation and seeding of these prairies. Grasslands 20 to 40 acres in size, and larger, help provide adequate cover and food throughout the year for a variety of migratory birds, pheasants, and other wildlife.



## Stream Improvements

Efforts are underway to improve stream structure, stabilize stream banks, and improve road crossings in northern Michigan watersheds that support brook trout or other interjurisdictional fish. Stream improvement projects in southern Michigan are considered on a case-by-case basis.



## Habitat for Endangered Species

Partners' efforts are expanding to restore sensitive habitats supporting endangered or threatened species. For example, forested wetlands are restored to benefit copperbelly water snake and invasive species, such as glossy buckthorn, are being removed from wetland fens to benefit the Mitchell's satyr butterfly. These projects are also considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Cost and Commitment

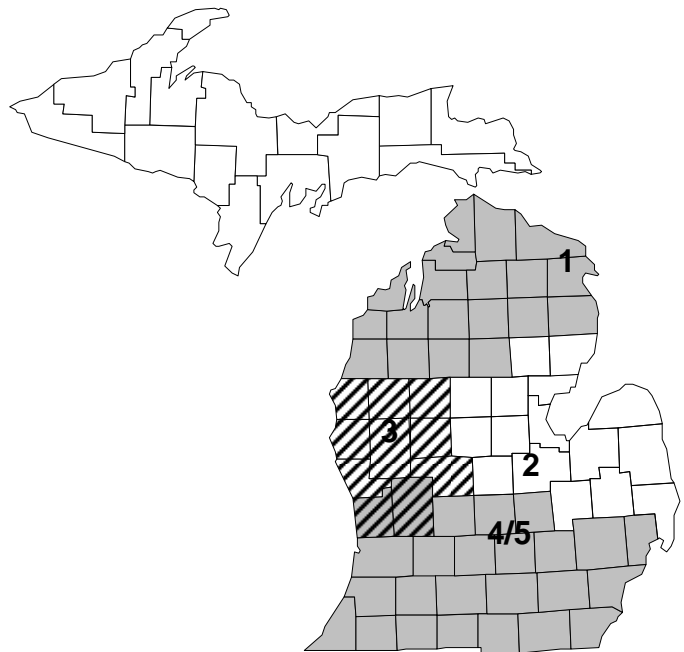
Projects are funded by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service with cost-share assistance provided by Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, other conservation organizations, government agencies, landowners and grants. In addition to regular Service funds, Partners Program biologists may compete for supplemental grants that are typically used for larger projects with many partners and matching partner funds.

Many landowners contribute funds for permits or construction and in-kind services such as labor to prepare seed beds and seed disturbed areas. Landowners are required to sign an agreement to leave the project in place on their property a minimum of 10 years. Longer agreements are encouraged. Landowners are responsible for project maintenance.

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*Our mission is, working with others,  
to conserve, protect and enhance  
fish, wildlife and plants, and their habitats  
for the continuing benefit of the American people.*