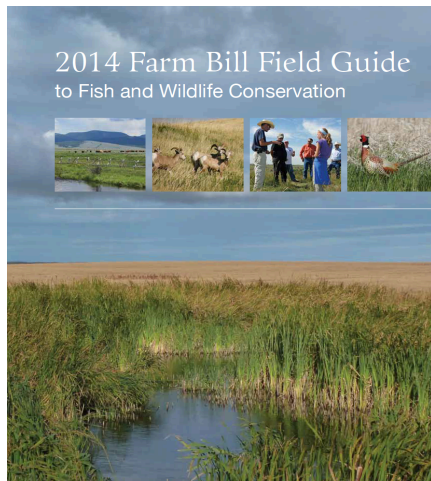




New Farm Bill Guide Now Available



Download the practitioner's guide to help landowners access Farm Bill programs here.

Missoula, Montana (April 28, 2015) – The Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) and a team of partners representing the North American Bird Conservation Initiative's Private and Working Lands Subcommittee released the ***2014 Farm Bill Field Guide to Fish and Wildlife Conservation***. This field guide is a tool to assist the staff of federal and state fish and wildlife agencies, nongovernmental conservation organizations, joint ventures, and other conservation partners in implementing Farm Bill conservation programs. It is primarily designed for those who work collaboratively with private landowners and agricultural producers to improve soil health, water quality, as well as fish and wildlife habitat.

“The 2014 Farm Bill is making robust investments in conservation and the vitality of America’s working lands,” said USDA Natural Resources and Environment Under Secretary Robert Bonnie. “This guide can help our conservation partners and customers understand what programs are available – and how to make those programs work for them.”

This user-friendly guide provides an overview of the Conservation Title in the 2014 Farm Bill, as well as Farm Bill history, program delivery, the role of partnerships, and priority setting. The guide includes case studies and details on the following programs: the Conservation Reserve Program, Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Innovation Grants, Conservation Stewardship Program, Healthy Forests Reserve Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program.

"The Conservation Title of the Farm Bill represents the single largest source of funding to conserve habitat and improve water quality across the United States," said Larry Clemens, director of the North America Agriculture Program for The Nature Conservancy. "The Farm Bill Guide is an essential resource for conservationists who work with farmers, ranchers and landowners responsible for the stewardship of the vast majority of our nation's lands and waters."

This guide serves as an introduction for fish and wildlife conservation providers – the

on-the-ground biologists, range conservationists, foresters, and others – who help deliver Farm Bill conservation programs to landowners. It is a tool to help them navigate the Farm Bill and its programs by engaging with landowners to conserve fish and wildlife habitat.

“The wildlife habitat practices created in the Farm Bill have become the nation’s best tools for landscape-scale natural resources conservation on private lands. A guide like this is an exceptional resource for those partner positions across the country, like the Pheasant Forever and Quail Forever Farm Bill Biologists,” said Jim Inglis, Government Affairs Representative for Pheasants Forever. “We look forward to continued work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency and other local, state, and federal agencies to leverage Farm Bill funding through ongoing and future partnership opportunities.”

The IWJV helped prepare this guide due to the importance of private lands to wildlife populations in the West. The IWJV is heavily invested in working with NRCS to put more “boots on the ground” to provide technical assistance in Farm Bill conservation program implementation, typically in the form of cost-shared partner biologists and range conservationists. Conservation specialists working cooperatively with NRCS and private landowners have expressed the need to better understand how Farm Bill programs can be most effectively applied to fish and wildlife habitat conservation within the context of broader natural resource conservation.

“Private landowners play an instrumental role in the conservation of fish and wildlife in the West,” said Dave Smith, IWJV Coordinator. “As such, we have worked hard to help NRCS build the field delivery capacity to assist landowners in Farm Bill conservation program implementation. This guide brings our collective knowledge together in a user-friendly manner to support this exciting form of collaborative conservation.”

[Click here to access this guide.](#)

Note that a limited number of copies will be printed. Please contact Todd Fearer, Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture, at tfearer@abcbirds.org, or Hannah Ryan, Intermountain Joint Venture, at hannah.ryan@iwjv.org, to request copies.

A diverse coalition of habitat conservation organizations helped the **North American Bird Conservation Initiative** prepare and publish this guide, including:

- Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture
- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- Intermountain West Joint Venture
- The Nature Conservancy
- Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever
- Point Blue Conservation Science
- Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory