

ing declining populations, as well as the likelihood of success in such an effort. Forest conservation activities such as tree planting, forestland improvement, and prescribed burning are among the eligible practices. Applications are ranked according to factors such as the type of habitat that will be restored; the project's potential to meet the program emphasis explained above, and by the resulting benefits to society.

For more information and eligibility requirements for WHIP contact the local USDA Service Center or visit www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/

The cost-share programs listed in this brochure are available to all eligible landowners and each program has its own selection criteria, payment schedule, enrollment dates, and requirements. Also these programs require that best management practices (BMPs) or other environmental guidelines be followed while implementing the practices outlined in the cost-share program. It is the landowner's responsibility to contact the program's respective administering agency to see if he or she meets the program's requirements and discuss with them all of the program's options. More detailed information may be found by visiting the following websites:

Texas Forestry Association
www.texasforestry.org

Texas Forest Service
<http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu>

Natural Resource Conservation Service
www.nrcs.usda.gov

Farm Service Agency
www.fsa.usda.gov



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This brochure was published in December 2007 and is only intended to be a general guide to various cost-share programs. Eligibility requirements and enrollment dates are subject to change without notice. Please contact the proper administering agency for eligibility and enrollment date changes.

This brochure was sponsored by the Texas SFI Committee and the Texas Reforestation (TRe).

A Landowner's Guide to Cost-Share Programs

"It is important for landowners to recognize these programs are out there and that they can reduce the financial burden of managing their property to meet their objectives."

Since 2002 over 28,000 acres have been reforested in East Texas using cost-share programs. In 2007 over 12,000 acres were reforested in East Texas through the EQIP program alone.



Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Administering Agency – Farm Service Agency (FSA)

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners. Through CRP, you can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland. The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) makes annual rental payments based on the agricultural rental value of the land, and it provides cost-share assistance for up to 50 percent of the participant's costs in establishing approved conservation practices. Participants enroll in CRP contracts for 10 to 15 years.

For eligibility requirements and enrollment dates please contact your local Farm Service Agency office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Administering Agency – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

EQIP is a voluntary program that offers eligible landowners both technical and financial assistance in applying conservation practices that address needs and concerns determined by state and local conservation leaders. It assists landowners who apply for eligible conservation activities that are a part of their conservation and management plan. Forestry measures such as site preparation, tree planting, forest stand improvement and invasive species control are eligible practices in almost all east Texas counties. The program is administered through contracts developed with landowners who are accepted into the program. EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practices and a maximum term of ten years. Acceptance into EQIP is determined by eligibility of both the owner and the desired conservation practice. The NRCS and the Farm Service Agency will explain and assist landowners with eligibility requirements. Payments for installed practices are made in accordance with a posted payment schedule for the conservation activity planned. A list of eligible conservation practices as well as the payment schedule is available at the local Service Center or through the Texas NRCS web site. Because technical assistance is as important as financial assistance, landowners can receive help in installing their conservation practices from the NRCS, the Texas Forest

Service, and consultant foresters who are registered as Technical Service Providers. Application for EQIP can be made year-round, however contract development and funding does occur at a specified time during the year. Information on the closing of a sign-up period can be obtained through the local NRCS office or the Texas NRCS website.

For more information, contact the local USDA Service Center or NRCS district office or visit www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

Administering Agencies – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Grasslands make up the largest land cover on America's private lands. For the first time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has directed financial resources and technical expertise to help landowners protect and restore these lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and the protection of grasslands under the greatest threat of conversion to other uses such as urban development and cropping. GRP is a voluntary program that helps landowners protect and restore grasslands while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program provides funding for easements, rental agreements, and cost share payments for eligible lands. Enrollment options are 30-year and permanent easements as well as 10, 15, 20, or 30-year rental agreements and cost-share restoration agreements.

Information on land and owner eligibility, and applicable land use limitations is available at the local USDA Service Center.

Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program

Administering Agency – Texas Forest Service

The Texas Forest Service (TFS) offers federal cost-share incentives to encourage private forest landowners to initiate preventive measures against future infestations of the southern pine beetle (SPB). Precommercial thinning of 6-12 year old pine stands and first thinning of overcrowded pulpwood-sized stands within specified areas of East Texas known to be susceptible to SPB outbreaks are eligible for cost-shares.

This program can cover up to \$75/acre for thinning plus up to \$10/acre for forestry consultant fees.

For more information and eligibility requirements please contact your local TFS office or visit <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu>

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

Administering Agency – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

WRP is a voluntary program offered to landowners who want to restore wetlands that have been altered or converted to other land uses. These are wetlands that have been drained and/or had their forest cover removed so that the land could be used for agricultural or pasture purposes. Landowners can enroll eligible land through either the offering of conservation easements or by enrolling into cost-share agreements. The duration of the easements can be either 30 years or permanent, while restoration cost-share agreements are generally for ten years. Easement purchase and cost-share rates are established by the length of the offer. Restoration activities generally include restoring the natural hydrology and vegetation to the site. These may include the construction of shallow-water impoundments, re-shaping the topography, and the planting of bottomland hardwood trees. The emphasis of WRP is to restore and improve habitat for migratory bird and wetland dependent wildlife, restore the wetland's functions and values, and help achieve the national goal of no net loss of wetlands. Applications for the program are accepted year round, but will close at a specified time each year. Interested landowners are encouraged to contact their local NRCS office for more information and to make an application.

Additional information is available at: www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Administering Agency – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

WHIP provides financial incentives to develop habitat for fish and wildlife on private lands. Participants agree to implement a wildlife habitat development plan and

NRCS agrees to provide a cost-share like assistance for the initial implementation of wildlife habitat development practices. NRCS and program participants enter into an incentive payment agreement for wildlife habitat development. Conservation practice incentive payments are based on the average cost of practice establishment. The program agreement typically lasts a minimum of 5 years from the date that the contract is signed. Emphasis is placed on restoring native habitats of species experienc-