



Forestry Quail Habitat Recovery Cost-Share Program

Virginia's Quail Recovery Initiative

Forestry Topic 16

www.dof.virginia.gov

July 2016



Photo courtesy of VDGIF

Program Overview

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) promotes healthy, sustainable forests for Virginians and Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) seeks to manage Virginia's wildlife to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth. VDGIF is partnering with VDOF to advance Virginia's Quail Recovery Initiative by providing funding assistance to forest landowners for a variety of good forestry practices, which will enhance quail habitat.

Bobwhite quail populations have plummeted in recent years due to loss of appropriate habitat like brushy, weedy areas; field and forest edges, and fallow lands. Forestry practices that promote healthy and productive forests can, at the same time, create good habitat for quail and other animals and insects that prefer these sunny and open conditions.

The program is administered by the Virginia Department of Forestry with funding support from Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Who Qualifies

The program is for private, non-industrial forest landowners within the 15-county area identified in the quail recovery initiative as "target" counties. These counties comprise six Soil and Water Conservation Districts—the Big Walker SWCD (Bland and Wythe); the Chowan Basin SWCD (Greensville,

Southampton and Sussex); the Culpeper SWCD (Culpeper, Greene, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock); the Halifax SWCD (Halifax); the Headwaters SWCD (Augusta), and the Three Rivers SWCD (Essex, King and Queen, and King William). Loggers qualify for practice #2.

Qualifying Practices

Cost-share is available for several approved practices, but shall not exceed 150 acres and \$10,000 per fiscal year per participant (tax identification entity).

Practice #1 – Herbicide Application in Managed Forests

The types and sizes of plants in the forest provide food and cover for wildlife. Managing the type and size of plants is a good way to improve habitat, and selective herbicides can be used to do this. Examples include release (early or mid-age) of desirable trees and plants and control of invasive species.

Specifications:

- ◆ Herbicide application as recommended by forester to improve habitat
- ◆ Ground or aerial application of a herbicide that targets certain plants and has little effect on beneficial wildlife plants
- ◆ 60% of cost, up to \$60/acre
- ◆ Applicant agrees to maintain practice for five years (pine) or 10 years (hardwood)

Practice #2 – Forest Road/Trail Seeding/Stabilization

Roads and trails provide access for timber harvesting and forest management. Seeding of these will reduce erosion and provide beneficial food and cover for quail and other species. Landowners and loggers qualify.

Specifications:

- ◆ Forest areas where harvesting has occurred
- ◆ Land preparation and seeding with plants that hold soil and benefit quail

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- ◆ 60% of costs, up to \$100/acre
- ◆ Applicant agrees to maintain practice for five years



Practice #3 – Diminished Pine Species Establishment

Shortleaf and longleaf pine were once common, but now greatly diminished. Both are well-adapted to fire, promote rich habitats and produce high-quality forest products.

Specifications:

- ◆ Incentive to prepare land and plant shortleaf or longleaf pine
- ◆ Tree spacing no closer than 10-foot by 10-foot spacing (434 trees/acre)
- ◆ 80% of costs, up to \$200/acre
- ◆ Applicant agrees to maintain practice for 10 years



Practice #4 – Non-Commercial Thinning

Stands that are too thick will shade out beneficial ground plants and have lower potential for timber. Early thinning will improve tree growth, health and development of wildlife-favoring plants.

Specifications:

- ◆ Young, thick forest stands (per forester recommendations)
- ◆ Stand thinned (pine) or crop trees released (hardwood)
- ◆ 80% of costs, up to \$100/acre
- ◆ Applicant agrees to maintain practice for 10 years

Practice #5 – Prescribed Burning in Forest Stands

Fire, under controlled and managed conditions, is a tool that can benefit both forests and wildlife. It can reduce build-ups of hazardous fuels, opens the understory, and encourages new plant growth used by wildlife.

Specifications:

- ◆ Mid-aged or older pine or hardwood stands (per forester recommendations).
- ◆ Conducted safely and according to burning laws
- ◆ 60% of costs, up to \$40/acre
- ◆ Applicant agrees to maintain practice for three years

For More Information

For more information about this program and other VDOF services or programs, please contact your local Virginia Department of Forestry office or visit www.dof.virginia.gov.



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