

For: State and County Offices

Public Access Incentive Available Through CRP

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 CRP Public Access Incentive

A Background

At the White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy (Conference), Vice-President Cheney announced that CRP incentives would be authorized for farmers and ranchers to permit land enrolled in CRP to be accessible to the public for hunting, fishing, bird watching, and other recreational activities.

Note: After environmental compliance requirements are complete, additional information including a signup date will be announced.

B Purpose

This notice provides:

- an estimated timeline
- USDA press release (Exhibit 1)
- fact sheet made available at the Conference (Exhibit 2).

C Timeline

Environmental compliance is expected to be completed by late Spring 2009.

D State Office Action

State Offices ensure that County Offices are aware of this notice.

E County Office Action

County Offices shall follow the provisions of this notice.

<p>Disposal Date</p> <p>July 1, 2009</p>	<p>Distribution</p> <p>State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices and NRCS State Offices</p>
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Public Access Incentive Press Release

Release No. 0256.08



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA TO LAUNCH PUBLIC ACCESS INCENTIVE FOR THE CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

RENO, Nev., Oct. 3, 2008 - Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer today said that USDA would fully implement President George W. Bush's directive to offer incentives to farmers and ranchers for opening up their land in the Conservation Reserve Program to the public for hunting, fishing, bird watching and other recreational activities.

Schafer made the announcement at the White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy today in Reno.

"The President is committed to enhancing support of habitat conservation by offering public access to Conservation Reserve Program land," Schafer said. "The Conservation Reserve Program is the largest public-private partnership for conservation and wildlife habitat in the nation and we expect robust participation in this initiative. It will provide better access and allow more efficient management of game populations while allowing CRP participants to continue to provide vital environmental benefits such as improving air and water quality, enhancing wildlife habitat and reducing erosion."

The goal of this incentive, Schafer said, is to double public access by providing up to 7 million acres of CRP land for public access in the next 5 years in participating states. The CRP public access incentive permits partnerships with existing state public access programs to identify and mark tracts of land as publicly accessible and publish maps for hunters and recreation enthusiasts. The incentive is consistent with current state public access incentives and will enhance the ability of state game departments to use hunting seasons as a wildlife management tool.

The CRP public access incentive will be limited to CRP participants in the 21 states that already have public access programs. These 21 states are: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming.

The public access incentive will pay \$3 per acre, per year, for the life of the CRP contract, provided the contract acres remain enrolled in the state public access program. CRP contracts are between 10 and 15 years. This incentive will be available to CRP participants with new or existing CRP contracts. This public access incentive is available to CRP participants that voluntarily agree to open CRP land to public hunting, recreation, wildlife viewing and other recreational activities.

CRP is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers enhance environmentally sensitive land. Producers enroll in CRP and plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve water quality, control soil erosion and enhance habitats for waterfowl and wildlife. In return, USDA provides producers with rental payments.

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Public Access Incentive Fact Sheet

Fact Sheet: Hunting, Wildlife, and Habitat	Page 1 of 2
 <p>THE WHITE HOUSE PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH</p>	 CLICK HERE TO PRINT
<p>For Immediate Release Office of the Press Secretary October 3, 2008</p>	
<p>Fact Sheet: Hunting, Wildlife, and Habitat <i>President Bush Is A Strong Ally In Protecting And Conserving America's Natural Resources</i></p>	
<p>In Focus: White House Conference on North American Wildlife</p>	
<p> White House News</p>	
<p>Today, Vice President Cheney attended the White House Conference on North American Wildlife and reviewed the progress President Bush and his Administration have made on wildlife conservation over the past seven years. Due to economic events this week, President Bush decided to remain in Washington, D.C. Vice President Cheney attended the conference in his place. The Conference sessions provided hunters and other outdoor recreational enthusiasts from across the United States an opportunity to discuss a forthcoming 10-year Action Plan on recreational hunting and wildlife conservation. Since President Bush took office, the Administration has enhanced and increased wildlife habitats, enlarged wildlife populations and increased opportunities for hunting, and the Administration continues to add to these accomplishments. In August 2007, the President signed Executive Order 13443 to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today, the Vice President discussed several new policies to expand and enhance hunting opportunities and wildlife habitat management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A new goal to protect, restore, or improve an additional four million acres of wetlands over the next five years. ○ An incentive, under the Conservation Reserve Program, for landowners who allow public hunting on their land. ○ Tax incentives for landowners who donate conservation easements. ○ New incentives for landowners to conserve wetlands on private lands by planting hardwood forests and providing habitat for waterfowl through the Conservation Reserve Program. ○ A proposal to make permanent the Oil and Gas Pilots Offices at the Bureau of Land Management that gives wildlife biologists and State game departments a seat at the table in planning energy development on public lands. ○ A proposal to authorize the Sporting Conservation Council to continue for 10 years to support progress on the 10-year Action Plan. 	
<p><u>The Administration Encouraged And Promoted Conservation Of Our Natural Resources</u></p>	
<p>We are working together to protect wildlife in America's forests. Under this Administration, the U.S. Forest Service has partnered with hunting organizations to improve forage and cover for elk and wild turkeys.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2002, President Bush launched the Healthy Forest Initiative to help prevent catastrophic wildfires. The Initiative directed Federal agencies to develop several administrative and legislative tools to help restore these ecosystems to healthy, natural conditions and assist in executing core components of the National Fire Plan. Since 2002, we have thinned and removed underbrush and performed other landscape restoration activities across more than 26 million acres – protecting animal habitats and hunting grounds. 	
<p>We are restoring and improving America's wetlands. In 2004, President Bush set a goal of restoring, improving, and protecting three million acres of wetlands in five years and has met this goal one year ahead of schedule. The President's new four million-acre goal will build on that success and include a stronger focus on quality as well as quantity.</p>	
<p>We are encouraging landowners to increase wildlife populations on private property. President Bush</p>	
<p>http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/10/print/20081003-13.html</p>	<p>10/9/2008</p>

Public Access Incentive Fact Sheet (Continued)

Fact Sheet: Hunting, Wildlife, and Habitat	Page 2 of 2
<p>expanded Federal tax incentives to encourage landowners to donate their property for conservation purposes. Through the Conservation Reserve Program, we are helping ranchers and farmers restore grassland habitats on their land.</p> <p>We are working together to ensure that America's sportsmen, hunters, and conservationists can make responsible use of Federal lands. Since 2001, President Bush and his Administration have opened up 30 National Wildlife Refuges to hunting. The Administration is working with 40 sportsmen's groups to improve access to hunting and fishing on Federal property. The President has also made significant efforts to assist citizens with planning safe and legal hunting trips by marking access points, improving highway signage for trail heads, and providing electronic maps online.</p> <p>We are educating the next generation of sportsmen and conservationists. President Bush and his Administration are working through Federal programs such as "Kids in the Woods," to teach children about conservation and provide them with hands-on outdoor experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In October 2007, Mrs. Bush launched the <i>First Bloom</i> program, a new conservation education effort by the National Park Foundation. The program teaches young people about the science of native plants and encourages them to be good stewards of our national parks and our environment.• Private organizations are also contributing to these efforts through programs such as "No Child Left Indoors" – launched by Pheasants Forever – to solve America's "nature deficit disorder." Ducks Unlimited's "Project Webfoot" promotes responsible stewardship of our wetlands in schools, and sportsmen's groups are promoting a culture of conservation that will be sustained by future generations. <p style="text-align: center;">###</p> <hr/> <p>Return to this article at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/10/20081003-13.html</p> <p> CLICK HERE TO PRINT</p> <p>http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/10/print/20081003-13.html 10/9/2008</p>	