

# Colorado Private Land Habitat Programs

January 2000



*For Wildlife-  
For People*



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Dear Reader:

I am pleased to present this booklet about a number of wildlife habitat related programs available to Colorado landowners. This information provides brief descriptions of many governmental and private efforts available to assist interested landowners with habitat protection and restoration. Partnerships in pursuit of mutual goals between landowners and wildlife interests are desirable. Several agencies and organizations contribute substantial amounts of financial support as well as human resources to work with landowners on habitat improvement projects.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife has long recognized the importance of private land to healthy wildlife populations and has developed programs to address those needs. These programs, combined with those of other organizations presented here, comprise a major area of emphasis for wildlife management in Colorado.

### C Colorado Division of Wildlife Programs

Cooperative Habitat Improvement Program  
Pheasant Habitat Improvement Program  
Partnership Program  
Waterfowl Stamp Program  
Game Damage Program  
Wetlands Program  
Ranching For Wildlife Program  
Colorado Trust Land Program  
Landowner Recognition Program

- **Partner Programs**

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Partners For F & W  
Ducks Unlimited, Inc. MARSH Program  
USDA Farm Bill Programs  
Owl Mountain Partnership



Habitat

### Other DOW Partners

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Pheasants Forever, Inc.  
Quail Unlimited, Inc.  
Colorado State Forest Service

These efforts have made considerable differences where they have been implemented. Whether it is pheasant habitat in northeastern Colorado, wetlands in the San Luis Valley, or big game habitat improvement on the west slope, these programs have been successful. Landowner interest and funding partners continue to increase, and I anticipate future growth in agency private lands efforts.

It is important to note that other organizations are also significant contributors to private land habitat efforts. The Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Soil Conservation Board, as well as other organizations are important partners in these programs. We will be updating this booklet to include information from these agencies as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

John W. Mumma  
Director



# Cooperative Habitat Improvement Program

The Cooperative Habitat Improvement Program (CHIP) is a cost-sharing program of the Colorado Division of Wildlife, initiated for all Colorado landowners interested in improving or developing wildlife habitat. The program is designed to benefit wildlife, with little or no cost or sacrifice to agricultural production. There is no restriction on the size of property, as long as the project is compatible with the land. Loss of habitat is the most serious problem facing wildlife today. CHIP can be made to fit almost any farm or ranch. It allows the landowner to decide the type of project and where it will be located. The landowner retains complete control of their property; there is no obligation to allow public access.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife provides technical assistance and cost sharing information. Since 1993 CHIP has established 1,325 acres of wildlife habitat. The Colorado Division of Wildlife has contributed \$80,786 to help share the cost of these important projects. CHIP has also contributed funding to the Living Snowfence Program of the State Soil Conservation Board. Starting in 1996 CHIP funding was used to provide additional incentives for landowners participating in the Conservation Reserve Program of USDA. The CHIP funds were used to cost share on wildlife targeted seed mixes. CHIP funding has been restored in Fiscal Year 1999-2000.

Fiscal Year	No. of Projects	Habitat Established (acres)	Ave. Cost/Project	Total Funds Expended
1993	39	575	\$635.00	\$24,786
1994	17	250	\$824.00	\$14,000
1995	34	500	\$1235.00	\$42,000
Totals	90	1325	Ave - \$ 898/prjct	\$80,786





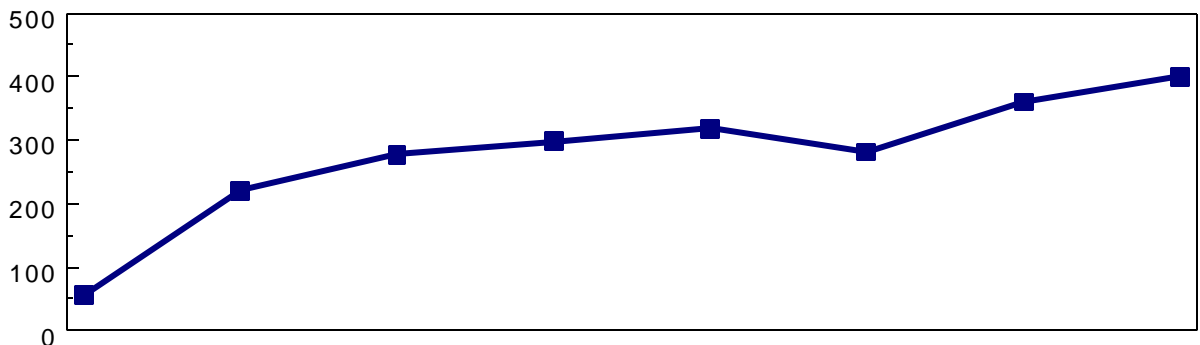
# Pheasant Habitat Improvement Program

The Pheasant Habitat Improvement Program (PHIP) is a cooperative effort by landowners, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and Colorado Chapters of Pheasants Forever. This program was instituted to improve habitat for pheasants in designated areas of eastern Colorado. The primary factor limiting pheasant populations is the lack of secure survival cover in eastern Colorado. PHIP is a flexible program, which offers landowners several options to create survival cover for the pheasants on their land. These options include plum thickets with windbreaks, sorghum food/cover plots in Conservation Reserve

Program fields, and switchgrass plantings in odd areas. Recently, the DOW has offered cost-share thru PHIP to landowners who plant high quality grass for pheasants in CRP.

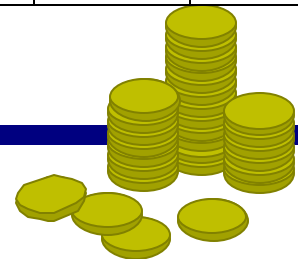
The Division of Wildlife provides funding and technical guidelines for habitat development to Pheasants Forever Chapters. The landowner retains complete control of their property; there is no obligation to allow public access.

Thousands



1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
54,954	221,028	277,930	298,680	317,854	281,616	359,941	400,000

## Spending on PHIP, 1992-1999



Number of Shrub Thickets Planted by Chapter and Year

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	TOTAL
<b>Phillips County</b>	26	51	41	63	54	58	48	24	<b>364</b>
<b>Yuma County</b>	7	30	36	38	40	38	29	28	<b>246</b>
<b>Sterling</b>	5	20	25	15	19	12	14	10	<b>120</b>
<b>Washington Cty.</b>		31	46	50	52	50	51	37	<b>317</b>
<b>Burlington</b>		6	14	17	11				<b>48</b>
<b>Fleming</b>				8	32	21	15	6	<b>82</b>
<b>Morgan County</b>					17	25	24	25	<b>91</b>
<b>Lamar</b>							9	5	<b>14</b>
<b>Cheyenne Wells</b>							10	8	<b>18</b>
<b>Flagler</b>							9	12	<b>21</b>
<b>Baca County Q.U.</b>							6	4	<b>10</b>
<b>Baca County P. F.</b>								16	<b>16</b>
<b>Sedgwick County</b>								10	<b>10</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>1358</b>



Acres of CRP planted to CP4-D Pheasant grass mix, by chapter and year			
<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999*</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Phillips County	5,296	445	<b>5,741</b>
Yuma County	2,029	1,367	<b>3,396</b>
East Central Co. (Flagler)	1,344	4,476	<b>5,820</b>
Frenchman Creek (Fleming)	890	617	<b>1,507</b>
Northeast Co. (Sterling)	183	430	<b>613</b>
Baca County Q.U.	65		<b>65</b>
Cheyenne Wells		337	<b>337</b>
Washington County		1,911	<b>1,911</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9,807</b>	<b>9,583</b>	<b>19,390</b>

- 1999 totals are current through December; substantial acreages will be drilled this winter.







# Habitat Partnership Program

The Habitat Partnership Program is a program that was authorized by the Colorado Wildlife Commission in 1990. Its purpose is to help alleviate rangeland forage and fence conflicts between big game animals and livestock on private and public lands. The program seeks to develop partnerships between landowners, land managers, federal agencies, sportsmen, the public, and the Division of Wildlife. The program is administered by a local Habitat Partnership Committee made up of three members from the livestock community, one member representing the interests of the big game license buying public, one member from each of the land use agencies involved, such as USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management, and one member from the Colorado Division of Wildlife. There are currently 17 Habitat Partnership Committees operating within the state. The program is overseen by a statewide council composed of 2 landowners, 2 sportsmen, 1 crop producer, 1 Colorado State University Range Extensionist, 1 Bureau of Land Management representative, 1 Forest Service Representative, and 1 CDOW representative. There are five basic types of solutions for wildlife/livestock conflicts:

- < Distribution Management Hunts designed to redistribute concentrations of big game to reduce, eliminate, or alleviate conflicts.

- < Habitat Improvement Projects to encourage big game animals to use other areas during certain time of the year or to improve the habitat where they are concentrating.
- < Fence Improvement or Repair to alleviate constant fence repair problems.
- < Direct Payment will be used if necessary where conflicts cannot be alleviated in any other way and the party involved is eligible for big game damage payments.
- < Other Programs carried out include leasing of private land for winter range, monitoring vegetation and animals, hunter referral services, brochures, range management seminars, and/or other educational programs.

In the period from fiscal year 89/90 to fiscal year 98/99, the Habitat Partnership Program has expended \$4,864,125.76 Committee dollars and \$5,260,622.01 from other partners to implement these solutions to wildlife conflicts.

# HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT FY 89/90 thru FY98/99

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>PRIVATE LANDS</u>	<u>PUBLIC LANDS</u>
Seeding	20,494 Acres	6,760 Acres
Weed Control	28,601 Acres	17,827 Acres
Silvicultural Treatment	88 Acres	1,166 Acres
Grazing Management	45,355 Acres	112,125 Acres
Fertilization	18,151 Acres	8,633 Acres
Brush Manipulation	2,304 Acres	2,604 Acres
Prescribed Burns	4,385 Acres	44,309 Acres
Water Developments	128	65
Salt Blocks	902 Public & Private	
Fence Constructed	182.18 miles Public & Private	
Stackyards Built	108	
Fence Repair	991 Ranches	
Fence Crossings Built	72	
Gates Installed	152	



Proper grazing systems are used to improve forage production for livestock and wildlife.



## Colorado Waterfowl Stamp Program

The Colorado Waterfowl Stamp Program, a cooperative endeavor between the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Ducks Unlimited, was initiated in 1990. The Program is funded through the sale of a \$5.00 stamp, required for Colorado waterfowl hunters, and the sale of art prints of the stamp image. Stamp sale funds are earmarked for waterfowl and wetland enhancement projects within Colorado. Funds produced from the sale of prints can be spent through the Colorado Ducks Unlimited Committee either within Colorado or in designated North American Waterfowl Management Plan joint ventures outside Colorado. To date, all print funds have been spent outside the state.

From inception, the actual amount of stamp funds available for project funding has varied from \$165,000 to \$250,000. The ability to leverage stamp monies to obtain matching funds from other sources has led to the success of the program. The initial 6 partners involved in 1990, has increased to a projected 23 partners in 1996.

The annual expenditure of \$254,000 in 1990 has grown to an estimated \$902,000 in 1996.

A multi-agency project review committee serves as a technical advisory group in selecting in-state habitat projects for funding. Initially nearly all projects selected were located on public lands. However, in recent years the review committee realized that good projects on private lands provide equal benefits for waterfowl and wetland habitats, as projects on public lands. In many instances, matching funds are more readily available for projects on private lands.

Most Duck Stamp Program funds expended on private lands have been transferred to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners For Fish and Wildlife Program. Through fiscal year 1995-96, \$471,000 (\$25,000, \$ 40,000, \$61,000, \$95,000, \$105,000, \$145,500 - 90 through 95) in Duck Stamp funds has been expended through the Partners Program. An additional \$32,000 has been expended on private lands through cooperative agreements with the Natural Resource Conservation Service or the Soil Conservation Districts.





# GAME DAMAGE PROGRAM

The Division of Wildlife's Game Damage Program began in 1931 with legislation passed by the State General Assembly providing for payments for wildlife damage. In 1972 liability of damage by wildlife was limited to only big game animals as defined by State Statutes and guided by Regulations. This was the result of a compromise between the CDOW and the agricultural sector. The issues surrounding the payment of claims by the CDOW have been and still are being debated internally within the organization and externally within the ranks of the hunting public and the livestock industry as to the legitimacy of the use of sportsmen dollars for the payment of damage to private property. Many states have no legal responsibility to compensate for damage by wildlife and remain steadfast in keeping it that way. However, the CDOW views the payment of damages as a cost of managing wildlife in terms of sustaining higher populations of big game animals that can and do cause considerable damage to private property. In 1995, the CDOW updated the Game Damage Program by streamlining the investigation and processing of claims as well as reducing the costs of providing Game Damage Preventative Materials. This update also addressed long-term solutions that were effective in preventing big game damage by linking the payment process to the preventative materials distribution process. In this light, the program has remained a dynamic and flexible process representing one of the more successful wildlife damage compensation programs in the United States.

Currently, the CDOW Game Damage Program equates to expenditure of over \$1.5 million annually. This includes approximately \$450,000 allotted for the purchase of preventative materials, up to \$685,000 for the payment of validated claims, and the remainder in operating and manpower costs associated with the investigation of claims, the delivery of materials, and the overall administration of the program. The Program is currently undergoing evaluation of its ability to: tie into other CDOW landowner programs (Habitat Partnership Program, Ranching for Wildlife Program, wildlife habitat enhancement programs etc.); to improve the investigative process for bear

and mountain lion damages to livestock; to address increases in non-agricultural payments to landowners (campers, tents, hot tubs, coolers, houses, vehicles, sheds, garages etc.); to develop pro-active, long term solutions that increase the effectiveness of preventing future claims; and to improve CDOW working relationships with landowners, representatives of the agricultural industry, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife strongly believes that the Game Damage Program plays a significant role in the successful management of the state's wildlife by providing solutions for the compensation, reduction and prevention of damages and conflicts between people, especially landowners in the agricultural sector, and the state's diverse population of big game animals. As Colorado's human population continues to grow and as development encroaches upon and diminishes more and more critical wildlife habitat, and as restrictions on hunting and trapping continue to increase, wildlife/human conflicts will likewise continue to multiply. This will result in additional pressure on the CDOW to expand its programs on conflict resolution and wildlife damage management and will be one of the major challenges for the next decade. The Program promotes a higher tolerance level for those big game animals that cause significant damage to private property and allowing the CDOW to manage for significantly higher big game populations for the use and enjoyment of hunters and all others interested in sustaining Colorado's rich and diverse wildlife heritage.

For further information contact:  
Stephen H. Porter Game Damage Coordinator  
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6060 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80216  
303-291-7335

**GAME DAMAGE PROGRAM  
CLAIMS AND MATERIALS SUMMARY  
FISCAL YEAR 1998/99**

**CLAIMS**

During fiscal year 1998/99 a total of 355 claims were paid for a total of \$479,505.24 and a total of 16 claims were denied by the Wildlife Commission for a total of \$16,936.75. A summary of these claims is as follows:

Bear	\$253,743.69	Mountain Lion	95,571.26	Whitetail Deer	1,167.76
Elk	94,487.74	Moose	00		
Mule Deer	33,969.62	Pronghorn	565.17		

**MATERIALS**

A total of 71,514 miles were driven to deliver a total of 209,888 feet (40 miles) of preventative fencing materials. Cost of fencing averaged \$1.35 per linear foot. Materials were delivered to 212 different individuals and distributed accordingly to areas distributed as listed below:

**STATEWIDE**

Apiaries	10
Orchards	11
Nurseries	28
Gardens	3
Vineyards	2
Stackyards	73
Haysheds	5
Paneled Yards	4
Sod Farms	1
Horse Yards	8
Forage	4
Extra Materials	61





## WETLANDS PROGRAM-WETLANDS INITIATIVE LEGACY PROJECT

On July 27, 1997 the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) received a Legacy Grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) to partially fund the Colorado's Wetland Initiative Legacy Project (WI). This project has since evolved into the flagship of the CDOW's Wetlands Program (WP). The 4.1 million dollar grant was combined with funds from the WI Partners-Ducks Unlimited (DU), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Partners For Fish and Wildlife (PFW), Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) and the CDOW resulting in a 12.5 million dollar statewide effort to conserve wetlands using the strategy involving willing to participate landowners and entities.

The overall goal of the Wetlands Initiative Legacy Project is to conserve biologically significant wetlands in Colorado. Specifically, the objective is to conserve 100,000 acres of wetlands by 2005. This will be accomplished through the development of an extensive planning and implementation process involving 12 coordinated projects:

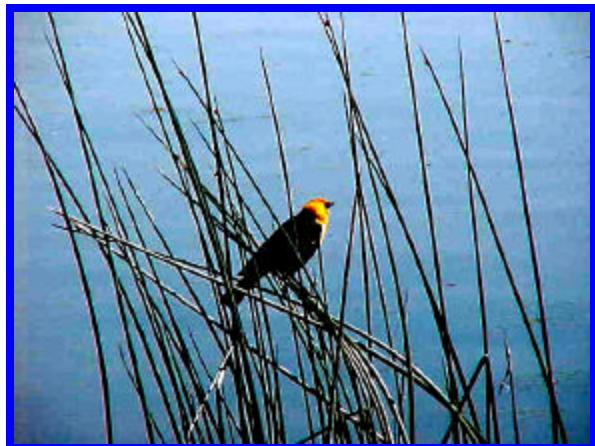
- \*The Wetlands Initiative Legacy Project
- \*Wetlands-Protection-Partnerships
- \*CDOW Wetlands Teams
- \*N.A.W.M.P. Joint Ventures in Colorado
- \*Section 404 Program Liaisons in Colorado
- \*Implementation of Wetlands Reserve Program and other related Farm Bill Programs in Colorado
- \*Statewide Wetlands Strategy (pilot in San Luis Valley)
- \*Wetlands Management Projects, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation
- \*Wetlands Protection Funding
- \*Wetlands Protection Participants Clearing House/Database
- \*Wetlands Protection Projects Database

The Wetland Initiative Project is now in the implementation phase and has already surpassed its goal of conserving 15,000 acres of wetlands by

the year 2000. To date, over 23,000 acres of wetlands have been protected through this program. As a voluntary approach to wetlands conservation, it has developed into a powerful wetlands conservation partnership aimed at protecting all biologically significant wetlands of the state and thus the habitats of significant populations of birds, mammal, reptiles and amphibians.

The importance of wetlands protection is strongly supported by the people of Colorado as well and is reflected in the success of this program on both private and public lands. This innovative approach is just another example of how partnerships working with people can significantly make a difference in the successful management of Colorado's wildlife and their habitats.

For further information contact:  
Alex Chappell  
Wetlands Program Coordinator  
Colorado Division of Wildlife  
West Regional Service Center  
711 Independent Avenue  
Grand Junction, CO 81505  
970-248-7175





# RANCHING FOR WILDLIFE

Ranching For Wildlife is a program initiated in 1985 by the Colorado Wildlife Commission to provide incentives for landowners who control large acreage to manage their lands to maximize wildlife benefits. The Program has, to this date, opened up over a million acres of prime private wildlife habitat to both paid hunting and to limited public hunting.

Eligible landowners must have a minimum of 12,000 contiguous acres that contain significant number of the species that they wish to manage for hunting. There are currently 25 ranches enlisted in the Program. Species hunted include all of those that are limited in drawings; Elk, Deer, Antelope, Bear and Turkey. The number of licenses available on these ranches is determined through negotiations between the landowner and the CDOW. Most of these ranches manage their big game populations to increase the size and age structure of their male animals. The number of male licenses is generally more conservative than those issued for public lands. The limited licenses for these ranches are available to the public through the CDOW's drawing process and are very popular with public hunters requiring a number of preference points to draw these licenses, and provide an excellent opportunity to harvest male or female animals.

Licenses issued for these ranches can only be used on the specified ranch. Hunters obtaining a license to hunt on these ranches are give access to private property that would otherwise be closed to public hunting. The agreements with these ranches allow them to impose additional conditions on the public hunters that relieve concerns the landowners have about security and liability. Hunting on these ranches is a privilege and both the public and the private hunters need to present a favorable impression of good sportsmanship. Successful applicants will receive information from the ranch that will address specific ranch rules.

Some common ranch rules are:

- \*Each hunter is allowed to bring in one non-hunting companion;
- \*Each hunter must sign a liability release;

- \*Each hunter must check in and check out;
- \*Hunters are often assigned areas to hunt on a daily basis to spread out and reduce hunting pressure;
- \*Hunters are not allowed to hunt other species or discharge firearms unnecessarily;
- \*Certain areas of the ranches may be closed for safety reasons;

Advantages the Program gives to landowners:

- \*A guaranteed number of male licenses that they can market for paying hunters;
  - \*90-day season window to hold their hunts;
  - \*They can hunt with rifles during the archery or muzzleloader seasons;
  - \*The knowledge that you are preserving and enhancing prime wildlife habitat.
- Benefits the public receive from the Program:
- \*10% of the male licenses and opportunity to harvest larger male animals for just the cost of the license;
  - \*100% of the female licenses issued for the ranch;
  - \*Equal access to all parts of the ranch that are hunted by the private clients;
  - \*Wildlife habitat improvements implemented on the ranch dictated by a cooperative management plan;
  - \*Quality hunting experience on prime habitat at low hunter densities;
  - \*State has no liability for game damage payments on these ranches (Preventative materials may be supplied).

Season dates for each ranch may vary and change each year. They are listed yearly in the CDOW Big Game Brochure.



# Colorado State Trust Land

## Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Projects on State Trust Lands

The Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners (Board) manages approximately 3.0 million surface acres.

Under a Memorandum of Agreement between the Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners and the Colorado Division of Wildlife (Division), trusts lands are nominated for public recreation that have the highest values for public hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-related recreational uses. Approximately 500,000 acres of trust lands are currently targeted for enrollment in the program at a cost of \$1.00 per acre, adjusted to the consumer price indices. Properties are enrolled annually and concurrently as agricultural leases expire and are renewed.

Out of the \$1.00 per acre paid by the Division, \$.25 per acre is deposited in a special property restoration/natural resource enhancement account. Once a year, applications for wildlife enhancement projects are submitted to a

Five-member steering committee for approval and construction. Only projects on trust lands enrolled in this program qualify for this source of funding. For the most part, these projects consist of wells, ponds, small impoundments and other water-related developments; fencing riparian corridors and other sensitive wildlife areas; replacement of fenced gates with cattle guards; vegetative habitat plantings; control of noxious weeds; property damage (real and personal property) caused by recreationists; and removal of trash and other undesirable/unsightly conditions.

During the first six years of the enhancement fund, seventy-two projects have been or are in the process of being completed at a cumulative cost of approximately \$416,730.00

A summary of the types of projects, number and approximate costs are as follows:

PROJECT TYPE	NUMBER	COST
WATER DEVELOPMENTS	20	\$152,330
FENCING SENSITIVE AREAS	11	\$84,100
CATTLE GUARDS	6	\$35,000
VEGETATIVE PLANTINGS	7	\$35,000
ROAD REPAIR	9	\$31,800
TRASH AND OTHER CLEANUP	5	\$13,500
SAGEBRUSH TREATMENT	3	\$19,000
WEED CONTROL	7	\$21,000
MAPPING	4	\$25,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>\$416,730.00</b>





# THE LANDOWNER RECOGNITION PROGRAM

The Landowner Recognition Program was put together in 1982 by the Colorado Division of Wildlife to improve communications between landowners, sportsmen and the CDOW. This Program is the result of suggestions from the Wildlife Commission and the work of a special task force of CDOW personnel who spent several months to provide appreciation, assistance, and recognition to landowners for their contributions in providing wildlife habitat and public access to that wildlife. Private lands comprise approximately 60% of Colorado's landscapes and 80% of Colorado's wildlife depend on this land for food, shelter, and water. The Program has developed specific cooperative efforts to create a better working relationship between landowners and sportsmen.

The Landowner of the Year Program recognizes the outstanding contributions made by private landowners in providing habitat and/or public access to Colorado's wildlife on private lands. Winners and runners up are selected annually by a three-member judging team appointed by the Landowner Recognition Program Coordinator and approved by supporting organizations. Nominations selected, along with the nominees, are provided two trips to the awards banquets held in Denver, CO. to publicly receive their awards from the CDOW and many other supporting and endorsing groups representing other government agencies, private wildlife and sportsmen organizations. The first banquet is held in January at the National Western Stock Show with honors presented by the governor. The second, less formal banquet is held during the Colorado RV, Sports, Boat and Travel Show in March. This award:

- \*Recognizes the important contributions private landowners are making to improve habitat for wildlife in Colorado;
- \*Promotes the creation and improvement of habitat on private and public land by acknowledging efforts of landowners;

- \*Provides opportunities for the public to access wildlife for hunting, fishing or viewing on private land through the promotion of improved communication with landowners;

- \*Creates opportunities for landowners to share information about innovative land and wildlife stewardship techniques through annual banquets and the quarterly CDOW newsletter, *"News for Landowners"*;

- \*Promotes understanding and appreciation of the rural land ethic;

- \*Provides educational opportunities for schools, 4-H groups, Future Farmers of America, Scout troops and many other groups;

- \*Serves as a model program to other state wildlife agencies.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife's Landowner Recognition Program encourages wildlife habitat improvement projects that involve partnerships between landowners, other state and federal agencies and the private wildlife organizations that improve land and resource management and provide benefits to all involved. Landowners provide critical wildlife habitats that must not only be acknowledged by public recognition, but also by providing them with the ability to continue to make a living off of their lands providing the nation's food and fiber, and to maintain the custom and culture of agriculture. Landowners are essential components to sustaining Colorado's rich and diverse wildlife heritage and programs that provide incentives for them to enhance their lands for wildlife are essential ingredients to a successful wildlife management program.

For further information contact:

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303-291-7274



## PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE

Partners for Fish and Wildlife is a program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designed to provide funding and technical assistance for habitat improvement projects to interested landowners. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program has been functioning within Colorado since 1988. Since that time, the program has completed over 500 agreements with landowners. These projects have resulted in the restoration, creation or enhancement of over 9,000 acres of wetland and 16,000 acres of upland habitats through January 2000. The San Luis Valley has been and remains the area of greatest emphasis due to its high value for migratory water birds and extensive landowner interest. Interest in the program from other parts of the State is growing rapidly. Landowner interest from the western slope, South Platte River Valley, and Southeastern Colorado in particular is increasing. The

program is not limited to specific habitat types, although wetlands and riparian areas have been our primary focus. Through January 2000, the program has participated projects totaling over \$3,000,000. This amount includes funds from other sources such as cooperating landowners, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Natural Resource Conservation Service, CDOW's Colorado State Waterfowl Stamp and Wetland Programs. The program is truly a cooperative effort among landowners, private organizations and state and federal government. In Colorado, the Division of Wildlife and the Fish and Wildlife Service are cooperatively implementing the program. The landowner retains complete control of their property; there is no obligation to allow public access.



# Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

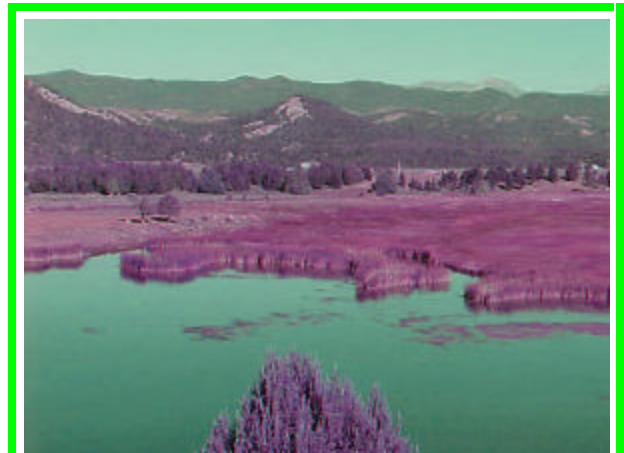
## M.A.R.S.H. Program

Ducks Unlimited, Inc., a non-profit conservation organization, is a national leader in wetland conservation. Much of the effort and money raised by Ducks Unlimited members is used for habitat improvement in the prairie pothole region of the U.S. and Canada. However, our Matching Aid to Restore States Habitat (MARSH) program returns seven and half percent of the money raised within a state back to that state. For Colorado wetlands, that means over \$500,000 has been returned for local Colorado projects. Approximately \$220,000 of that total has gone to wetland projects on private lands. Ducks Unlimited recognizes the importance of private property to healthy wildlife populations and will continue to assist willing landowners through the MARSH program.

Ducks Unlimited has begun to assist Colorado wetland projects on private lands through our U.S. Habitat program. Through U.S. Habitat,

Ducks Unlimited provides complete wetland project services - mapping/survey, design, bidding, and construction management. We are currently working on three U.S. Habitat projects in Colorado, one of which is on private property. We are hopeful that future funding will allow continued expansion of this program into Colorado.

Ducks Unlimited also uses its Major Donor program to raise money for specific Colorado wetland projects. The Major Donor program solicits large contributions from private individuals to fund the construction of large wetland habitat projects.



# THE OWL MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP

The Owl Mountain Partnership developed as a spin-off from the Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) in North Park (Jackson County), Colorado. The North Park HPP Committee applied for and received seed money from Seeking Common Ground to put together an ecosystem level planning process to manage the natural resources in that area. The challenge was accepted and a Steering Committee separate from the HPP group was formed in July 1993.

The Owl Mountain Partnership began on shaky ground in the community because of local distrust in government, the perception that government agencies were joining forces to take over the county, and because of all the political baggage surrounding the term "ecosystem management". However, the Steering Committee outlined these concerns as some of their major issues to first address and to resolve by developing a collaborative planning and project implementation process from the community level. The Partnership recognizes that science cannot provide all of the answers for resource management. Common sense and experience available through local expertise, are also essential ingredients and can come only from the grassroots level of the community. Local people representing a diversity of interests came forward to take the risks and responsibility of demonstrating that successful and sustainable resource management can be accomplished at the community level.

The mission of the Owl Mountain Partnership is to "serve the economic, cultural and social needs of the community by developing adaptive, long term landscape management programs, policies, and practices that ensure ecosystem sustainability. The Partnership, working from the common ground of land health and the development of a local land ethic, put together five fundamentals of ecosystem management to guide them in their planning processes:

**Fundamental 1:** Increased trust must be developed between local stakeholders and all levels of government.

**Fundamental 2:** Ecosystems allow harvest and use of appropriate natural resources on a sustainable basis.

**Fundamental 3:** Local people being affected must be involved and empowered to make decisions and implement actions that will contribute to sustaining the social, cultural, economic and ecological systems upon which they depend.

**Fundamental 4:** Environmental education is a crucial element of management because it is a process of mutual learning about interactions and interdependence of socio-cultural, economic and ecological systems that support mankind.

**Fundamental 5:** Issues that drive an ecosystem management effort must, in large measure, originate from the community's grass roots, where a sense of place and community ties to a natural world are best expressed.

The Owl Mountain Partnership agreed at its beginning to develop its processes over the course of five years. At the end, the Partnership would put together an intensive analysis to determine its future in North Park. That analysis is currently taking place to determine government resource management agency, local government and citizen commitment to continue to expand the program into a full-scaled, countywide ecosystem planning process. The first five years were extremely challenging in terms of developing a working group that has the trust and credibility to effectively make meaningful decisions and recommendations on managing the land and its resources. The task has only just begun, but it is evident that the process for ecosystem management being set up in North Park is one that provides an effective template for the evolutionary processes of land stewardship necessary to meet the challenges of modern day resource management. Members of the community have already expressed their willingness to expand the program and this will be used as a primary basis for determining the future of the Owl Mountain Partnership.

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# THE FARM BILL-U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

With approximately three fourths of the land in the United States being privately owned, activities on private lands have more influence on more populations of more species of wildlife-migratory and resident, terrestrial, wetland, and aquatic-than all of the wildlife management programs in the country combined.

The Farm Bill authorizes about 20 agricultural conservation programs with a combined funding level of \$2.5 billion per year. Most of these programs have significant potential to affect fish and wildlife habitat. Wildlife managers, at the state and local levels must get serious about the Farm Bill to allow it to reach its full potential to maintain and enhance wildlife habitats. The Farm Bill can be a key component to providing the ability to manage wildlife habitat at the levels of landscape necessary to sustain the nations wildlife heritage. Wildlife managers got most of what they asked for from Congress and the USDA in the 1996 Farm Bill in terms of providing funding for incentives for landowners to manage their lands for health and sustainability and thus providing habitats for wildlife for all to enjoy. It is without question, the strongest package of private-land wildlife habitat opportunities ever assembled and must be effectively used to ensure its future when the 2002 Farm Bill is again proposed.

Programs available through the Farm Bill include the following:

\*The *Conservation Reserve Program* is a large-scale land retirement program that established permanent grass or tree cover for wildlife habitat and other purposes on environmentally valuable cropland or marginal pasture for 10 or 15 years. It enrolls large acreage periodically through a traditional national sign-up, or small acreage of certain practices continuously.

\*The *Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program* is a new initiative established as part of the highly successful Conservation Reserve Program. It is set up to protect millions of acres of environmentally sensitive land, increases

wildlife habitat, and safeguards ground and surface water. This program expands CRP's effectiveness by allowing USDA to work in partnerships with State and local interests to meet specific objectives. Project development must originate with State and local governments, which also contribute funding, a specialized local knowledge, and technical support.

\*The *Environmental Quality Incentives Program* is a land-management program that provides incentives to address conservation needs-including fish and wildlife habitat-on croplands or land used for livestock operations. It is a locally driven program focused on priority areas and needs.

\*The *Wetland Reserve Program* is a voluntary land retirement program that assists landowners in restoring and protecting wetlands through cost-share agreements or easements.

\*The *Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program* is a farmland management program that helps landowners plan and pay for habitat improvements in association with active farming operations.

The Farm Bill works through locally established Working Groups and Soil Conservation Districts, designed to operate from the local level-including local involvement from public and private, local, state, and federal sources-in an effort to develop locally driven solutions to local natural resource issues and concerns. This is based on the premise that local people best know the local conservation needs. This is a key component of the Farm Bill's potential for the implementation of wildlife habitat management strategies at the landscape levels necessary to sustain the nations' wildlife populations for the use and enjoyment of everyone.

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