

Habitat complexes maximize benefits

Individual projects should fit within a larger functional system, in contrast to stand-alone projects.

Focused efforts will concentrate on specific **4 to 9-square mile wetland/grassland complexes**. Each complex should strive to include **40 percent total grassland acres** (one-half in permanent grassland) and **20 percent total wetland acres** (one-half in seasonal and temporary basins).

Priority areas are those where a significant investment has already been made or major components of habitat are already in place.

"Working Lands" can add the remaining management or restoration activity to complete the system, thereby maximizing wildlife benefits on minimal acres.



For more information about the Working Lands Initiative, please contact:

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NRCS Photo

Minnesota's "Working Lands For Wildlife Initiative"

A public/private partnership for wildlife development on working farms

Goals:

**Sustainable and increasing
wildlife populations**

--AND--

**Agronomic enhancement for
landowners**



Private Lands is Key

In Minnesota's prairie pothole region the fate of wildlife is largely determined by what happens on private lands. With sufficient technical and financial assistance, **private landowners can affect landscape changes that would dramatically benefit wildlife.**

"Working Lands" brings together public, private, and non-profit organizations in local project teams to provide assistance to landowners interested in identifying economically viable conservation focus areas and strategies. These areas are identified with the benefit of GIS tools, computer models, and local knowledge.

In some cases, land might be set aside to restore wildlife habitat. Other projects might involve changes in certain agricultural practices in ways that support both wildlife and the economic vitality of the farming operation.

Guiding Principles:

- Private land holds the key to wildlife populations in the Prairie Pothole Region of Minnesota
- Food and energy production on agricultural land will be preserved.
- In some cases wildlife and agriculture share the same acres, while in others they complement one another.
- Balance agricultural production and conservation.
- Private landowners assume a wildlife management role.
- Use best available technology-models and mapping combined with local knowledge.
- Flexibility of teams to meet local needs and priorities. Local teams have decision-making authority.

Project Examples:

- Managed haying and grazing projects
- Delayed drainage of cropland creating seasonal wetlands on years when soybeans are planted at a later date
- Prairie management to increase habitat quality.
- Bio mass production for energy
- Critical buffers installed between cropland and surface waters
- Key wetlands restored or reclaimed
- Increased quantity and quality of nesting cover, including both short and long-term needs

