

Financial and Technical Assistance Opportunities for Ecosystem Conservation and Restoration in Louisiana, January 2012.

Assistance Program	Description	Types of Activities	Agency	Eligibility	Length of Agreement	Easements				Landowner's Obligations	Sign-Up Period
						Easements	Payments				
Forest Planning, Establishment, and Management	Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQIP)	Financial and technical assistance incentives to promote forest management and environmental quality; optimize environmental benefits; and help forest managers meet environmental regulations	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Nonindustrial private forest land	1 year after completion of the last practice, but not more than 10 years.	N/A	Up to 75% or 100% of estimated income forgone by producer to implement particular conservation practice; no more than \$300,000 during the 6-year period between 2009 and 2014.	Develop and implement a forest management plan; assist with cost and establishment of conservation practices	Continuous, through the year		
	Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)	Assistance to develop and improve wildlife habitat, including threatened and endangered species; can focus program on special areas, habitats, or species	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Nonindustrial private forest land and tribal land; governmental land not eligible	For General WHIP, 1 year after completion of the last practice, but not more than 10 years. For Longleaf Pine Initiative, agreements are 15 years in length.	N/A	For General WHIP, up to 75% of wildlife habitat development practices. For Longleaf Pine Initiative, 90% of establishment and management practices; no more than \$50,000 per year.	Develop and implement a forest management plan that includes the development of wildlife habitat; assist with installation costs	Continuous with periodic designated ranking periods		
	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	Encourages producers to undertake additional conservation activities or improve, maintain, and manage existing conservation activities	Site prep, tree planting, timber stand improvement including burning and precommercial thinning, and wildlife enhancement	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Meet "stewardship threshold" for at least one resource concern and address one additional priority resource concern; up to 10% of enrolled acreage may be in NIPF land	5 years	N/A	May not exceed \$200,000 for all contracts entered into during a 5-year period	Develop and implement a forest management plan that includes installing or maintaining conservation practices	Continuous, through the year	
	Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFW)	Provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners to restore and enhance habitat for the benefit of migratory birds and rare species (federal trust species)	Site prep, planting, TSI, mid story control, invasive species control, fencing for riparian or T&E species, wetland swale excavation, moist soil development, any habitat improvements	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Any private land, farmers, ranchers, corporations, NGO's, local governments, schools and universities, any private landowner	10 to 25 years	N/A	Up to 100% cost share, \$10,000 to \$50,000/cooperator/year	Retain habitat improvements for 10-25 years	Continuous, although funding typically arrives in winter/spring each year	
	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and CRP CP-36 (Longleaf Pine Initiative)	Helps agriculture producers safeguard environmentally sensitive lands; CRP is for conversion of eligible cropland to long-term, resource-conserving cover Eligible land must have cropping history 4 of 6 years 2002 through 2007	Site preparation, tree planting, permanent wildlife habitat establishment, soil stabilization, and water quality protection; management activities can include tree thinning	Farm Service Agency	Individual, Corporation, Association, or state and local government with agricultural land meeting cropland definitions and falling within the National Conservation Priority Area (CPA); land owned for at least one year	10-15 years	N/A	50% of participants costs to establish practice; a one-time up front sign-up incentive (SIP) of \$100 per acre for longleaf pine CRP contracts for 10+ years; a one-time practice incentive (PIP) of 40% of the eligible installation costs for certain practices on continuous CRP land; an annual rental payment based on the	Develop and implement a forest management plan for the conversion of cropland to a less-intensive use; assist with the cost, establishment, and maintenance of conservation practices	Continuous, through the year until the 250,000-acre goal is met.	
	Technical Assistance Landowners for Wildlife Program	Provides technical assistance to landowners, land managers, hunting clubs and other who desire to improve habitat and wildlife on their property. Assit with other state and federal cost share programs.	Assistance can vary from an answer to a simple question to a comprehensive written management plan. Information is not limited to traditional game species, but is available for all wildlife and their habitats - from hummingbirds to long leaf pine savannahs.	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	Private landowners	N/A	N/A	No cost	Landowners are responsible for cost associated with implementation of other state or federal management practices with cost share program. Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) has enrollment fees.	Continuous, through the year	
	Forestry Productivity Program	Provides financial assistance to eligible landowners for establishing and improving a crop of trees	Planting or seeding, site preparation, control of competing vegetation including application of chemical, pre-commercial thinning, and release of longleaf pine seedlings by burning	Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry	Landowners in all parishes who own a minimum of 5 contiguous acres suitable for growing a commercially valuable timber species. No maximum size of ownership	Landowners are required to maintain the forestry usage for a period of 10 years	N/A	Cost-share payments cover 50% of the total cost of one or more forestry practices, not to exceed a maximum limit set for each individual practice. Landowners can receive up to \$10,000 of assistance each fiscal year	Must have a forest management plan	Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis year-round, but are funded during April and May of each year	
	Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)	Financial and technical assistance to restore wetlands via restoration agreement and easement options	Wetland restoration of vegetation and hydrology including site preparation, tree planting, plugging ditches, levee construction or breaching, and swale excavation.	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Private and Tribal lands, prior converted cropland, farmed wetland, farmed wetland pasture, or degraded wetlands	10-year restoration agreement option	30-year easement option; and permanent easement option	75% of restoration costs for 10-year restoration agreement; 75% of restoration costs plus \$1050 to \$1125/acre for 30-year easement; 100% of restoration cost plus \$1400 or \$1500/acre for permanent easement.	Retain habitat improvements for 10-years (restoration agreement), for easements the landowner forfeits all surface rights except the rights to: (1) control of access, (2) title and right to convey title, (3) quiet enjoyment, (4) undeveloped recreational uses, (5) subsurface resources, and (6) water rights.	Continuous, through the year	
	Louisiana Forest Stewardship Program	The Forest Stewardship Program gives public recognition to landowners who are good stewards of their land. Certified Stewardship Forest landowners practice multiple-use forest management based on their own long-term objectives	Developing prescribed burning plans, fire line installation, conducting prescribed burns on approved tracts.	LA Department of Agriculture and Forestry, LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; Louisiana State University Ag	Any private forest landowner who owns 10 acres or more of forestland and wants to manage it for multiple-use. If a landowner owns more than one tract of land, each will be considered separately for certification as a Stewardship Forest.	Stewardship Forest certification is good for five years. At that time the property will be re-inspected to see if it continues to meet the Stewardship Forest standards	N/A	A one time prescribed burn can be implemented at no cost to the landowner.	Develop and implement a forest management plan	Continuous, through the year	

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Land Acquisition	Forest Legacy Program	Grants to states to protect important forest areas	Assist in the purchase of a working forest conservation easement; national competitive	US Forest Service administered by Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry	Private forestland within a state-defined Forest Legacy Area	Permanent	Yes, fee simple purchases also allowed	Federal government may fund up to 75% of project costs, with at least 25% coming from private, state, or local sources	To qualify, landowners prepare a multiple resource management plan as part of the conservation easement acquisition	Continuous, through the year
	Fort Polk Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Program	Funding to reduce incompatible development adjacent to installation boundaries	Fee title purchases of land from willing sellers; acquired land is owned/managed by The Nature Conservancy	Fort Polk, The Nature Conservancy	Private forestland within the authorization boundary of Kisatchie National Forest, Vernon Unit	Permanent	N/A	Department of Defense funds 75% of appraised value plus long-term management costs, The Nature Conservancy and non-DoD sources contribute remaining 25%	N/A	Continuous
	US Forest Service Tripartite Program	Use of Forest Service timber sale proceeds to purchase key inholdings	Fee title purchases of land from willing sellers for Forest Service ownership	Kisatchie National Forest, The Nature Conservancy	Private forestland within the authorization boundary of Kisatchie National Forest, Calcasieu Ranger District (Evangeline & Vernon Units)	Permanent	N/A	The Nature Conservancy purchases land at fair market value, and is later reimbursed via timber sale proceeds upon transfer of the land into Forest Service ownership	N/A	Continuous
Regulatory Assistance	Louisiana Statewide Red-cockaded Woodpecker Safe Harbor Program	Non-federal landowner program to benefit red-cockaded woodpeckers through voluntary habitat and population management activities	Provides regulatory assurance to landowners that no additional land restrictions will be imposed as a result of their management actions	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	Non-federal Louisiana landowners	For the life of the Safe Harbor Management Agreement (99 years beginning in 2005)	NA	Provides regulatory assurances for future Endangered Species Act restrictions for an increase in the number of red-cockaded woodpeckers on a landowner's property	Enhance/maintain existing red-cockaded woodpecker habitat if present, create/improve future red-cockaded woodpecker habitat, perform habitat enhancement activities, and coordinate/cooperate with authorized biologist	Continuous, through the year
Tax Incentives	Present-use Value Program for Forestlands	Forestlands are assessed at a value consistent with its present use rather than its higher market value	Decreased tax rate	Parish tax office	Private landowners and certain business entities and trust organizations; 10 acres in actual production of trees; land owned for at least 4 years; must have a current approved forestry plan	Permanent unless property no longer qualifies as forestland; 3 years of roll back taxes with interest will be required of land changes	N/A	Significantly reduced tax rate on qualifying forestland	Commercial production of trees on at least 10 acres of land	During annual listing period as determined by parish where property is located (January in most cases)
	Charitable Contributions of Land Interests	Potential tax deduction for donation to qualified conservation organization	Donation or bargain sale of fee title or conservation easement	The Nature Conservancy	Private forestland meeting conservation criteria within The Nature Conservancy's priority areas; may also be used in conjunction with Ft Polk ACUB and USFS Tripartite Programs	Permanent	Yes	For bargain sales, negotiated on a case-by-case basis according to landowner's financial objectives	Landowner is responsible for consulting with his/her tax advisor to determine potential tax benefit. Where conservation easement is donated, terms are negotiated on a case-by-case basis but generally require the land to remain permanently in forested condition.	Continuous
	Endangered Species Tax Deduction	Taxpayers who are engaged in the business of farming or ranching can receive a tax deduction for expenditures paid or incurred for implementing actions benefitting recovery of federally threatened or endangered species	A wide variety of activities could qualify based on site-specific management actions recommended in approved recovery plans	Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	To qualify, there must be federally threatened or endangered species in the area; there must be an approved recovery plan for the species; conservation actions implemented by the taxpayer must be consistent with management actions described in the recovery plan and must occur in the location and habitat type for which the plan was written	NA	NA	The deduction for endangered species recovery expenses cannot be more than 25 percent of a farmer's gross income from farming.	Landowners determine if their actions are eligible for the deduction. IRS Tax Guide for Farmers includes deduction information. USFWS can assist landowners in finding the information they need to make their own determinations, including consistency of site-specific action in recovery plans	NA