



Department of Game, Fish and Parks Wildlife Partners Program

Woody Habitat Guidelines

The goal of the woody habitat component of the GFP private lands program is to increase wildlife populations by enhancing their survival. This can be accomplished with woody plantings that are large enough to ensure survival in the worst possible winter weather and by planting woody plant species that afford wildlife year-round protection from predators. Woody plantings can also provide food for wildlife. Most of the wildlife species of interest live on the ground and woody habitat should be designed to create cover at ground level. Consequently, only low-growing trees and shrubs should be planted in most wildlife shelterbelts. However, to accommodate alternate objectives such as providing farmstead or livestock wind protection, GFP program guidelines allow for 1 or 2 rows of tall trees to be planted in some shelterbelts.

The annual deadline for submitting applications for cost-share is **November 1st** of the year preceding the scheduled planting of the woody cover. If woody habitat applications do not meet annual planting objectives, this deadline may be extended until planting goals are reached. If applications exceed planting goals, applications will be ranked according to the potential wildlife benefits of plantings and funding will be allocated from highest to lowest ranked plantings until available funding is exhausted.

Applications for GFP woody habitat programs can be made through SD Department of Agriculture foresters, Conservation District offices, GFP Conservation Officers, and USDA Natural Resource and Conservation Service offices. Demand for these programs is such that funding is reserved for producers that are not involved in any type of fee hunting operation. In addition, because funding for these projects comes entirely from sales of hunting licenses, producers must agree to allow reasonable free public hunting access. However, producers retain and may regulate all hunting access privileges on enrolled lands.

Applications consist of sending a tree plan (including landowner contact information) and color aerial photograph noting the project location to the Project Coordinator at Game, Fish and Parks, 895 3rd Street SW, Huron, SD 57350.

GFP Woody Habitat Program Guidelines

- GFP will reimburse producers for 75% of their costs incurred for planting woody habitat for wildlife. Alternate cost-shares received by producers will be subtracted from the total project cost prior to calculating the GFP 75% reimbursement.
- The *maximum* GFP payment *per planting per year* is \$10,000.00.
- Woody wildlife habitat planting criteria are as follows:
 - At least half of all rows planted in each woody habitat planting must be shrub, cedar or juniper rows.
 - New woody plantings must be at least 8 rows wide and a minimum of 1 acre in size.
 - Plantings adjacent to existing tree rows do not need to meet the above width and size criteria, as long as the total number of new and existing rows is at least 8, and the combined acreage is at least 1 acre.
 - Shelterbelts that are at least 3 acres may include 1 or 2 rows of tall trees as long as at least 4 rows of shrubs and/or mid-sized trees are planted immediately adjacent to each side of the tall tree row(s).
 - Cottonwoods, Blue Spruce, and Russian olives may not be planted in any woody habitat planting.
 - Woody Habitat plantings cannot be made in native prairie/sod.
 - Lands converted from native sod to cropland after 2008 are not eligible.
 - All projects must be biologically beneficial to wildlife, under the discretion of SD GFP Private Lands Biologists.
- Eligible practices include costs incurred for:
 - Trees, shrubs, and planting of trees and shrubs.
 - Weed barrier fabric and installation.
- Payments will be issued each year after receipts are submitted.

Eligible shrub and tree species include, but are not limited to, those listed below. Producers should select species best suited for their property in consultation with wildlife, forestry and agriculture professionals.

Shrubs:

American Currant, American Plum, Amur Honeysuckle, Black Chokeberry, Caragana, Common Lilac, European Cotoneaster, Golden Currant, Gooseberry, Hansen Hedge Rose, Juneberry, Mongolian Cherry, Nanking Cherry, Nannyberry, Redosier Dogwood, Seaberry, Silver Buffaloberry, Skunkbush Sumac, Smooth Sumac, Western Sandcherry

Mid-Sized Trees:

Amur Maple, Arnold Hawthorne, Black Walnut, Bur Oak, Chokecherry, Eastern Red Cedar, Manchurian Apricot, Manchurian Crabapple, Pin Cherry, Rocky Mountain Juniper, Russian Mulberry, Siberian Crabapple, Siberian Apricot, Ussurian Pear

Tall Trees:

Austrian Pine, Black Cherry, Black Hills Spruce, Boxelder, Green Ash, Hackberry, Honeylocust, Ponderosa Pine, Scotch Pine, Siberian Elm, Siberian Larch, Silver Maple, White Poplar, White Spruce

Contract Life:
The life of the contract for the woody habitat program is a period that extends for ten (10) years after planting. If trees are removed prior to the full 10 year term, the cooperator will be responsible for full reimbursement of GFP funding.