Deadline Looms for Wildlife Conservation Program - $1 million Available for Habitat Development in Washington

Local News

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Posted on : April 9, 2009 at 5:23 am

SPOKANE, Wash. (April 8, 2009) - With less than a week to go before the April 15 application deadline, conservation officials with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are reminding interested landowners in Washington that $1 million in financial assistance is currently available to help them develop wildlife habitat.Through its Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and tribes for developing, restoring and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat. According to NRCS Asst. State Conservationist, Dave Brown, financial assistance available to eligible landowners in Washington has doubled this year to nearly $1 million. "Plus," he said, "eligible lands now include not only forest land and land currently in agricultural use, but also private land that has the potential for agricultural use or tree production and is suitable for fish and wildlife habitat development." This change in the interpretation of the WHIP rule opens the door for additional lands in rural areas to be considered for habitat improvement, he said.

The program covers 75 percent of wildlife habitat installation costs, according to Brown. "WHIP program funds in Washington will be used where fish and wildlife habitat has been affected by past activities or land management," he said. "There is also an increasing interest in providing habitat for native pollinator species." Brown encourages landowners who are interested in the program to contact their local NRCS office. Applications received by April 15 will be ranked and prioritized and considered for 2009 funding. For the location of your local NRCS office, visit the NRCS website at www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov or call 509-323-2900.

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e program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication o