



April 16, 2004

OKLAHOMA BULLETIN NO. OK300-4-13**SUBJECT: LTP – Fiscal Year 2004 Approval of Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) Applications for Funding**

Purpose: To provide field offices guidance on approval of WHIP applications for conservation plan/contract development in 2004.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2004

ODWC - Action Required By June 4, 2004**Field Office - Action Required By June 25, 2004****Office Assistant - Action Required By July 23, 2004**

The application ranking list has been completed for selection of applications approved for completion of contracts and advance preparation of conservation plans, contract support documents, and contractual documents for future obligation of WHIP funds for fiscal year 2004. Oklahoma NRCS received a WHIP allocation of \$960,000 for the current fiscal year. Prior year contract "tentative" contract approvals (Bulletin OK440-3-19) provided for commitments in excess of the fiscal year allocation. Certain field offices were advised by letter in late March to complete contract development on the tentative approved contracts totaling ≈\$85,000. The 2004 ranking list was created and is posted to the website at:

<http://intranet.ok.nrcs.usda.gov/PGM/whip/WHIPApplicRankList04.pdf>

The posted ranking list is for internal use only and not for public release under the Federal Privacy Act and the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

The following actions are necessary to complete the obligation of WHIP funding for this year and ensure an adequate number of contracts are available to access WHIP unobligated funding in other states.

Wildlife Habitat Plan Development and Contracting (New Contracts)

As conveyed by bulletin OK300-4-1, ODWC technicians and biologists will complete wildlife habitat development plans (WHDPs) and plan components for all applications selected for contracting each year. NRCS will enter information from the WHDP into Customer Service Toolkit or ProTracts, assemble the contractual documents, acquire final contract signatures, and serve as the Contracting Officer. District Conservationists will coordinate with ODWC Technicians to review the final contractual documents and schedule participants' review and signatures. NRCS will provide copies of the final contract and related documents to the ODWC Technician.

The following information will constitute the WHDP to be delivered to the NRCS District Conservationist by ODWC (Note: The soil map with legend, as described in the cooperative agreement, will not be provided as a part of the wildlife habitat development plan, at this time):

(MORE)**DIST: AO**

Wildlife Habitat Management Plan Map

- Copy of the most recent aerial photography available. Currently, 1995 digital photography is available in each field office.
- Title Block – showing “Wildlife Habitat Management Plan Map”, client’s name, “Natural Resources Conservation Service”, the name of the conservation district (if applicable), county, state, approximate total acres, and date prepared
- Map scale
- North arrow
- Legal description
- Boundary lines of the planning unit outlined
- Field boundaries
- Field number, land use, and acres labeled on each field
- Map symbol legend, showing all symbols used on the map (Reference: National Map Symbol Handbook and Oklahoma Amendment)

Environmental Evaluation

- Documented on an OK-CPA-52 Form (Only the special resources and cultural resources section completed. NRCS will complete the remaining sections.)
- Inventory information on wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, wetlands, water resources, utilities, or other inventory data, as appropriate to support the planning decisions

Tentatively Approved. Deferred application ranking numbers 60 through 79 (Additional \$205,219) will be developed into contractual documents, but not signed by the district conservationist (producer and conservation district board signatures are acceptable) as obligated. These contracts will be “on-the-shelf” awaiting approval should funding become available at the end of the fiscal year. These contracts must be developed by June 25, 2004, reviewed, and ready for obligation at a moment’s notice. Should funding not become available this FY, they will be considered for priority funding in FY2005.

Deferred applications will be maintained and considered for funding in FY2005. Continue promoting and accepting applications from interested producers. Continue to refer applications to the ODWC technicians for ranking.

County WHIP allocations will be distributed through ProTracts consistent with the estimated funding needs shown on the ranking lists. District Conservationists should notify their zone Office Assistant (OA) and Kevin Norton at (405)742-1236 or Joni Hays, Program Assistant, at (405)742-1238, immediately upon notification of approved applicants withdrawing from the WHIP.

If the total amount of funds required to obligate the contract varies from the initial request, District Conservationists will contact Kevin Norton to ensure that funds are available in ProTracts prior to approving the contract. District Conservationists **cannot** approve a contract exceeding the dollar amount allocated for the application without the allocation being distributed in ProTracts.

A small reserve of funds will be maintained in the State Office to address errors in estimates. OAs will coordinate fund needs with the Programs staff and forward fax their allocation register balance to Joni Hays at the end of each pay period.

/s/ Mark Habiger, Acting For

M. DARREL DOMINICK
State Conservationist

Attachments