

NRCS Funding Available for Turkey Habitat

Landowners can access funding for state-wide habitat improvements benefitting wild turkeys, white-tailed deer, songbirds, and more!

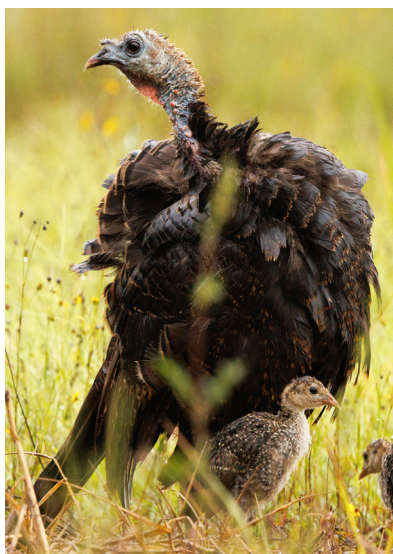


Build Habitat With NRCS Tools & Assistance

The regal (and tasty) American wild turkey can be found across the state of Ohio, preferring to dwell in mature forests and early successional habitats. Brought back from the brink of extinction in the early 1950s, wild turkey populations continue to rely on quality habitat for nesting, brood-rearing and foraging.

Attract this popular upland game bird to your private lands with funding and technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Funding is available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for practices including wildlife habitat plantings, edge feathering, invasive species removal, and wildlife habitat monitoring and management. Incorporate one or more practices to receive priority consideration for funding.

Contact your local NRCS office today to learn how the agency can help you create or improve wildlife habitat on your agricultural, forested, or associated lands. Ask staff about upcoming sign-up dates to be considered for funding in the most current cycle. Application for assistance is not a guarantee for a contract. If the application is accepted and you decline the contract, there is no financial obligation by either party.



Why is Nesting and Brood-Rearing Habitat Important?

Turkey populations depend on suitable nesting and brood-rearing habitat. Because turkeys do not migrate, they require multiple habitat types to nest, raise broods and overwinter. Nesting and brood-rearing habitats are commonly found in and near transition zones between two cover types, such as between grassland and shrub/forestland habitat. Ideal nesting and brood-rearing habitat is characterized by ground cover able to conceal nests and young poults while allowing mobility at ground level (<50cm). Desirable vegetation within open fields or forest understory is often dominated by forbs and brambles. Some management of woody and invasive plant species is necessary, as these can quickly dominate the overstory, thereby limiting growth of desirable herbaceous plants in the understory.

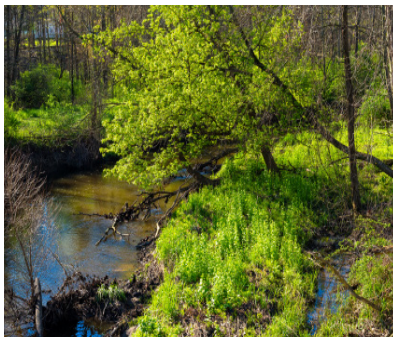
Establishing or improving habitat on your land may involve planting diverse mixes of native grasses and forbs, creating brushy transitional areas; or may be as simple as removing some invasive species along fencerows and forest edges. This type of habitat is also beneficial to deer, migratory bird species, pollinators, and other important species.

Suggested Conservation Practices



Wildlife Habitat Planting

Establishing native wildflowers, legumes, and grasses provide suitable habitat for pollinating insects and provide great habitat for wild turkeys and bobwhites to rear their broods. Native insects are a quality food source for turkey poults and quail chicks, and make up the majority of their diet during the first several weeks of life.



Riparian Forest Buffer

Plant a combination of trees, shrubs, and/or other perennial plants in areas adjacent to a stream, lake, or wetland to provide quality wildlife habitat. A good riparian buffer provides food, shelter, water, and breeding sites for birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles.



Edge Feathering

Edge feathering is the strategy of harvesting trees along a forest edge to expose sunlight to the forest edge. The sunlight promotes many species of native shrubs and small trees to create thickets between the forest edge and adjacent field. This promotes habitat suitable for turkey, American woodcock, and bedding cover for white tailed deer. These native shrubs thickets provide escape cover, winter cover, and loafing cover.



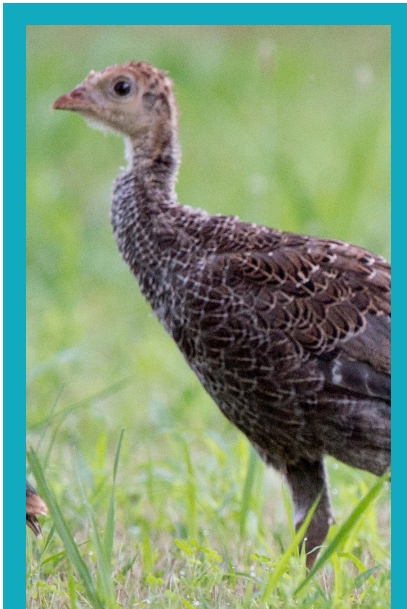
Early Successional Habitat Development and Management

Turkey and other wildlife seek out successional habitat such as grasslands, old fields or pastures, shrub thickets and young forest for the excellent cover and quality of food that can be found, such as flowering plants, browse, fruits and insects. These habitats must be mowed, brush hogged, burned, cut, or grazed to prevent forestation.



Invasive Species Removal

Invasive plant species are one of the largest threats to native biodiversity. Invasive shrubs like autumn olive and bush honeysuckle now dominate areas like fencerows and forest edges, that were once quality turkey habitat. Removing species mechanically, chemically, biologically, or through a combination of methods.



Get Started!



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