



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Working through partnerships to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat on private lands

Stewardship. Partnership. Fish and wildlife. Future generations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) Program embraces each of these themes. It's about working together in a voluntary pro-active manner with private landowners to restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitat. It's about sharing resources of time, energy, and funds to help ensure that elements of our common heritage -- wildlife, fish, and a healthy ecosystem -- will be there for our kids, and their kids.



The Partners Program focuses on improving habitat for federal trust resources: migratory birds, federally-listed endangered or threatened species, and interjurisdictional fish. In Michigan, restoration of wetlands has been, and remains, the primary focus for the Partners Program. The program also includes restoration of grasslands, streams (both in the channel and within the riparian corridor), and specific habitats used by federally-listed endangered or threatened species. Since this program began in Michigan in 1988, approximately 3,500 projects have been completed, totaling more than 40,000 acres of improved habitat. Partners include, but are not limited to, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Conservation Districts, Land Conservancies, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Michigan Department of Natural Resources.



Wetland Restoration

Wetland restorations are generally focused where previous agricultural drainage provides an opportunity to restore hydrology or put the "wet" back into altered wetlands. Projects often involve breaking or plugging a portion of a tile line, blocking a ditch, or building a low berm or embankment. Restorations are designed to re-establish shallow-water wetlands (depth of 3 feet or less) containing a mixture of open water and vegetated areas. The program does not create farm ponds and does not alter existing natural, undisturbed wetlands.

Grassland Projects

Grassland habitat provides a buffer around wetland areas and nesting cover for some waterfowl and a number of declining grassland and pollinator species, such as bobolinks and meadowlarks as well as the monarch butterfly and native bee's. The Partner's Program is working with others in Michigan's agricultural counties to promote the establishment of mixed stands of warm-season grasses and native wildflowers. Partners can help both with site preparation and seeding of these prairies. Grasslands 10 to 40 acres in size, and larger, help provide adequate cover and food throughout the year for a variety of migratory birds, pheasants, and other wildlife. Smaller 2-5 acre pollinator habitats benefit native bees and other pollinators species.



Stream Improvements

Efforts are underway to improve stream structure, stabilize stream banks, and improve road crossings in northern Michigan watersheds that support brook trout or other interjurisdictional fish. Stream improvement projects in southern Michigan are considered on a case-by-case basis.



Habitat for Endangered Species

Partners' efforts are expanding to restore sensitive habitats supporting endangered or threatened species. For example, woody vegetation or invasive species may be removed from coastal lake plain prairie wetlands to improve habitat for the eastern prairie fringed orchid. These projects are also considered on a case-by-case basis.

Cost and Commitment

Projects are funded by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service with cost-share assistance provided by Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, other conservation organizations, government agencies, landowners and grants. In addition to regular Service funds, Partners Program biologists may compete for supplemental grants that are typically used for larger projects with many partners and matching partner funds.

Many landowners contribute funds for permits or construction and in-kind services such as labor to prepare seed beds and seed disturbed areas. Landowners are required to sign an agreement to leave the project in place on their property a minimum of 10 years. Longer agreements are encouraged. Landowners are responsible for project maintenance.

For additional information, please go to: www.fws.gov/midwest/partners

Or contact: Jim Hazelman,
Michigan PFW State Coordinator
USFWS Michigan Private Lands Office
2651 Coolidge Road, Suite 101 East Lansing, Michigan 48823
517-351-6235
jim_hazelman@fws.gov

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Our Mission is, working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish and wildlife and plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

