

OPEN FIELDS FOR GAME BIRD HUNTERS



Note: This 2-part packet contains detailed Open Fields program information and the application. Enrollment will be based on eligibility, priority, and available funding.

Objective: To provide incentives to private landowners to (1) enroll new lands into CRP during the 2013 USDA-Farm Service Agency CRP general sign-up and (2) maintain current enrollments in CRP.

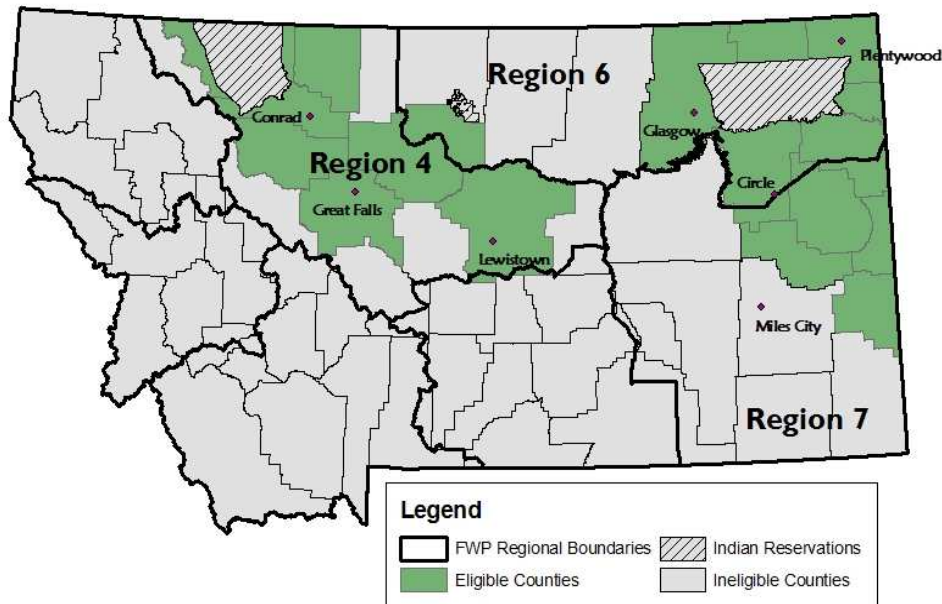
Introduction

Through the **Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program**, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will accept "Open Fields" applications from eligible landowners beginning **May 20 through June 14, 2013**.

Open Fields targets CRP and other highly productive game bird habitats on private lands that allow walk-in access for fall game bird hunting. Landowners enrolled in the program will receive a payment of \$5/acre for each year the land is enrolled in the program, which is concurrent with the landowner's CRP contract. Enrolled lands will be clearly posted to identify the area open to walk in game bird hunting.

Eligibility Map

2013 Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters
Eligible CRP counties outside of Indian Reservations



The following counties outside of Indian Reservations are eligible:

Region 4 (North-Central Montana)

Cascade
Chouteau - South
Fergus
Glacier
Pondera
Teton
Toole

Region 6 (Northeast Montana)

Chouteau - Northeast
Daniels
McCone - North
Richland - North
Roosevelt
Sheridan
Valley

Region 7 (Eastern Montana)

Dawson
Fallon
McCone - South
Prairie
Richland - South
Wibaux

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Program Eligibility

- New and re-enrolled CRP on private lands located in eligible counties.
- Existing CRP contracts with 3 or more years left on the CRP contract.
- Private lands that are legally accessible and adjacent to roads; corner-crossings are not considered legally accessible.

NOT eligible:

- CRP stands dominated by crested wheatgrass or smooth brome.
- Land actively enrolled in FWP's Block Management Program or the Upland Game Bird Program (UGBEP) at the time of applying.
- Additionally, the following scenarios do not qualify for Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters:
 - ❖ Lands that were enrolled in Block Management in 2012.
 - ❖ Lands part of an active Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program project, unless the contract terminates on or before August 30, 2013.
 - ❖ Lands immediately adjacent to a Block Management Area (BMA) that are owned by the same landowner who has land enrolled in the BMA.

Program Details

Basis of Payment:

- Up to 160 CRP acres may be enrolled in Open Fields.

General Information

- You may enroll additional CRP or non-CRP lands for public access that will create clearly identified boundaries to help manage walk-in access.
- Walk-in game bird hunting (fall only) with no further permission necessary. Boundaries will be signed by program staff.
- For Open Fields contract terms 5 years and greater, the CRP acres may incur **one** haying or grazing event. Scheduled maintenance or an emergency provision is considered one event.
- CRP acres enrolled in Open Fields for 3 and 4 years are not eligible for any haying or grazing events.
- Open Fields contracts will begin September 1, 2013, and end January 1 of the year the CRP contract expires.
- Location of the project will be published in the annual Upland Game Bird Access Guide as well as on FWP's website for the length of the contract term.
- Producers may apply for Open Fields enrollment at the time of applying for CRP enrollment. However, enrollment in Open Fields will be contingent upon successful enrollment in CRP.
- Contracts will contain provisions for required pro-rated cost recovery in the event of landowner default, change of ownership, or similar events that prevent fulfillment of contract terms.
- All contracts will be recorded in the county of ownership.

Program Compensation

- FWP payment will be based on CRP acres multiplied by \$5.00/acre times the number of years in the CRP contract. For example:
(160 CRP acres X \$5.00/acre) X 10 years = \$8,000.00
- Open Fields contracts that are 3 to 5 years in length will receive a full upfront payment in 2013.
- Open Fields contracts that are 6 to 15 years in length will receive a partial upfront payment (50%) in 2013 for the first 5 years with the remaining payment balance (50%) paid in 2018.

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Make Your Application Competitive

Enrollment in Open Fields is a voluntary and competitive process. All applications will undergo a review and scoring process by FWP staff. Contracts will be awarded based on evaluation scores and available funding.

If you decide to apply for enrollment in Open Fields, here are some general tips to keep in mind when filling out the application.

- **CRP quality.** CRP stands with a greater diversity of forbs and grasses generally receive a higher score. Please provide a species list (grasses, forbs, legumes) with your application.
- **Habitat quality.** Indicate additional cover (shelterbelts, riparian areas, wetlands, cropland) on your USDA map.
- **Access Area.** You may receive a higher score by including additional lands you own that are adjacent to the CRP offer. Also, consider enrolling additional acres to help better define the area open to public access. All lands enrolled in Open Fields should be legally accessible to game bird hunters. If not apparent on your map, please indicate legally accessible roads and indicate a parking area for hunters on your map.

For more information, contact your local FWP biologists

Region	Biologist	Phone	Email
4	Diane Boyd	406-271-2680	dboyd@mt.gov
4 – Fergus Co. only	Sonja Smith	406-538-4658 x228	sonjasmith@mt.gov
6	Ryan Williamson	406-895-2468	ryanwilliamson@mt.gov
6 – NE Chouteau Co. only	Scott Hemmer	406-265-6177 x224	shemmer@mt.gov
6 – Valley Co. only	Drew Henry	406-228-3709	dhenry@mt.gov
7	Steve Atwood	406-234-0940	satwood@mt.gov

FWP APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 14, 2013
See application for details on how you may submit your application

2013

APPLICATION

OPEN FIELDS FOR GAME BIRD HUNTERS

Enrollment will be based on eligibility, priority, and available funding.



Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks

To Apply: To determine your eligibility, refer to the *Open Fields for Upland Game Birds Program* Info Sheet. Submit your signed application to the address located at the bottom of form **no later than June 14, 2013**. Successful applicants will be contacted in August. Applications must include USDA Farm Service Maps that (1) outline the CRP tracts offered and (2) acreage open to public access.

- 1. Please fill out your contact information. For CRP tracts with multiple ownerships, please provide only one name.**

Applicant Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Legal name assigned to CRP (if applicable). (Example: Johnson Family Trust; Valley Farms, Inc; Edward Brothers, LLC): _____

- 2. CRP Offer.** You may enroll up to 160 CRP acres. Please attach FSA maps and highlight the CRP fields you're offering. Indicate legally accessible roads to gain access to CRP.

Farm #	Tract #	CRP contract # (if re-enrollment)	# CRP Acres	Year CRP Tract Expires	County	Legal description (T, R, S, ¼- Section)

- 3. List the species that comprise your existing or planned CRP planting. If you prefer, you may submit a species list.** _____

4. **Additional Access lands.** You may include additional CRP or non-CRP lands for public access that will create clearly identified boundaries to help manage walk-in access. Please indicate the access boundary on the **FSA map**. Indicate legally accessible roads to gain access to these lands.

Applicants who offer additional access acres may receive a higher ranking score.

County	# Acres	Legal description (T, R, S, ¼- Section)

Applicant signature: _____

Date: _____



*Applications & maps must be received by **June 14, 2013***

Mail completed application and maps to:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks – Wildlife
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620

Thank you for your interest in the Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters Program. If you have questions, please contact the biologists in your area. You may also contact the program coordinator, Debbie Hohler, at 406-444-5674 or by email at dhohler@mt.gov.

Region	Biologist	Phone	Email
4	Diane Boyd	406-271-2680	dboyd@mt.gov
4 – Fergus Co. only	Sonja Smith	406-538-4658 x228	sonjasmith@mt.gov
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