OPEN FIELDS FOR GAME BIRD HUNTERS
2020 FACT SHEET

WHAT IS OPEN FIELDS?
Open Fields works with landowners to manage CRP in a wildlife-friendly way to provide important cover for Montana’s game birds. Montana has lost a significant amount of CRP in recent years, and more is scheduled to expire in future years. Conservation-incentive programs like Open Fields are geared to help landowners keep some land enrolled in CRP and to provide public game bird hunting opportunities.

PROGRAM DETAILS
• Landowners receive a one-time lease payment of $5.00 per CRP acre (320-acre max) for each year remaining in their USDA contract.
• CRP is eligible for managed or emergency harvesting or routine grazing activities once in 5 years and if pre-approved by the USDA.
• All enrolled acres are open to free walk-in public access for game bird hunting with no further permission needed.
• Additional acres may be offered to help manage walk-in hunting but do not add to the payment.
• Landowners may apply to enroll up to 320 CRP acres (max) per contiguous parcel of land. More than one application may be submitted if landownership parcels are at least ¼-mile apart.
• Open Fields contracts begin September 1 and end January 1 of the year the USDA contract expires.
• NEW this year: Additional incentives may be available for mid-contract management activities, such as light disking.

PAYMENT EXAMPLE
(320 CRP acres) X ($5 per acre) X (10-year enrollment) equals a one-time payment of $16,000

ELIGIBILITY
To be considered eligible, the following criteria must be met:
• All enrollments must be on private land that is legally accessible for walk-in game bird hunting.
• A minimum of 2 years remaining on your USDA contracts.
• Continuous CRP practices such as SAFE CRP may be eligible for enrollment.
• Agree to manage the CRP for wildlife.
• Agree to allow free walk-in game bird hunting access.

Lands not eligible include the following:
• Lands enrolled in Block Management during 2019-2020.
• Lands immediately adjacent to a Block Management Area under the same ownership.
• Lands that are part of an active Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program contract.
• Due to different management jurisdictions, lands within Indian Reservations do not qualify.

PRIORITY
The following counties will receive priority for Open Fields enrollment, but landowners in other counties are welcome to apply:
• Priority counties include: Cascade, Chouteau, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Glacier, McCone, Pondera, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Teton, Toole, Valley, and Wibaux.
• CRP stands planted with native species, sufficient grass height & density needed to conceal nesting game birds, and a diversity of grass and forb species that provide both cover and food for upland birds, pollinators, and other wildlife will be ranked higher during the enrollment process.

CONTACT US! For more information, contact your regional UGBEP staff. Applications may be downloaded here: fwp.mt.gov/ugbep, then click Open Fields

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<tr>
<th>Region(s)</th>
<th>Regional Office Location</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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Enrollment will be based on eligibility, priority, and available funding.