



OPEN FIELDS FOR GAME BIRD HUNTERS

2021 FACT SHEET



**UPLAND GAME BIRD
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

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 the near future. 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.
- 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 Opportunity:** 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 if the total access area is 100 acres or more.
- Agree to manage the CRP for wildlife
- Agree to allow free walk-in game bird hunting access.
- CRP stands with the height, density, native species, and greater plant diversity favored by game birds will be ranked higher during the enrollment process

Lands not eligible include the following:

- Lands enrolled in Block Management in 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.

CONTACT US! For more information, call your regional UGBEP staff.

Region(s)	Staff	Phone	Email
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Applications may be downloaded here: fwp.mt.gov/ugbep Click Open Fields

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