



# OPEN FIELDS FOR GAME BIRD HUNTERS 2022 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 enroll up to 320 CRP acres (maximum) per landownership. More than one application may be submitted if landownerships are at least ¼-mile apart.
- Open Fields contracts begin **September 1** and end **January 1** of the year the USDA contract expires.

## PAYMENT EXAMPLE

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

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES

- CRP Re-enrollment: Additional incentives may be available for mid-contract management activities, such as light disking.
- Bonus Payment of \$5.00 per acre for seeding CRP, up to 360 acres.

## 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

### Lands not eligible include the following:

- Lands enrolled in Block Management in 2021.
- Lands that are 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, contact your regional UGBEP staff.

Region(s)	Staff	Phone	Email
4	Evan Rodgers	406-454-5877	Evan.Rodgers@mt.gov
5	Megan O’Reilly	406-247-2966	moreilly@mt.gov
6	Ken Plourde	406-474-2244	Kenneth.Plourde@mt.gov
7	Justin Hughes	406-234-0922	Justin.Hughes@mt.gov
HQ	Debbie Hohler	406-444-5674	dhohler@mt.gov

Applications may be downloaded here: [fwp.mt.gov/ugbep](http://fwp.mt.gov/ugbep)  
click Open Fields

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