

# Access to Minnesota Outdoors Plan

1/15/2008



*The purpose of this report is to comply with Minnesota Session Law 2007 Chapter 131 Section 85 Access to Minnesota Outdoors Plan (Appendix A).*

*This report can be found on the DNR web site at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/walkin>*

In accordance with MS 3.197 the following estimated costs are associated with the development and delivery of this report to the legislature as required by Session Law 2007 Chapter 131 Section 85. Personnel: \$16,700, Travel: \$365, Miscellaneous: \$400.

## *Executive Summary*

Public demand for access to the outdoors in general, and hunting and fishing lands in particular likely exceeds current access to existing public lands. The constituent demand is for a farmland private land access program designed primarily for small game (upland bird) and possibly deer hunting. Minnesota already has an active Forest Legacy program that has permanently conserved nearly 57,500 acres of public access. In addition Minnesota's Trout Stream Easement Program has secured 618 miles of perpetual stream access easements.

The DNR surveyed 22 states where walk-in programs are in place. Data from this survey is summarized in the report. Generally speaking, western states, where land values and rental rates are low, ownerships are vast, and populations are sparse, tend to have successful walk-in programs. Eastern states where parcel sizes are small, land prices are high and populations are greater tend to be less successful.

This report also describes both public and private benefits and costs associated with a walk-in program. The report also provides cost estimates based on various payment scenarios.

South Dakota has one of the more successful walk-in programs. The "East River" of South Dakota access program primarily targets existing CRP acres for pheasant hunting. Contracts are annual and pay one dollar per acre with a five-dollar bonus per acre if the habitat is left undisturbed through out the hunting season. Advantages of the South Dakota program are that it fairly inexpensive, is easy to administer, and relatively popular with both landowners and hunters. The primary disadvantage is that lease hunting is beginning to out compete what the state can pay east of the Missouri River.

A walk-in program has the potential to add significant acres of opportunity for hunters, anglers and other recreational users in the farmland zone of Minnesota. Minnesota is perhaps most similar in nature to eastern South Dakota and the model that we have proposed is based upon the South Dakota model.

### Recommended Walk-In Program Option for Minnesota

- Target existing programs such as CRP, CREP, RIM, RIM-CE, WRP, etc. with an additional layered payment
- One to two year contracts
- Contract should have an opt-out provision.
- Simple payment structure
- Annually published, high quality, widely available map books
- Sign each parcel at corners and access points. Large parcels may need more signs.
- Build habitat complexes by targeting program around existing wildlife habitat
- Focus on grassland and wetland habitats
- Ensure contract compliance through inspections before and after season
- Increase enforcement efforts to reduce landowner conflicts
- Change liability law to protect landowners enrolled in state sponsored walk-in program
- New funding is key

## *MORE ACCESS FOR HUNTERS*

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In recent years, the participation rate in all forms of hunting has dropped, according to a recent national survey by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation 2006). In Minnesota while the number of licensed hunters has remained stable, DNR license sales data reveals a downward trend in the number of young people taking up the sport. If this trend continues, it will mean less license revenue to support important conservation work as well as a decline in the state's strongest advocates for clean water and wildlife habitat.

One of the main reasons cited by those who do not hunt or have quit the sport is lack of a suitable place hunt (Bissel, Duda and Young, 1998). Although Minnesota has 3.5 million acres of state forests open to hunting and one of the premier Wildlife Management Area systems in the country with more than 1.3 million acres open to public hunting, much of the acreage is in the northern part of the state. In the south, where the majority of the population lives, the WMA system consists of smaller, individual units and hunter use is very high.

In response to this demand, the DNR has developed a stakeholder-based long-range WMA acquisition plan that calls for acquiring an additional 702,000 acres of WMAs over the next 50 years with 30 percent (210,500) acquired in the next ten years (2002 citizens Advisory Committee Report) of these 178,600 additional acres are planned for the farmland area. Thanks to increased legislative funding for acquisitions and easements, the DNR is implementing the WMA acquisition and Forest Legacy easement plan. Still, the public demand for access to the outdoors in general, and hunting and fishing lands in particular will likely exceed even the lands that would be added under this plan.

This report is in response to the provisions of Minnesota Session Law 2007, Chapter 131, Section 85 that requires the commissioner of natural resources to "...prepare a plan for a walk-in public access program under which the commissioner may encourage owners and operators of privately held land to voluntarily make that land available for walk-in access by the public for hunting and fishing under programs administered by the commissioner..." (See Appendix A for the complete session law).

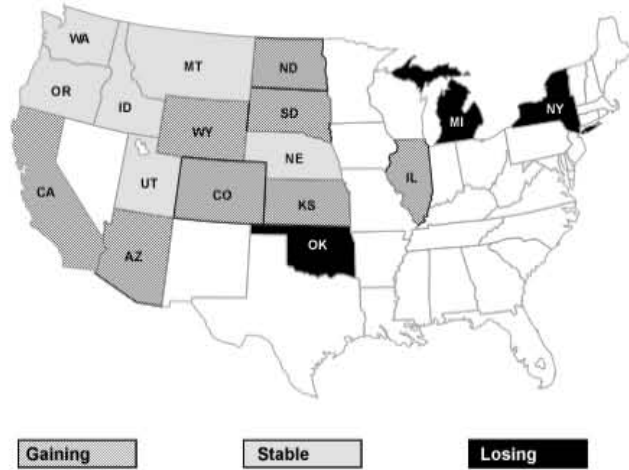
Although not explicitly stated in the session law, the constituent demand and likely the primary intent of the law is for a farmland private land access program designed primarily for small game (upland bird) and possibly deer hunting. That type of access will be the focus of this report. This also recognizes the fact that Minnesota already has abundant public forest lands and an active Forest Legacy program that provide access to public and private forest lands and that fishing access is provided through a very active Trout Stream easement program that allow access to private lands (Appendix B).

The plan presented in this report is designed primarily as a farmland access program for small game and possibly deer hunting. Numerous western and Midwest states have such programs that entail leasing hunting rights from private landowners for public use, and are generally known as "Walk-in" programs.

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## WALK-IN PROGRAMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

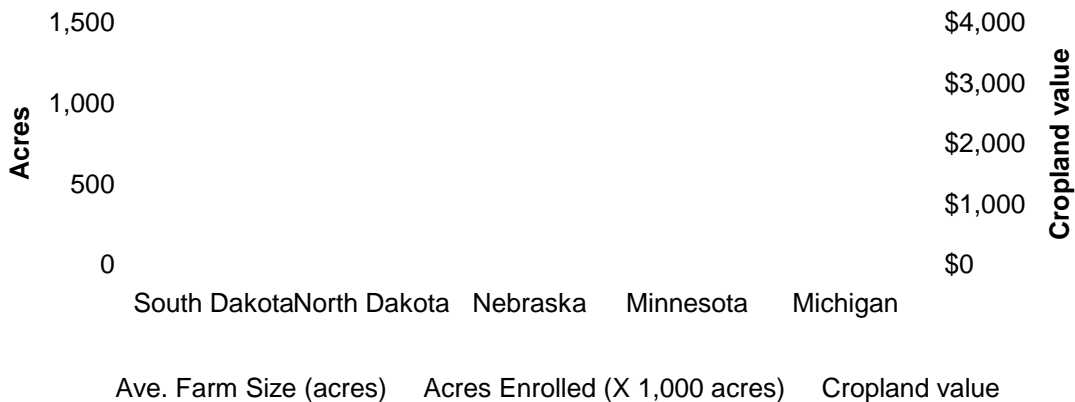
In the fall of 2007, the DNR surveyed natural resource professionals in 22 states where walk-in programs are in place. (Appendix C) Table 1 is a summary of the information gathered from the survey. Of the 17 states that replied, all but New York, Michigan and Oklahoma reported acres enrolled in their programs were increasing or stable.



**Figure 1.** Seventeen states responded to the DNR's walk-in survey in the fall of 2007.

Generally speaking, western states, where land values and rental rates are low, ownerships are vast, and populations are sparse, tend to have successful walk-in programs. Eastern states where parcel sizes are small, land prices are high and populations are greater tend to be less successful. Figure 2 demonstrates this relationship among several nearby states with walk-in programs. In Minnesota parcel sizes are smaller, and cropland values are greater than in some of the states to our west that have successfully implemented walk-in programs.

### Walk on acres compared to farm size, cropland value



**Figure 2.** The relationship between average farm size and cropland value to the number of enrolled walk-in acres.

A summary of hunting access programs for private lands across the country is included in Table 1. There is high variability in the types of programs, their administration and costs depending on the area of the country. This report focuses on Midwestern states that should be more representative of the costs and administration that Minnesota could expect with a walk-in program.

### **Examples of Successful Programs**

Both North and South Dakota have successful walk-in programs with more than 1 million acres enrolled in each state. South Dakota recently established a new goal of 2 million acres. The key elements of each state's program are described below:

South Dakota. The "East River" of South Dakota access program primarily targets existing CRP acres for pheasant hunting. Contracts are annual and pay one dollar per acre with a five-dollar bonus per acre if the habitat is left undisturbed through out the hunting season. Signage and maps are provided by the State. Advantages of the South Dakota program are that it fairly inexpensive, is easy to administer, and popular with both landowners and hunters. The primary disadvantage is that lease hunting is beginning to out compete what the state can pay east of the Missouri River. Furthermore the South Dakota program is not as much of an incentive for enrollment into other long-term programs like CRP as the North Dakota program is. The South Dakota program is funded through hunting license surcharge and Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Funds. The program administration is spread out over 50 conservation Officers and one part time administrator for a total of 8 FTEs.

North Dakota. North Dakota has a public access program called PLOTS (Private Lands Open To Sportsmen) that targets CRP and CREP enrolled acreages as well as working lands that includes 1,000,000 acres and is open to all forms of hunting. The North Dakota program is complex but offers landowners many options and provides for some of the longest contracts (up to 20-year) and best long-term habitat incentives with up to 50% cost share on seed for habitat improvements. North Dakota also has the most expensive program at \$10,000,000 per year. The North Dakota program is funded through a general game and habitat endorsement (\$13) on every hunting license and interest from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's general fund. There are three full time administrators, 9 full time field staff and a shared full time position with USFWS for a total of 12.5 FTEs.

**Table 1. Summary of hunter access programs in 2007**

State	Program	Species	Acres	FTEs <sup>1</sup>	Cost	Funding
Arizona	Adopt-A-Ranch	Upland/big game	2 (M) <sup>1</sup>	3.40	\$600,000	State lottery/ casinos
California	No name	Upland game	2,000	N/A	\$60,000	Game bird stamps
Colorado	Walk-In Access	Pheasants	270,000	0.75	\$432,000	Access permit
Idaho	Access Yes!	All species	1.3 (M)	8	\$615,000	Hunting licenses/donations
Illinois	Access Illinois Outdoors	All species	250,000	1	None	Fee from hunter to landowner
Kansas	Walk In Hunting Access	All species	1 (M)	0.5	\$2 (M)	Hunting licenses/PR grant
Michigan	Hunting Access Program	All species	25,943	N/A	N/A	Hunting licenses
Minnesota <sup>2</sup>	Forest Legacy	All Species	57,500	1	\$12 (M) <sup>2</sup>	State/Private Partnership
	Trout Stream	Trout	620 miles	1	\$8.4 (M) <sup>2</sup>	Licenses, RIM, bonding, LCCMR
Montana	Block mgmt. Access	All species	8.3 (M)	23	\$6.5 (M)	Hunting licenses
Nebraska	CRP mgmt. access	All species	180,000	2	\$700,000	Hunting licenses, stamps, lottery
New York	F&W Mgmt. Act Coop Areas	Upland/big game	144,182	0	N/A	Hunting licenses, conservation fund
N. Dakota	Prvt. Lands Open to Sportsmen	Upland, big game, waterfowl	1 (M)	12	10 (M)	Habitat stamp/ NDGF Dept general fund interest
Oklahoma	No name	All species	500,000	3	\$200,000	Access permits
Oregon	Access and Habitat	Upland, big game, waterfowl	2 (M)	4	N/A	Hunting license, tag auctions
S. Dakota	Various	All species	1.2 (M)	6	\$2.3 (M)	Hunting licenses P-R fund
Utah	Various	All species	2 (M)	8	\$420,000	General funds, PR
Washington	Prvt Lands Access	Upland, big game, waterfowl	1.5 (M)	3.5	\$300,000	Hunting licenses P-R fund
Wyoming	Walk-in Hunting	Upland, big game, waterfowl	1.3 (M)	5	\$870,000	Donations, stamps, restitution funds

<sup>1</sup> Some states include only the coordinator staff time, others include staff time to sign up contracts, check and post properties, make, print and distribute maps, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Access easements in these programs are perpetual easements. Totals are over the life of the programs.

## COSTS AND BENEFITS

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There are a variety of costs and potential benefits associated with a private lands access program for hunting and other recreation. Minnesota Session Law 2007, Chapter 131, Section 85 requires a description of "...the costs and benefits that a private lands access program will provide the public..."

### Cost estimates for access programs

Estimating the cost per acre is difficult even in states that have established programs. Total program costs as reported by each state are found in Table 1. Each state has a unique method of calculating payments and accounting for costs. Some include field staff time and administrative costs in their calculations and others do not. Some states base their payment system on hunter use days (which requires an accurate accounting system), others pay a flat per acre fee, still others have a sliding per acre fee based upon habitat type, location, length of lease or other factors. In many instances states simply responded to our survey that they negotiate leases individually. Table 2 shows an estimated cost per acre for a select number of states as given in an Iowa DNR report from 2006.

**Table 2. Cost per acre for state hunter access**

	<b>Montana (2004)</b>	<b>N. Dakota (2005)</b>	<b>S. Dakota (2005)</b>	<b>Nebraska (2004)</b>	<b>Kansas (2005)</b>
Acres	8,767,805	849,335	1,032,570	180,000	1,009,885
Total cost	\$5,653,497	\$10,800,000	\$2,110,000	\$670,000	\$1,440,000
Land rental	\$3,939,481	\$7,240,000	\$1,800,000	\$550,000	\$1,290,000
Admin. Cost*	\$1,714,016	\$3,560,000	\$310,000	\$120,000	\$150,000
Total/acre	\$0.64	\$12.72	\$2.04	\$3.72	\$1.43
Land Payment/acre	\$0.45	\$8.52	\$1.74	\$3.06	\$1.28

\*Staff time, signs, atlas, enforcement, etc.

Source: Iowa DNR

Part of the costs associated with walk-in programs are their potential impacts on other programs or interests. Some of these are detailed below.

**Maintaining accelerated WMA/AMA acquisition.** Constituent groups who have strongly supported the Wildlife Management Area and Aquatic Management Area systems have made it clear that they do not want resources diverted from WMA/AMA acquisitions and management for a walk-in program. These groups have successfully lobbied for additional funding in recent years for accelerated acquisitions and management activities for these programs. There is support for a private lands access program if it involved a new source of funding that would not divert resources from existing programs.

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**Lease Hunting.** Some states such as Michigan, Illinois, and eastern South Dakota have seen a rise in private lease hunting correlated to the state sponsored walk-in programs. Staff members who administer these programs believe that private individuals were using the walk-in program to locate prime hunting locations, identify willing landowners, and establish the minimum lease price. It was then a simple matter to out-bid the state the following year.

While this can be financially beneficial for the landowner the net result is a loss of public access and is counter productive to the intent of a walk-in program. One potential way to minimize or slow this impact is to require longer-term walk-in contracts but these may be less attractive to landowners particularly when a program is in its infancy.

**Negative “Neighbor” Reaction to Increased Use.** Some agricultural interests have stated that they have concerns regarding increased potential for trespass, litter, motor vehicle use, or property damage on lands neighboring walk-in area parcels.

## **Benefits to the public**

### **More acres available to hunt**

The most obvious benefit is that more acres will be available to hunt. This will help to alleviate crowding and offer more opportunity closer to home.

The time element associated with obtaining landowner permission is significant because finding landowners is increasingly difficult. Many of them have their primary job off the farm, work extremely large ownerships, or are absentee owners. Furthermore, asking a landowner for permission to hunt seems to have become increasingly difficult for suburban/ urban hunters that have lost their rural connections.

### **Easier to find a place to hunt**

By posting walk-in areas and publishing an annual map delineating walk-in areas hunters are able to find these additional areas of opportunity with relative ease. This takes some pressure off of public lands while providing additional opportunity and distributing hunting pressure throughout the landscape. A secondary benefit is that, depending upon the contract language, these areas may be open for other activities such as nature-viewing, birding and photography as well as providing additional access for fishing opportunities along lakes and rivers.

### **Additional areas may attract new hunters**

Walk-in programs are often designed with hunter recruitment and retention in mind. Two of the most frequent reasons that hunters cite for not participating are lack of time or lack of a place to hunt. The increased acres in a walk-in program provide additional places to hunt and closer to home. Moreover, having these areas identified can save a significant amount of time for hunters, because they do not need to find the landowner to ask permission.

While hunters report lack of access as an impediment, the scant data that is available suggests that high pheasant populations (as a result of good habitat) are a better “recruitment tool” as measured by resident license sales than are walk-in programs themselves (Iowa DNR, 2006).

### **Improved habitat complexes**

Walk-in areas can be strategically located in order to maximize habitat value, in addition to providing recreation. By using the walk-in program as an additional incentive to build habitat complexes or add buffers around existing public lands to create larger blocks of quality (primarily grassland and wetland) habitat additional landscape level complexes can be built and/or maintained. This will maximize wildlife production, provide additional environmental benefits, and create hunting or wildlife viewing “destinations”.

### **Benefits to landowners**

#### **Additional income for landowners**

When layered with other incentives such as CRP, RIM, RIM-CE or CREP, or even sequestered carbon-banking payments, walk-in payments may make an attractive enough package to make it financially feasible for landowners to enroll marginal lands into conservation programs rather than continue to farm these lands.

#### **Reduced wildlife depredation problems**

At times landowners experience depredations caused by wildlife such as deer feeding in haystacks. This can become particularly troublesome in difficult winters. Allowing public access to private lands through a walk-in program could provide both recreation and significant control of nuisance deer. For example, absentee landowners often post their land out of convenience. This land can then become a *defacto* wildlife sanctuary and be the source of depredating deer for neighboring farms. If this land were enrolled in a walk-in program the sanctuary effect would be mitigated.

#### **Reduced landowner “annoyance”**

Another, albeit, smaller benefit from a walk-in program is that it can reduce the “annoyance” factor for landowners that have their property enrolled, as hunters already know that the property is open to hunting and what the boundaries are. This saves the landowner from repeated interruptions from hunters seeking permission to hunt.

## RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL MINNESOTA WALK -IN PROGRAM

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### Targeted to existing programs

In order for a walk-in program to be successful the land enrolled must provide good wildlife habitat. This can be obtained in two ways: 1) enrolling land that in its pre-existing condition contains good habitat; or 2) providing incentives to get landowners to establish cover on currently cropped acres (e.g. by enrolling those lands into other conservation programs such as CRP).

In Minnesota it will probably be appropriate to use both methods. Enrolling pre-existing habitat provides “instant opportunity” but does not create any new habitat whereas new enrollments of cropped acreages that are converted to conserving cover create new habitat. A walk-in program payment layered on top of other conservation programs such as CRP, CREP, RIM, RIM-CE or even newly emerging “industrial grasslands” for biofuels may make it financially feasible for landowners to enroll, or extend contracts, in these programs. This will result in added habitat. Minnesota has a significant existing base of private conservation resource acres (see Table 3). We recommend that current and future private lands enrolled in these existing conservation programs serve as the backbone of the walk-in program. It is unlikely that a stand-alone walk-in payment will be sufficient incentive to entice landowners to enroll on its own.

**Table 3. Total acres enrolled in private land conservation programs across Minnesota, 2007.**

PROGRAM	CRP	Cont. CRP	CREP	RIM	RIM/WRP	WRP	All Programs
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	1,453,817	292,223	106,435	67,796	6,668	63,702	1,992,642

### Short-term contracts

We recommend that short-term contracts be used because they are attractive to landowners and relatively easy to administer. Easements or long-term contracts are probably not feasible for this program at this time because of landowner unfamiliarity with the potential of the program and a desire to maintain control and flexibility over land use in the future. It is very important that landowners can easily sign up for and opt-out of the program if good participation is to be expected. For example in South Dakota a landowner can withdraw from the program with a 30-day written notice.

### Simple fee structure

We also recommend that a relatively simple fee structure be developed to value contracts that would not require bids, appraisals, or complex valuations. As previously mentioned, we envision a walk-in payment to be an additional “layer” of conservation payment, which, collectively with payments from other programs, can provide an attractive financial incentive for landowner participation.

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**Easy to find**

Walk-in parcels must be easy for hunters and other users to locate. Quality map books are the corner stone of good walk-in programs. These books will be in high demand by hunters, and must be updated and printed annually.

**Identifiable and Well-signed**

Similarly, insuring that all parcels are well signed is a key component to successful walk-in programs. At a minimum, all enrolled parcels should be signed at property corners, and at major entry points. This allows the public to easily find the parcels and minimizes trespass issues for neighbors. Standardized signs are required that clearly indicate the lands are open for public hunting or other uses.

**Build habitat complexes**

Walk-in areas should be strategically located in order to maximize habitat value, in addition to providing recreation. In general, the walk-in program should be used as an additional incentive to build habitat complexes or add buffers around existing public lands to create larger blocks of quality habitat. This will maximize wildlife production, provide additional environmental benefits, and create hunting or wildlife viewing “destinations”. We recommend a walk-in program focus on grasslands and wetlands, but including some limited mix of croplands to provide hunting opportunities.

**Contract Enrollment and Compliance**

Care must be taken to ensure that only high quality land is enrolled (or that substandard land is quickly brought up to standards) and that the quality of the cover and the identifying signs are maintained during the life of the contract. This will require pre- and post-enrollment inspection and monitoring of contract compliance.

**Enforcement**

Additional patrolling of walk-in areas likely will be required to ensure that a small minority of unethical hunters do not abuse walk-in properties and to assure that neighbors to the properties do not incur trespass issues.

**Marketing Plan**

Initial marketing of the program to both landowners and hunters through a directed marketing plan will likely be needed. South Dakota reported that initial marketing to landowners was a critical component of their program. However after a period of years they were able to stop marketing the program as both landowners and hunters became familiar with it.

**Program Funding and Administration**

To address concerns raised by our stakeholders of diverting funding from existing programs, new funding will be a key component to ensuring a successful and viable walk-in program. Although the primary component of the budget will be contract dollars we have learned from other states that running an access program is labor intensive and adequate staff resources must be devoted to ensure success. Non-contract costs include signs, posts, atlases, labor, and contract administration.

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The total number of acres that can be enrolled is a function of both landowner interest and total budget. At this time it is unknown what actual payment rates would be required to entice a significant number of landowners to enroll into a walk-in program. Table 4 below estimates the cost of a program based upon per acre landowner contract payment rates of \$5, \$10, \$15 and \$20 plus administrative costs. Some administrative costs such as atlas publication remain fixed regardless of program size. These costs are estimated at \$100,000 per year. Other costs such as signage and personnel increase with acres enrolled these costs are estimated at \$150,000 per 100,000 acres enrolled. Thus a 100,000 acre program at \$10/acre would cost \$1,250,000 per year and a 200,000 acre program would cost \$2,400,000 per year.

Assuming a user fee funding model, cost per hunter is also estimated at various landowner payment rates. These costs range between approximately \$17/hunter/yr for 300,000 acres at \$5/ac to \$178/hunter/yr for 1,000,000 at \$20/ac.

**Table 4. Annual estimated cost of a walk-in program per 100,000 acres at various per acre payment rates and estimated cost per hunter at various per acre payment rates.**

Landowner payment rate	\$5/acre	\$10/acre	\$15/acre	\$20/acre
Cost/ 300,000 acre* (per hunter**)	\$2,050,000 (\$17)	\$3,550,000 (\$29)	\$5,050,000 (\$41)	\$6,550,000 (\$54)
Cost/ 500,000 acre (per hunter)	\$3,350,000 (\$27)	\$5,550,000 (\$48)	\$8,250,000 (\$68)	\$10,850,000 (\$89)
Cost/ 1,000,000 acre (per hunter)	\$6,500,000 (\$53)	\$11,600,000 (\$96)	\$16,600,000 (\$136)	\$21,600,000 (\$178)

\*includes \$100,000 fixed program costs and \$150,000 per 100,000 acres program costs.

\*\* based upon the average number of pheasant hunters per year over the last 5 years (122,000).

**Landowner Liability Protection**

Minnesota Session Law 2007, Chapter 131, Section 85 specifies “...nothing in the plan may preempt trespass and liability laws. Recommendations submitted by the commissioner of natural resources under subdivision 3 shall include any changes to Minnesota Statutes, sections 604A.20 to 604A.27, necessary to ensure that landowners are not exposed to additional liability as a result of the walk-in access program.”

Current Minnesota laws (sections 604A.20 to 604A.27) protect landowners from liability associated with public use of their lands for recreational purposes only if no fee is charged. Because landowners participating in a walk-in program will be receiving compensation from the state, the liability laws need to clearly protect participating landowners from any increased liability. Suggested language to amend existing statutes and make this clear is given below:

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Minnesota Statutes 2007, Section 604A.21, is amended by adding a new subdivision that shall read:

“Subd. 7. **State Walk-In Access Program.** Land enrolled in the State walk-in access program pursuant to section \_\_\_\_\_, is deemed, for the purposes of sections 604A.20 to 604A.27, to be land that an owner has made available without charge for recreational purposes, despite any payments which may be made to the owner by the state for enrollment of the land in such program.”

### **Additional options**

Minnesota has some other unique opportunities to increase public access to now private lands that the Legislature may wish to consider in the context of a walk-in package.

They are:

- Increase investment in Forest Legacy Program
- Increase investment in Trout Stream Access Program
- Insure that new programs such as RIM-Clean Energy include a provision and funding for public access

## APPENDIX A

Minnesota Session Law 2007 Chapter 131 Omnibus Natural Resources

Sec. 85. **ACCESS TO MINNESOTA OUTDOORS PLAN.**

**Subdivision 1. Walk-in access plan.** (a) The commissioner of natural resources shall prepare a plan for a walk-in public access program under which the commissioner may encourage owners and operators of privately held land to voluntarily make that land available for walk-in access by the public for hunting and fishing under programs administered by the commissioner.

(b) As part of the plan, the commissioner shall explore entering into contracts with the owners or lessees of land to establish voluntary walk-in public access for hunting, fishing, or other wildlife-dependent recreational activities.

(c) In the plan, the commissioner must describe:

(1) the costs and benefits that private land access will provide the public, such as hunting, fishing, bird watching, and related outdoor activities; and

(2) the types of game, fish, and wildlife habitat improvements made to the land that will enhance public uses.

(d) The commissioner shall explore the effectiveness and public and private cost of walk-in public access programs in other states and recommend walk-in program options for public access to private lands for hunting, fishing, and related recreational activities.

**Subd. 2. Other law.** Nothing in the plan may preempt trespass and liability laws. Recommendations submitted by the commissioner of natural resources under subdivision 3 shall include any changes to Minnesota Statutes, sections 604A.20 to 604A.27, necessary to ensure that landowners are not exposed to additional liability as a result of the walk-in access program.

**Subd. 3. Report.** The commissioner must present the walk-in public access plan to the house and senate committees with jurisdiction over natural resources policy and finance, with recommendations on program implementation, by January 15, 2008.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Brief Summaries of MN/DNR Forest Legacy and Trout Stream Easement Programs.**

#### Trout Streams

The statewide goal for protection of Minnesota's 5,508 miles of coldwater stream habitat through public ownership should increase from the current 46% to 72 % by 2032. These public lands include federal, state, county, and municipal ownership. To achieve this goal, the vision for the AMA Acquisition Program is to acquire 1,500 miles of cold-water stream habitat in the next 25 years from willing sellers to provide sustainable populations of trout and greater opportunities for angling recreation for future generations. This vision would increase the portion of cold-water designated trout streams protected as AMAs from 11% (618 miles) in 2007 to 38% (2,118 miles) by 2032.

Due to increasing land costs and habitat loss, acquisition efforts should be accelerated over the next ten years by purchasing approximately 66% of the 25 year long-term goal or 1,000 miles in ten years at a rate of 100 miles per year. This may require approximately \$10 million per year from 2008-2017 and \$3.3 million per year between 2018-2032. Acquisitions should be concentrated in the southeast and northeast portions of the state where development and land use pressures, habitat fragmentation, and increased demand for outdoor recreation continue to expand.

This vision would increase trout stream AMAs from just over ½ foot of shoreland for each of Minnesota's 5.1 million citizens (2007) to nearly 2 feet for each of Minnesota's projected 6.3 million citizens (2030). Accessibility for Minnesota's growing urban populations would be tremendously increased.

#### Forest Legacy Program

The Minnesota Forest Legacy Program protects environmentally important forests throughout the state threatened by conversion to nonforest uses. Federal funds and local matching funds are used to purchase development rights and conservation easements on these forests in targeted areas of Minnesota to keep them intact and continuing to provide forest benefits. The landowner retains ownership and can continue to foster forest uses such as timber management, recreation, hunting, and hiking as long as they don't conflict with the terms of the easement. All easements are perpetual and any new owner is bound by the terms of the easement.

The Minnesota Forest Legacy Program has acquired public hunting rights and other public recreation opportunities on nearly 57,500 acres of private forestlands in Koochiching, Cass, Crow Wing, and Itasca counties. Hunting on Forest Legacy Conservation areas is allowed during the appropriate seasons and with the correct license. Other, non-Forest Legacy private properties adjoin these conservation areas, many of which are signed "no hunting."



## **APPENDIX C**

### Characteristics of Hunter Access Programs in the United States

This document is a compilation of the written responses received from state agencies responding to the hunter access survey summarized in Table 1.

Due to length this document has not been included but can be found on the DNR web site at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/walkin>

## **APPENDIX D**

### Hunter Access Literature Review

This document provides a brief summary of programs by state and concludes with a bibliography of known hunter access publications.

Due to length this document has not been included but can be found on the DNR web site at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/walkin>

## Characteristics of Hunter Access Programs in the United States

The following is a completion report for a survey of state wildlife agencies regarding hunter access program characteristics. The survey was conducted by Student Intern, Jacob Firle, undergraduate ecology major at Minnesota State University-Mankato in cooperation with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Information was gathered by phone or e-mail during September through November 2007. A copy of the survey instrument is included at the end of this report as Appendix 1.

Surveys were sent to 22 states felt to have walk-in access program. Five states (Kentucky, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Vermont) did not respond. The 17 states that completed surveys are included in Table 1. All returned surveys are included in this report.

The survey was done in response to a request by the Minnesota State Legislature to provide a plan for a hunter access program for Minnesota.

For further information on this survey contact Richard Kimmel, DNR Wildlife Research Group Leader at [richard.kimmel@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:richard.kimmel@dnr.state.mn.us) or 507-642-8478 ext. 225.

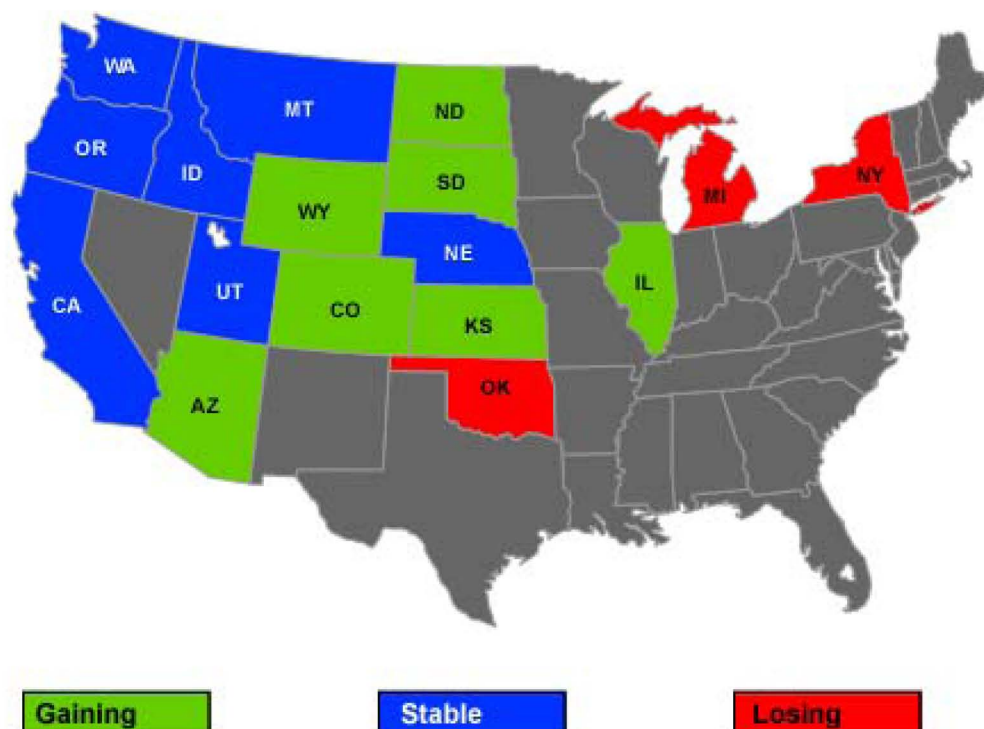


Table 1. Characteristics of North American Hunter Access Programs

<u>State</u>	<u>Program Name/s</u>	<u>Hunting Available</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Acre Status</u>	<u>FTE'S</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>	<u>Funding Source/s</u>	<u>Rating</u>
<i>Arizona</i>	Access Program, Adopt-A-Ranch, Landowner Respect Program	Upland/Big Game	2,000,000 <sup>i</sup>	Gaining	3.40	\$600,000	State Lottery, Native American Casino's	7.5
<i>California</i>	No Formal Name	Upland Game	2,000	Stable	N/A	\$60,000	Game Bird Stamps	8.0
<i>Colorado</i>	Small Game Walk-In Access Program, Big Game Access Program (Pilot)	Mainly Pheasants, others	270,000	Gaining	0.75	\$432,000	Access Permit	9.0
<i>Idaho</i>	Access Yes!	All Species Hunted	1,361,276	Stable	8.00	\$615,000 <sup>ii</sup>	Hunting Licenses, Donations	9.0
<i>Illinois</i>	Access Illinois Outdoors <sup>iii</sup>	All Species Hunted	250,000	Gaining	1.00	None	Fee from hunter to landowner	8.0
<i>Kansas</i>	Walk In Hunting Access Program	All Species Hunted	1,075,361	Gaining	0.50+	\$2,000,000	Hunting Licenses, PR Grant	10
<i>Michigan</i>	Hunting Access Program	All Species Hunted	25,943	Losing	N/A	N/A	Hunting Licenses	N/A
<i>Montana</i>	Block Management Hunting Access Program	All Species Hunted	8,300,000	Gaining	23	\$6,500,000	Hunting Licenses	8
<i>Nebraska</i>	CRP—Management Access Program	All Species Hunted	180,000	Stable	2.00	\$700,000	Hunting Licenses/Stamps, State Lottery	8.0
<i>New York</i>	Fish and Wildlife Management Act Cooperative Areas	Upland/Big Game Mainly Pheasants, also Upland/Big Game,	144,182	Losing	None	N/A	Hunting Licenses, Conservation Fund	5.0
<i>North Dakota</i>	Private Land Open To Sportsmen	Waterfowl	1,000,000	Gaining	12.00	\$10,000,000	Habitat Stamp	10
<i>Oklahoma</i>	No Formal Name	All Species	500,000	Losing	3.00	\$200,000	Land Access Permits	

<u>State</u>	<u>Program Name/s</u>	<u>Hunting Available</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Acre Status</u>	<u>FTE'S</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>	<u>Funding Source/s</u>	<u>Rating</u>
<i>Oregon</i>	Access and Habitat Program	Upland/Big Game, Waterfowl	2,017,055	Stable	4.00	N/A	Hunting Licenses, Tag Auctions	9.0
<i>South Dakota</i>	Walk-In Hunting Access Program, Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access Program, Controlled Hunter Access Program (Pilot)	All Species Hunted	1,230,197	Gaining	6	\$2,329,481	Hunting Licenses, Pitman-Robinson Fund, Non-Resident Waterfowl Licenses	8.0
<i>Utah</i>	Cooperative Wildlife Management Program, Walk-In Access Program, Landowner Association Program	All Species Hunted	2,060,000	Gaining	8.00	\$420,000	General Funds, Federal Aid (PR)	7.0
<i>Washington</i>	Private Lands Access Program	Upland/Big Game, Waterfowl	1,500,000	Stable	3.50	\$300,000	Pittman-Robinson Fund, Hunting Licenses	7.0
<i>Wyoming</i>	Walk-In Hunting, Hunter Management	Upland/Big Game, Waterfowl	1,386,953	Gaining	5.00	\$870,000	Donations, Conservation Stamps, Restitution Funds	8.0

<sup>i</sup> Lands impacted mostly by road access, not actual hunting land set aside

<sup>ii</sup> Estimated cost, includes other programs, actual cost is not known

<sup>iii</sup> Not a state run program, operated by a non-profit organization



# Arizona

## *Contact Information*

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## *Questions*

### **1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Within the Landowner Relations Program for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, there are 3 programs that deal with access: the Access Program, Adopt-A-Ranch Program, and the Landowner Respect Program.

#### **1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

These programs can provide access for any big game, small game and wildlife viewing opportunities around the state of Arizona. The species are: Mule Deer, White-tailed deer, elk, bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, turkey, javelina, bison, black bear, mountain lion, Gambel's quail, Mearns quail, Scaled quail, Blue grouse, Sandhill cranes, several waterfowl species, jack rabbit, cottontail, etc.

### **2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

Due to the ownership pattern in the state of Arizona, our program works a little differently than programs in other states. Many roads that provide access into public lands around Arizona are private roads, which give the owner of these roads control over access to thousands of acres of public lands. What our program does is works with landowners to keep these roads open to the public and if the landowner is willing open up private land to hunting. We deal with ranches more than acres, and we negotiate access agreements specific to each ranch or landowner we work with. These agreements can last from 1 year to a perpetual easement. We loosely throw out the number of ~2 million acres impacted by our program each year. This is a conservative figure, and actual acres impacted are likely quite a bit higher.

### **3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

Access in Arizona is becoming a very dynamic issue. The number of ranches cooperating with the Department increases each year.

#### **3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

The dedicated funding for the access programs is probably the most important reason we are able to continue to increase the number of cooperators utilizing our program. This funding does two things: allows us to keep staff in place to establish the trust needed to get landowners to allow access, and ensures we will have some funding to initiate access projects across the state.

Credibility and trust established by our staff and the program in general over the years is probably reason 1a for our continued expansion of the program. We have great people working in our program, which has built trust and credibility throughout the ranching community. Our regional, or field staff, are essential for creating relationship with landowners. Regional staff has the local knowledge of priority areas and important access point, and can foster very close working relationships with landowners, which is essential to the success of our program.

Building trust and credibility takes time, and if we were to lose any person in our staff, some of the trust would be lost until the new person was able to establish a relationship with the landowners in the area, however our program has also established a certain level credibility which helps our program withstand turn over in positions.

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

These are the top seven reasons why ranchers are closing off access in Arizona: vandalism, trespassing, littering, off-road activities, disruption of landowner operations liability Issues, undocumented Immigrants and drug trafficking (Southern Arizona)

Landowners with smaller properties are choosing not to participate in our program mostly because they purchased the property to enjoy for themselves, and have no interest in allowing others to use or cross their property.

The reasons why landowner chose to work with the Department and our program is the compensation we offer, and trust. The compensation we provide can be monetary, road maintenance, materials needed for ranching operations, or setting up volunteer projects. These volunteer projects provide manpower to do a variety of projects such as; a ranch clean up, a fence repair, or some other labor intensive project. The trust comes through time and effort by Department staff to understand and address (if possible) the concerns of the landowners.

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

Landowners are given payments for allowing access to their property. This payment is negotiated with the landowner and depends on the number of hunters and/or wildlife viewers using the road or property to go hunting or wildlife viewing and how long the access is allowed. The payments to any single landowner cannot exceed a cost benefit analysis we complete for each project. This cost benefit analysis uses the economic value of hunting and wildlife viewing recreation (based on the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), and the number of hunters and wildlife viewers the using the property or road to determine the value the Department can justify for the access. Then it is up to our staff to negotiate what access is allowed, for how many years, and what the payment will be. The payments are not made on a per acre basis, but are based on the amount of opportunity the access provides.

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

The amount or type of access is negotiated by our staff and outlined in our access agreements. Some ranches are open to hunting, some allow hunters to use roads to get to public lands, and some allow both. We have some ranches require a check in and some that don't require a check in. Some of our agreements allow year round access, others allow access during specific hunting seasons. It all depends on what the landowner is willing to agree to, and how much opportunity the access will provide.

We will provide a check in box and an "access permit" for ranches that want the check in. Most landowners that want a check in of some sort do not require a phone call, but again that case by case. We provide signs at access points that instruct hunters on what is required to gain access to each ranch or road.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

More than we have currently. At present, we have 8 people that work in the Landowner Relations Program; however, none of these people have access as 100% of their job duties. If I had to break down these positions into percent of time spent on access I would say we have 2 people that are 90% access, 3 people that are 50% access and 3 people that are 20% access.

Perhaps better way of explaining this is that the access programs are tools used by the Landowner Relations Program staff, and each person in our Landowner Relations Program is expected to be knowledgeable and promote our access programs as part of their job duties.

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

Right now we have a budget of \$600,000 per year to implement our access programs. Much of this goes to salary and operational costs. On the ground project funding for each program are as follows: the Access program is \$180,000, Adapt-A-Ranch \$30,000, Landowner Respect Program \$35,000.

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

Our funding for access comes from 2 sources. \$500,000 is a dedicated amount from our Heritage (state lottery) funds. \$100,000 is an annual allocation (not a dedicated funding source) from an account that is provided to the state of Arizona by Native American Tribes that operate Casino's across the state.

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

At present, there are no costs to the hunter to access these properties.

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

I would say that this program is a 7 or 8. Just like anything, the more funding the better the program and there is always room for improvement, but we are able to build strong relationships with private landowners through our programs and address problems that lead to restricted access for hunters and wildlife viewers.

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

We are able to focus our efforts on lands that are critical for access. We can generate projects that are win-win situations with landowners and the Department. We have the ability to be flexible through our negotiations to provide access at a level that the landowner is comfortable with. We continue to build trust and support among the group of people that control the access to and habitat for much of the wildlife in the state. In my mind the biggest reason I think our program works is that it is based on the number of hunters and wildlife viewers that use the property rather than the number of acres opened up. Not all acres provide the same amount of hunting opportunity, but by basing our payments on hunting opportunity we are able to get the biggest bang for our buck.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

There isn't anything else about the program, but I do want to pass on a thought I have on access in general. Every state has it's own culture, values, norms, societal and political pressures. The success



or failure of any access program will rest on the people that administer the program understanding the culture and values of landowners and the ability to foster good working relationships with the landowners. Just a quick thought.

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

We have many different internal reports, so I'm sure I could find something to send you if you let me know what information you are looking for. Our reporting is typically by ranches opened to access, and opened to access can mean roads, private acres, or both depending on the agreement.

# California

## *Contact Information*

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## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

California does not yet have a formal access program like that in many other states. Legislation has been passed to initiate a program called the “Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement” Program. (Fish and Game code Sections 1570 – 1574). This program has yet to be formally established. Currently, public hunting on about 2,000 acres of private lands is offered through our “Game Bird Heritage Program”.

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

Doves, quail, pheasant, rabbits

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

2,000 (2007)

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

Stable, although it may expand substantially in the future.

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

A large public access program on private lands has been difficult to establish in California, partially because there is a strong market for lands that offer quality hunting. It is difficult to compete with a modest amount of funding.

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

Individuals or businesses selling hunting access offer landowners substantial amounts for hunting rights. Landowners are concerned about liability.

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

For the small program mentioned above (Game Bird Heritage Program), a conservation organization leases farmland, and the Department of Fish and Game grows wildlife food crops on it. We don't have information on the lease price. However, this is a somewhat unusual circumstance (for California),

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

No check-in required. This may not be the case if the “Shared Habitat Alliance” program mentioned above comes about.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

Not applicable at this point.

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

Farming costs for the 2,000 acre program are about \$60,000. (About half of this is to purchase irrigation water.)

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

Upland Game Bird Stamp funds.

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

No extra cost.

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

8

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

The small program that exists has worked well, but it only exists because of unique circumstances in that area. Establishing a larger program has been difficult.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

N/A

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

N/A

# Colorado

## *Contact Information*

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## *Questions*

### **1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Small Game Walk-In Access Program (initiated in 2001)

Big Game Access Program (2007 Pilot Program)

#### **1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

The Small Game Program traditionally focused on pheasants although hunters could harvest any legal species of small game that might occur on a property. We have since expanded our focus to quail, doves and waterfowl. The small game program contains no clause to permit public big game hunting on enrolled properties.

Due to the success of the small game program and high demand for public access, the Big Game Access Program Pilot was initiated in 2007 to determine the feasibility of obtaining access for big game hunting, primarily eastern plains pronghorn and deer hunting opportunity.

### **2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

The Small Game program has enrolled around 205,000 acres in 2007.

The Big Game Pilot enrolled approximately 65,500 acres in 2007.

### **3) Is the program gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

The small game program is stable or increasing. The Big Game program was a pilot program in 2007.

#### **3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

N/A

### **4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

Landowners enroll because: they benefit financially from hunting, easier than leasing to private entities, less disturbance during the season from hunters seeking permission, minimized trespass problems, WIA brings in non-local revenue to small towns and communities, some landowners see WIA as a way to make a contribution to society

Landowners choosing not to enroll: Have family or friends that hunt on the land, They are not comfortable with public access, agricultural conflicts, A few just don't like hunting, A few lease to private clubs or individuals

### **5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

We pay differently based on parcel size, quality and opportunity present. The general small game rate is between \$1-3 per acre, but we do offer a bonus payment for sprinkler corners that offer excellent pheasant cover and opportunity.

For waterfowl leases we are allowing landowners to “bid” the lease cost during 2007 so that we can establish a fixed rate in the future.

The Big game program offered landowners between \$0.25/acre and \$3/acre depending on how many seasons of access were offered and the type of habitat offered and whether the access is for pronghorn only or deer and pronghorn.

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

The SG WIA program is true “Walk-In” hunting opportunity. The hunter must buy an SG Access Permit and then they can hunt any parcel enrolled without a check-in system or reservation. There is virtually no contact with the landowner from the hunters perspective.

The Big Game program also does not use check in boxes or reservation systems.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

Small game Walk-In takes about ½ to ¾ of an FTE. Only part of an FTE was used for the Big Game Pilot.

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

Gross cost is around \$360,000 for the small game program.

Gross cost for the Big Game program is approximately \$72,000.

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

Colorado sells a permit that is required to access Walk-In Lands. The small game permit costs \$20 and is required for any hunter 18 years or older. This permit offsets a significant part of the overall program cost.

The Big game permit costs \$40, in addition to the normal license cost.

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

The Walk-In Access Permit is required in addition to a hunting license.

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

Small Game program is a “9”. It’s a win-win situation for the landowners and hunters. There are always improvements to be made but for the most part both groups are happy with the program.

Hunting seasons are just beginning on the Big Game Program so its too early to tell.

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

For the small game program, hunters recognize the importance and difficulty of obtaining access – approximately 45% of our pheasant hunters buy the access permit, which is surprisingly high. Prior to WIA, our pheasant hunter numbers annually declined by around 7.3%. After Walk-In, the decline in hunter numbers stopped completely, even in the face of

extreme drought which seriously hampered the quality of habitat and small game populations.

We also track landowner participation. Around 90% of the landowners that are accepted in 2005 (for example), will apply for Walk-In in 2006. Generally speaking, we have more landowners trying to get into the program than we can accept.

As before, we need to go through a hunting season on the big game side to evaluate how feasible it is.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

Colorado uses local non-profit groups to hold enrollment periods for landowners in the small game program. I write 9 Purchase Agreements with a variety of groups, (including a PF Chapter, two FFA clubs, local conservation districts) paying them on the basis of \$0.50 per acre. They hold a sign-up period for landowners, then give us the landowner contracts to inspect. We inspect and approve or deny parcels of land on the basis of habitat quality, paying the contracting group on the basis of “acres accepted”. The contracting service group is then tasked with posting the signs that we provide. After the season we pay the contractor fee and the rental fee, which the contractor then pays the landowner.

Contractors that are most successful are ones that have a strong tie to the agricultural community, such as a Conservation District (in Colorado these districts are housed in the NRCS offices). With some habitat training, they are very efficient to work with.

By the same token, a bad contractor can cause lots of problems for the program, so if you go this route, make sure that there is an “out” clause in the contract.

Colorado also uses our field staff to talk to landowners about WIA, and we do have the ability to contract with those landowners directly. We have had good success using this method as well.

Another thing to consider – it is important to manage hunter expectations beginning at inception of a program. As you can imagine, expectations are very wide-ranging, from the hunter that just wants a place to walk around versus the guy that expects to shoot a limit every time out and is disappointed when that doesn’t happen.

Secondarily, its also important to emphasize to hunters that a Walk-In Program should never become the only tool in the hunting tool box. My perception is that many hunters use WIA lands exclusively and never try to obtain access to private hunting lands.

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

Will have in the future. Contact me and I will forward at a later date.

# Idaho

## *Contact Information*

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## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Access Yes!

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

All species that are available to hunt or fish in Idaho.

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

108 Access Yes! Lease Agreements opening 634,956 private acres and 726,320 public acres of land for use by sportsmen for 2007.

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

Fairly stable only due to the lack of increase in funding, there continue to be increased interest. We are investigating alternative compensation for landowners. A pilot project was started in 2006 to test forms of alternative compensation (i.e. big game hunting tags). The Pilot was controversial with sportsmen and was canceled.

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

N/A

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

Money was the primary reason, second reason being landowners felt they had some control of hunting and fishing access.

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

The landowner creates their own BID for the Access Yes! program- containing all the criteria the landowners require for access to or through their property. The bid is ranked by a regional group of sportsmen as to the value of the hunting access and the cost of the lease agreement. Therefore financial cost of the lease will vary.

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

Some landowners require personal check-in, limits on days of hunting, limits on hunter numbers- the rules of the ranch vary with each landowner. That is one of the reasons Access Yes! is so popular- it is flexible. We are working on a hunter management system- a hunter reservation system that can be managed by IDFG or by the landowner.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**  
At current time 8 FTE- 1 in each IDFG Region and 1 at the headquarters office. There are additional part time employees and temp help during hunting seasons.

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**  
In FY07 approximately \$615,000 was spent in lease costs and personnel.

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**  
License and donation, and a SuperHunt drawing: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/superhunt/> Sportsmen apply for a SuperTag or a SuperHunt where, if successful they can hunt in any open hunt in the state, for the species that they have applied for- or the SuperHunt, for elk, deer, moose or antelope anywhere in the state that there is an open hunt. The proceeds go towards supporting the Access Yes! Program

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**  
No, not at this time. We are currently investigating an additional conservation stamp to be required to use Access Yes! areas to help with program funding.

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**  
9+

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

Landowners continue to sign up, feedback from sportsmen is great. The program continue to expand and have great support. We struggle with finding more funding.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**  
Landowner Liability. Here is the link to the Idaho statute that provides landowners relief from liability when they provide hunting access: <http://www3.state.id.us/cgi-bin/newidst?sctid=360160004.K>

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**  
<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/huntplanner/accessyesguide.aspx>



# Illinois

## *Contact Information*

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## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

[Access Illinois Outdoors](#)

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

[Deer, turkey, bird, coyote or any huntable species that can be provided by the landowner.](#)

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

[250,000 acres - 2007](#)

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

[Gaining](#)

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

[More interest in additional income gained from hunting.](#)

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

[Revenue](#)

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

[Landowners set their own fee.](#)

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

[Hunters are required to schedule the hunt with the landowner prior to hunt.](#)

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

[2 but only have 1.](#)

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

[None](#)

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

[The state does not fund us or help us financially.](#)

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

[There is an access fee paid to the landowner.](#)

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

8

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

It's an excellent program to provide hunting access for both resident and non-resident hunters and provides additional revenue to the landowners at no additional expense to them. It costs the state nothing and the land is kept on the tax roles.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

N/A

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

Yes

# Kansas

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** Mike Mitchner

**Title:** Chief of Wildlife

**E-mail:** mikewm@wp.state.ks.us

**Phone:** (620) 672-5911

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Walk In Hunting Access Program.

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

All Species huntable in the State of Kansas.

**2)How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

1,075,361 acres.

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

Increasing.

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

It is a program popular with landowners in the state, more so in West than in East probably due to land ownership patterns.

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

To make more money off of land, to gain benefit of additional KDWP patrol, to not be bothered by hunters seeking permission.

**5)What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

Average cost per acre is \$1.47.

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

Land is open during the contract period some are Sept - Jan others are Nov. - Jan.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

One FTE spends 50% of time coordinating, 29 dist biologists spend a portion of their time in addition to other duties.

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

Approximately \$2,000,000 including salaries, leases, and consumables such as signage and atlases

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

Hunting license Dollars and a PR Grant.

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

It is included in standard license fee

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

10

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

It has been a very popular program to hunters, landowners, employees, and legislators in Kansas

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

N/A

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

Various things like brochures, atlas etc.

# Michigan

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** Mark Sargent

**Title:** Michigan Department of Natural Resources Private Lands Office

**E-mail:** sargentm@michigan.gov

**Phone:** (517) 241-0666

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

The current program name is Michigan Hunting Access Program (HAP).

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

Hunting is allowed for all open hunting seasons.

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

Currently there are 25,943 acres enrolled in HAP (Down from 188,000).

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

The program is losing acres

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

This decline has incurred for several reasons including, ownership changing hands, private individuals taking over leasing the property, problems associated with having the property open to the general hunting public and reduced priority to wildlife division's staff.

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

With the increase in land prices it is difficult for the state to offer competitive prices so landowners chose to sell their land for money or not enroll at all. It is not unusual for a small group of hunters to offer the landowner slightly more than the state offer with the understanding that instead of being open to public hunting the landowner will only have to be concerned with a small group of hunters. Landowners opening their lands to public hunting through the HAP also have many of the same problems associated on state lands open to hunting. These issues include over use, littering, driving vehicles in areas off limit to vehicles such as farm fields, hunter conflicts, etc. When these problems reach a certain level the farmer either drops from the program or becomes involved in a lease with individual hunters.

Those that chose to enroll do so for financial benefits provided by the program and for a better system of granting hunters access to their property

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

HAP lease rates are negotiated based on a fixed financial scale based upon the general hunting value of the lease acreages and is approved by the Natural Resource Commission every 4-8 years.

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters**

**required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

This is negotiated with the landowner. Some have self check-in boxes and others require check-in with the landowner.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

N/A

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

N/A

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

Funding comes from a portion of every hunting license sold in the state.

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

No, it is included in regular hunting license fees

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

N/A

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

N/A

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

N/A

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

Reports are included.

# Montana

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** Alan Charles

**Title:** Coordinator, Landowner/Sportsman Relations

**E-mail:** acharles@mt.gov

**Phone:** (406) 444-3798

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Block Management Hunting Access Program

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

All huntable species – big game/waterfowl/upland bird to include turkey

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

2007 – 1250 landowners have enrolled 8.3 million acres

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

Stable to gaining

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

Successful program

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

Landowners value the incentives package, which includes compensation and/or services, liability protection, livestock loss reimbursement, complimentary non-transferable license, and the focus of the program is on helping the landowner manage public hunting on private land which remains under the control of the landowner.

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

No fee per acre is paid, as FWP does not lease the land away from the landowner. Instead, the landowner is eligible to receive up to \$12,000 per year in payment to offset potential impacts associated with the public using the private land (average payment per landowner is \$3,000 per year). Payment is made using a formula that allows for payment of \$10/per hunter day (a hunter day is anytime a hunter enters the property in the course of a day; a group of 3 hunters hunting for 3 days equals 9 hunter days).

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

Most Block Management Areas require some sort of sign in to provide for accountability of who is on the property; on some areas, hunters administer their own permission by signing rosters, daily coupons, etc; on other areas, the landowners or FWP employee issues permission slips to a limited number of

hunters;

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

Montana FWP currently commits 23 FTE to administering this program; about 15 of those FTE translate into 40-45 season employees hired to assist in hunter management activities;

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

FWP currently commits about \$6.5 million to this program; about \$4.1 million is paid to landowners in impact payments;

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

Multiple ear-marked license fees from various licenses;

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

Hunter pay no extra cost to use the program;

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

8+

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

Multiple surveys of landowners and hunters have indicated high levels (80+%) of satisfaction in key areas; Program has opened or maintained public access to significant portions of the state (which is 64% privately-owned), allowing for effective game management and continued retention and recruitment of Montana hunters;

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

The sooner a program is started, the less difficult it is to maintain access in an arena where nationwide trends indicate increased privatization of public wildlife and increased loss of traditional public access to private land;

Another reason Montana has had success with the program is the involvement throughout of a citizen's committee comprised of landowners and hunters who have helped build, shape, and monitor the program;

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

Reports are available on [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov), under "hunting," "hunting access," "private land/public wildlife", with a website devoted to Block Management also available;



# Nebraska

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** Steven P. Riley

**Title:** Wildlife Division Assistant Administrator

**E-mail:** [steve.riley@ngpc.ne.gov](mailto:steve.riley@ngpc.ne.gov)

**Phone:** (402) 471-5420

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**  
Conservation Reserve Program—Management Access Program (CRP-MAP)

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

All

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

180,000

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

Stable

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

Limited funding

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

Lots of reasons: want to facilitate hunting, to stop trespassing, reduce liability, money, added law enforcement, others.

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

They receive \$1-\$5 per acre depending upon the habitat management work they agree to do.

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

Wide open.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

That's hard to say. We have probably more than a dozen people who work on the program, but none of it is full time. I would guess it would probably be 2 FTEs, but it only works out to be that few do to the local availability of distributed staff.

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

About \$700,000

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

Habitat Stamp Funds, Hunting License Funds, Pheasants Forever Chapter Contributions and Lottery Funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

No.

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

8

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

It has been very positively perceived. It has increased and dispersed hunting access, it has helped us manage private land habitats and to spread the word about early-successional habitat management, it was a catalyst to establishing mid-contract management as a part of CRP nationally.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

There are lots of examples of programs around the country and that Minnesota should easily be able to craft a program that will suit its needs. I would offer that, as you begin to work through this process, I would be willing to consult with you on details regarding all aspects of the program and even what you might consider doing to get this idea through your internal processes (may be the largest obstacle).

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

Yes, I will see if Emily Munter, our hunting access committee chair, can send you a draft of the report she has been coordinating.

# New York

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** Jed Hayden

**Title:** New York State Department of Wildlife Conservation

**E-mail:** jmhayden@gw.dec.state.ny.us

**Phone:** (518) 402-8943

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Fish and Wildlife Management Act Cooperative Areas

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

Big game (white-tailed deer, black bear), small game (many species), and trapping (furbearers)

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

As of 2007 there are 144,182 acres enrolled.

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

Losing

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

Competing land values, lack of an incentive for landowners to get involved, after enrolling, participating landowners are not prepared for the influx of public use after enrolling, participating landowners offer only limited public access changes in social values of rural landowners lack of personnel to administer the lands and/or agreements, some FWMA Cooperative Areas have been purchased or gifted to the State.

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

Unknown

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

At this point, no financial benefit is offered, but the possibility of doing this is being explored

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

Both, it depends on the particular FWMA

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalent are needed to administer the program/s?**

There are no full time employees currently administering the program. If we had one or two, it would greatly benefit the program

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

It is unknown, very little.

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

Conservation Fund, money from hunting and fishing licenses.

**10) s there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

There is no extra cost

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

Early on it was a great success. However at this point it is about a 5

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

Our agency needs to dedicate more time and effort into this program to recruit new cooperators and maintain current ones.

**12) Is there any other information about your sates program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

No

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

Yes, A document will be e-mailed

# North Dakota

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** Kevin Kading

**Title:** Private Lands Coordinator

**E-mail:** [kkading@nd.gov](mailto:kkading@nd.gov)

**Phone:** (701) 328-6371

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Private Land Open To Sportsmen (PLOTS)

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

Program is mainly focused on pheasants, but many PLOTS tracts offer big game and waterfowl hunting in addition to upland game.

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

As of August 2007, the PLOTS program reached 1 million acres; a goal that was set by Governor John Hoeven in 2003.

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

The program still has a lot of interest from landowners. Reaching 1 million acres was a goal that was reached two full years ahead of schedule. The original goal was 1 million acres by 2009. The Department will focus on maintaining 1 million acres as its next goal.

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

There are many challenges that face the PLOTS program in the next few years. The unknown future of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres in the state plays a large role in the PLOTS Program and the habitat base it creates for wildlife. The Department is concerned that if a large amount of CRP acres expire and are not eligible for re enrollment into CRP that wildlife populations will suffer. If wildlife populations decline, a loss of hunters could result in a loss of PLOTS program funding.

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

PLOTS provide another option for landowners when making decisions on their land. Financial incentives provided by the program are a major factor. Some landowners like the fact they are creating habitat, allowing people to have a place to hunt and securing the hunting heritage of North Dakota and our country.

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

There is not a set amount per acre for the entire PLOTS program. Under the PLOTS acronym, there are many types of program agreement lengths, payment types, cost share assistance, incentives etc... Some payments are made annually while some are made one-time upfront. Annual payments range from \$1-\$12 per acre for short term contracts. Upfront payments vary depending upon length of agreement and amount of acres the landowner enrolls.

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters**

**required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

Land enrolled in PLOTS is open from Sept. 1 to April 1 for Walking Access Only. Hunters do not need to sign in, or check with landowners before hunting on PLOTS. The Department produces a PLOTS Guide that shows the locations of PLOTS tracts and other public lands open for hunting in the state free of charge.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

Three administrative level staff are located in the Department headquarters and 9 field biologists are located in field offices throughout the state. The Dept. also contributes funding for a shared position with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to work on private lands.

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

The private lands budget for the Department is approximately \$10 million.

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

The sale of habitat stamps on every hunting license sold in North Dakota goes into a fund. Interest off of the Department's general fund goes into this fund as well. No state taxpayer dollars go into the PLOTS program; it is all hunter license money.

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

This is included in their hunting license. There are specific restrictions for nonresident hunters for certain dates of which they cannot hunt but there is no extra cost for any hunter to hunt PLOTS.

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

10

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

Surveys from our constituents show that their overall satisfaction of the PLOTS program is satisfactory to very satisfactory. The Department feels the program is well received by hunters, landowners, government officials, legislators, decision makers, rural communities and others.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

An asset to our program is the diverse portfolio of programs offered under PLOTS. The flexibility of agreement lengths, payment options and payment types is attractive to landowners. Piggy-backing on federal farm programs such as CRP, EQIP, WRP etc... makes funding go much farther. Creative partnerships help cover landowner's share of habitat development costs.

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

The Department has acreage reports, survey information, director's reports and other information available upon request.

# Oklahoma

## *Contact Information*

**Name:** Mike Sams

**Title:** Senior Biologist

**E-mail:** mgsams@brightok.net

**Phone:** 405-590-2584

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

No specific name just require a land access permit to gain access

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

All species

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

Approximately 500,000

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

Losing

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

The timber companies that we lease from are selling off property

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

Our program consist of agreements with 3-4 timber companies who's motivation is increased law

enforcement to curb arson fires primarily

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available) To my knowledge leases are just \$1/year to make it legal with the primary motivation of curbing arson fires**

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)? Open to hunting whenever**

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

Three FTEs with help form other agency folks during times of high fire danger

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

Approximately, \$200,000

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

The sell of Land Access Permits

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses? Must purchase the Land Access Permit at \$16/year resident & \$25/year non-resident.**

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far? 8**

**11a) Explain why you feel this way. Access is charged regardless of what activity you participate in (i.e., hunting, hiking or horseback riding need permit). Would be a 10 if the lands were not selling off.**

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent? I will check**



# Oregon

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** Matthew Keenan

**Title:** Access and Habitat Program Coordinator

**E-mail:** Mathew.t.keenan@state.or.us

**Phone:** (503) 947-6087

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Access and Habitat Program

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

Deer, elk, chukar, grouse, quail, pheasant, waterfowl, predators

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

2,017,055 (2003-2005)

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

Stable

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

N/A

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

They Enroll because we pay them on a per-acre basis, or to control damage to crops by ungulates.

They choose not to enroll if they want to limit hunting or if they have had problem with hunters

(vandalism/etc)

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

Approximately \$2.25/acre

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

Some projects are "open to hunt", others are "permission only". For permission only areas, we provide maps to locate the areas, the hunters must visit the area to find the name of the landowner on the sign, then look up the phone number of the landowner, and call for permission. The landowner decides who he gives permission to, and for what seasons.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

4

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

N/A

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

\$2 fee on all hunting licenses, special tag auctions/raffles,

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

No extra cost

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

9

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

The public, as well as the agency, seem to be very satisfied with the program. There are several great access areas with bountiful hunting opportunities.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

This is my second week on the job – if you ask me later I probably will have an answer.

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

See number 12.

# South Dakota

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** William Smith

**Title:** Wildlife Biologist

**E-mail:** Bill.Smith@state.sd.us

**Phone:** (605) 773-3096

## *Questions*

### **1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Walk-In Area program, Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access program, Elk Access Program, Controlled Hunter Access Program (in development/pilot process for 2008), GFP Special Management leases

#### **1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

Walk-In Area (all species with bonus incentives for undisturbed cover for pheasant hunting), Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access (focus on goose hunting, with some duck and some upland game bird hunting), Elk Access Program (elk only), Controlled Hunter Access Program (species allowed to be hunted will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis), GFP Special Management leases (all species).

### **2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

Walk-In Area program (1,158,611.5 acres); Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access program (33,819 acres), Elk Access (17,995 acres), Controlled Hunter Access Program (still under development--no acres yet), GFP special management leases (19,771 acres).

### **3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

Walk-In Area program is gaining acres since 2000, Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access program relatively stable, Elk Access stable, Controlled Hunter Access program will be new in 2008, GFP special management leases is stable.

#### **3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

Walk-In Area program changes in payment rates a few years back increased interest in the program. The other programs have smaller budgets but enrollments are more limited by human resources.

### **4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

Why to enroll--absentee landowners, driving not allowed on enrolled areas, payment rates and state statutes hold landowners who open their land to public hunting at the lowest liability level (i.e. they do incur any additional liability).

Why not to enroll--lots of hunter use, commercial leases sometimes will pay more. On the Walk-In Area program, landowners cannot control the number of hunters on the property at a given time.

### **5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

Walk-In Area (up to \$1/acre for access plus a bonus of \$5/acre for permanent, undisturbed habitat in pheasant areas)

Lower Oahe (negotiated)

Elk Access (negotiated plus a bonus for number of elk harvested)

Controlled Hunter Access Program (will pay based on hunter use.

Cooperator will be paid \$6/hunter day base plus a bonus of \$2/a hunter-day if there is no species restriction and \$2/hunter-day if enrolled acreage is open for hunting for the entire species for all species allowed to be hunted.)

GFP Special management leases (negotiated but based on reduced grazing or cropping)

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

Walk-In Area hunters can come and go as pleased--no checking in.

Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access have to check in on the decoy only areas for goose hunting, but can come and go on the pass shooting areas. There are also some areas that hunters can decoy or pass shoot that are open without checking in)

Elk Access--hunters must check in with rancher.

Controlled Hunter Access Program--hunters will have to check in.

GFP Special management leases--most are open without checking in, but on one, rifle deer and antelope hunters need to check in with the rancher.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

We have no FTE's who's sole jobs are administering the program. These programs are implemented largely by our 50 conservation officers scattered throughout the state, plus one seasonal intern, about 75% of my time. At this time, we estimate it cost us about 1500 man-days to implement and deliver all the access programs

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

Walk-In Area program (\$2 million)

Lower Oahe (\$200,000)

Elk Access (\$18,331)

GFP Special Management Area (\$111,150)

Controlled Hunter Access (unknown)

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

Walk-In Area Program--hunting license sales, half of surcharge on most hunting licenses, Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Funds

Lower Oahe--sales of a special 3-day nonresident waterfowl license and some funding from the surcharge on most hunting licenses.

Elk Access, Special GFP Management Areas--general hunting licenses and funding from the surcharge on most hunting licenses.

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

Hunters using these lands do not pay any extra fees.

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

8

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

Lack of FTEs solely working on access issues. Having some FTEs working solely on access would allow more program consistency and uniform delivery. MT and WY have some dedicated FTEs for access with delivery handled by field staff. Both of their structures are good models. Herein SD, we have the occasional conflicts pop-up when staff have to split time on access and other duties because of overlapping deadlines and priorities.

**12) Is there any other information about your sates program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

See our 2005 Walk-In Area program survey

<http://www.sdgifp.info/Publications/WalkIn05.pdf>

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

I will send some Hunting Atlases and Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access Guides.

# Utah

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** Boyde Blackwell

**Title:** Private Lands Public Wildlife Program Coordinator

**E-mail:** boydeblackwell@utah.gov

**Phone:** (801) 538-4776

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Cooperative Wildlife Management Program (CWMU)

Walk-in Access Program (WIA)

Landowner Association Program (LOA)

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

CWMU- Limited entry permit draw system CWMU's must be 8,000 acres for deer, pronghorn, 10, 000 acres for elk and moose.

WIA – open access, register when entering property, WIA properties have a minimum of 80 contiguous acres.

LOA – Limited entry areas only, LOA's are provided permits depending on private land mass on a hunting unit. The LOA may sell these permits an in turn allow hunting on their private lands on the unit.

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

CWMU – 2 million acres

WIA – 60,000+ Acres

LOA – not available

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

CWMU – Stable 103 different CWMU properties registered

WIA – gaining 29 properties and increasing

LOA - Stable

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

CWMU – Size requirement limits these to only productive hunting units

WIA – New program in Utah, it is growing very quickly

LOA – most limited entry units have an association on them

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

CWMU - In almost all cases it's a monetary gain response and to help mitigate wildlife damages to

private lands. In some cases it's being able to keep their lands open but being paid to do so is pretty

good too.

WIA – Some monetary gain but not a lot it more for the landowner that wants to regulate how his lands are being used by sportsmen with some gain involved.

LOA – Completely monetary gain and to help mitigate wildlife damages to private lands.

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

CWMU – Owners are allowed to sell permits for market value (which has really increased over the years)

WIA – Landowners are paid approximately \$1.00/acre if they provide good quality habitat to enroll their property in the program

LOA – The association is allowed to sell their permit for market value.

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

CWMU – This is a limited entry draw system, sportsmen draw for a limited number of permits available for any individual CWMU.

WIA – Users are required to sign in at a kiosk when using a property, some properties require call first

LOA – The lands are left open during regularly scheduled hunts.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

CWMU – 2

WIA – 4

LOA - 2

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

CWMU - \$10,000

WIA - \$400,000

LOA - \$10,000

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

CWMU – General funds, some federal aid (PR)

WIA – General funds

LOA – General funds, some federal aid (PR)

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

There are no extra costs involved in sportsmen’s use of these programs

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

CWMU – 8

WIA – 7

LOA - 7

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

CWMU – For the most part this program works very well however in some cases the monetary greed issue over comes the pure intent of the program. This requires constant oversight to make sure that the public permit holders are provided equal opportunity that the private hunters are allowed.

WIA – this is a new program in Utah and we are still evaluating its benefits and successes

LOA – This program has caused a feeling of entitlement by some landowners and can be a draw back or source of contention in the program. This often stems from the monetary greed issue as well.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

None that I can think of

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

Nope sorry



# Washington

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** Mick Cope

**Title:** Upland Game Section Manager

**E-mail:** copemgc@dfw.wa.gov

**Phone:** (360) 902-2691

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Private Lands Access Program

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

Waterfowl, upland game birds, turkey, forest grouse, deer, elk

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

1.15 Million acres in 2007

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

After recent declines (2003-2005) it has stabilized. There may be loss when CRP acres drop out in 2008.

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

The decline was due to loss of CRP acres, changes in administration (required lands to be made available to public via mapping), and attrition. CRP plays a big role as we partnered with FSA and the NRCS to get landowners enrolled. Stability is because people are happy with the program and they have current farm bill contracts

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

Enroll: Increased awareness by enforcement officers, special hunting seasons (big game only), help in qualifying for federal farm bill programs (e.g., CRP).

Not Enroll: public visibility, poor hunter ethics, increased costs to them.

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

Washington has no monetary payment to landowners for access. Benefits include more EBI points for farm bill agreements (if in an agreement with WDFW for habitat protection), WDFW signs provided, increased awareness by WDFW enforcement officers.

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

Some areas are "Feel Free to Hunt" (no checking in), others are "Register to Hunt" (sign in box, but no landowner contact), and others are "Written Permission" where a permit from the landowner is

required. Some Written Permission areas require calling landowner prior to hunting.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

We have 7 FTEs to manage the private lands program, which includes habitat development and access management. These seven probably use about half of their time on access related issues.

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

Again, the budget is for habitat and access. Total budget is about \$600,000, but only about \$300,000 is dedicated to access issues.

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

Current funding is through Pittman Roberson contract and state license sales revenue as a match.

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

No. We are, however, trying to get legislation passed to help fund this program better.

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

7

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

For not paying landowners directly, it has worked amazingly well.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

Try to set up your program with a variety of options for landowners and hunters to consider. Some landowners want more control than others and some hunters want to work harder to gain access than others. If you are going to pay landowners who participate, have good, understandable criteria for choosing those who will get the cash. Try to provide as many non-monetary incentives as possible so the program cost is not prohibitive.

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

We have our annual PR report that is available up through 2006.

# Wyoming

## *Contact Information*

**Date:** Oct 2007

**Name:** Matt Buhler

**Title:** State Access Coordinator

**E-mail:** matt.buhler@wgf.state.wy.us

**Phone:** (307) 473-3428

## *Questions*

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

Our main program is the Private Lands Public Wildlife Access Program. We have three subprograms: Walk-in Hunting, Walk-in Fishing, and Hunter Management Areas. We provide hunting for elk, deer, antelope, moose, mountain lion, upland birds, waterfowl, turkeys, rabbits, and sandhill cranes

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

We provide hunting for elk, deer, antelope, moose, mountain lion, upland birds, waterfowl, turkeys, rabbits, and sandhill cranes.

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

Hunter Management Area information: HMA: 842,538, WIA: 563,530 (2007)

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

The Program continues to grow, however we have almost reached our funding amount.

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

N/A

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

Management of hunters, monetary compensation, and additional law enforcement.

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

A small monetary payment is made to landowners based upon number of acres enrolled.

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

We have both unlimited access throughout the season and also access broken down into time periods. It all depends on how/when we and the landowner(s) want hunters to access property.

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

There are five FTE's in the PLPW Access Program.

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

Our current budget is \$170,000 for administration/operations and \$700,000 in easement payments.

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

We receive funds from several sources that include: Donations from hunters/anglers; Donations from organizations; portion of conservation stamp sales; State Restitution funds; and interest.

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

No

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

8. We just had a survey conducted and around 84% of hunters and anglers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the access provided to them.

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

We provide access to around 2.9 million private and public acres for almost every huntable species in Wyoming. All this access is free of charge to them. Additionally, we provide this access close to their home so they do not have to travel very far.

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

No

13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?

Reports are available online at: <http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/access/index.asp> and <http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/access/plpw/index.asp>.

**Appendix 1.** Survey instrument used to obtain information on hunter access programs.

***Contact Information***

**Date:**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**E-mail:**

**Phone:**

***Questions***

**1) What is the current name/s of your states hunter access program/s?**

**1a) What types of hunting access does it/they provide (species)?**

**2) How many total acres are enrolled in your states program/s (for what year)?**

**3) Is the program/s gaining or losing acres or is it stable?**

**3a) Explain what the possible reason/s for this may be?**

**4) What are the primary reasons why landowners chose to enroll or not enroll in the program/s?**

**5) What (if any) financial gain or other benefit is given to landowners that enroll in this program/s? (Amount per acre if available)**

**6) Are the lands left open for hunters to come and hunt whenever they chose or are hunters required to check-in before hunting (Include how they check-in: sign-in box, check-in at landowners home, call before hunting, other)?**

**7) How many full time employees (FTE) equivalents are needed to administer the program/s?**

**8) What is the total annual cost of each program to your state?**

**9) What funding source/s does your state use to generate money for the program?**

**10) Is there any extra cost to hunters who choose to hunt on these lands or is it included in standard hunting fees/licenses?**

**11) On a scale of 1-10 (1-low, 10-high) how would you assess how well the program/s has worked thus far?**

**11a) Explain why you feel this way.**

**12) Is there any other information about your states program/s that could be useful to the Minnesota DNR when it considers its future access program?**

**13) Do you have report/s available on your program that you could be sent?**

## APPENDIX D

November 21, 2007

### Hunter Access Literature Review

This document contains a state-by-state literature review regarding hunter access programs. It is divided into 2 parts: 1) Summaries of selected manuscripts and website information organized by states, and 2) a list of manuscripts, website information, and reports relating to programs designed to improve hunting access on private lands and hunter retention and recruitment. This literature review was first compiled during winter 2007 by Cole Barta, a student intern from Minnesota State University- Mankato (MSU) Department of Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services, and updated during fall 2007 by Jacob Firle, from MSU Department of Biology. This cooperative project between MSU and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources was in response to public interest in hunter access programs and potential legislation to establish a program. For information on this literature review, contact Richard Kimmel, Wildlife Research Group Leader, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, email [richard.kimmel@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:richard.kimmel@dnr.state.mn.us), phone 507-642-8478 ext. 225.

## SUMMARIES OF PROGRAMS BY STATE:

### Arizona

**Program Title:** Access Program

**Program Summary:**

All of the information on this program came from the Arizona Game and Fish (2006) website.

The Arizona Access Program is a cost-share program that allows access to privately owned properties and in return gives the landowner funds to perform certain projects. Projects can vary from grassland restoration to installing water distribution systems and drinkers. The money for this program is provided through Heritage funds. The main purpose of these funds is to create and maintain public access across the state. Since Arizona is mostly public or state trust land, the main goal of the access program is to create more access to public lands through agreements with private landowners. To find out more information on this program, contact the private lands coordinator Al Eiden at 602-789-3624.

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### California

**Program Title:** Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE)

**Program Summary:**

California is currently running a pilot program called Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE). Detailed information on this program is limited. Information on the California Department of Fish and Game (2006) stated that a pilot program started in 2003. Only a small number of properties are enrolled in the program, and a drawing is used to determine who gets a tag for these areas. Funding for SHARE is provided by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and the National Rifle Association Foundation (California Department of Fish and Game 2006).

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**Colorado**

**Program Title:** Walk-In Access Program (WIA)

**Program Summary:**

The Colorado Walk-In Access Program (WIA) started in 2001 with 113,000 acres. Current numbers now show that the program has grown to over 162,000 acres (Colorado Division of Wildlife 2006a). Even though the program numbers have not increased tremendously, they do have a high landowner retention rate. The Colorado Division of Wildlife (2006a) stated, “To this point the program has been very popular with landowners- nearly 90% reapply each year for acceptance into the program...” One major difference between Colorado’s WIA program compared to others is that all hunters over the age of 16 must purchase a \$20 permit in order to hunt on any WIA property (Colorado Division of Wildlife 2007). Hunting season dates can vary by location and species. Colorado Division of Wildlife (2007) stated “In eastern Colorado, access begins annually on the opening day of pheasant season (Nov. 11, 2006) and continues beyond the end of pheasant season (January 21, 2007), ending on the last day of small game season (February 28, 2007).” Last season, the Pacific Flyway access for ducks and geese began November 1, 2006 and closed January 28, 2007 (Colorado Division of Wildlife 2007).

No information was provided about benefits in any of the literature found. To help give a better visual of the WIA hunting areas, the 2006-2007 WIA hunting atlas is provided on the Colorado Division of Wildlife website.

**Colorado Division of Wildlife 2006a**

- WIA started in 2001 to address concerns about access to small game in eastern Colorado.
- The program is only open to small game and is mainly geared toward pheasants.
- WIA currently has over 162,000 acres.
- “To this point the program has been very popular with landowners- nearly 90% reapply each year for acceptance into the program, and a good percentage take advantage of Division habitat programs such as PHIP to improve habitat and provide a better hunting experience.”

**Colorado Division of Wildlife 2007**

- A \$20 access permit must be purchased to hunt WIA land for all hunters 16 and older.
- Season dates vary depending on the location and season. Most of Eastern Colorado was open during pheasant hunting last season on November 11, 2006 and closed February 28, 2007.
- The Pacific Flyway, which is opened to waterfowl, and mostly located on the western half of the states, started November 1, 2006 and ended January 28, 2007.
- The 2006-2007 WIA hunting atlas link is available on this website, it will give a better visual on the location of properties enrolled in the program.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Idaho**

**Program Title:** Access Yes!

**Program Summary:**

Idaho currently has a program called Access Yes! Like most hunting access programs Access Yes! provides benefits to enrolling landowners. According to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (2007a) “Compensation to the landowner can be in the form of: 1) direct monetary payments, 2) habitat improvement projects, 3) access development projects, or 4) other forms.” In addition, landowners are given more control of access then in most other programs. Director of Idaho’s wildlife bureau Brad Compton stated in Barker (2004) that the landowners “...are still in control” and “They set the conditions of access...”

Before a landowner can receive any payments they must go through an enrollment process. Applications are filled out and before the application is accepted a Sportsman Review Committee determines what projects will be funded (Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2007a). Access Yes! has grown to 620,000 acres of private land and is currently looking at non-monetary ways of providing landowners incentives (Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2007b). Hunters can receive most of the information they need regarding hunting on these lands online including; what species are available to hunt, how many acres are enrolled in the area, weather or not it is located next to public property, and what type of habitat the property contains (Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2007c). Access Yes! is funded by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, as well as money from super tags and super slam tags raffle tickets (Barker 2004).

Other information such as the year the program started, specific rules of the program, and any evaluation of the program was not found.

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2007a**

- Access Yes! requires any participating landowner to go through a review process before they can receive financial compensation for enrolling their property.
- Bids for the program are looked at by a Sportsman Review Committee who determines what projects should be funded.



- Numerous factors can go into the review process such as amount of access, diversity of opportunity provided, cost, availability of wildlife, access to public land, regional recreational needs, species management objectives, past experience with cooperators, past habitat improvement projects on the property, along with other considerations.
- “Compensation to the landowner can be in the form of: 1) direct monetary payments, 2) habitat improvement projects, 3) access development projects, or 4) other forms. For direct monetary payments, ½ of the payment will be issued July 10, 2007 with the remaining issued December 31, 2007.”
- Signs are provided to determine property boundaries of Access Yes! enrolled property.

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2007b**

- “Access Yes! provides access to 620,000 acres of private land to additional 689,000 acres of public land for hunting and fishing.”
- “Developed the Access Yes! Magic Valley Pilot Project to evaluate non-monetary incentives for landowners to enroll in the program.”

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2007c**

- The goal for Access Yes! is to reach over 1,000,000 acres.
- Guides for Access Yes! hunters are provided on this web page to give hunter a idea of what species are available to hunt, how many acres are enrolled in the area, weather or not it is located next to public property, and what type of habitat does the property contain.
- Areas rules and species available to hunt may vary depending on landowner.

**Barker 2004**

- Director of Idaho’s wildlife bureau Brad Compton stated that the landowners “...are still in control” and “They set the conditions of access...”

\*\*\*\*\*

**ILLINOIS**

**Program Title:** Access Illinois Outdoor (AIO)

**Program Summary:**

The Access Illinois Outdoor (AIO) program was created by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in 1995, to meet the needs of hunters seeking access to privately owned lands (Miller et al. 2002). Two Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Area manages the AIO program. In doing so, Two Rivers RC&D oversees the membership and application process and also provides landowner contact information to members (B. Middendorf, Two Rivers Research Conservation and Development Area, email). In order to become a member, a fee of \$25 for an individual and \$50 for the same household family must be paid (Two Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Area). Participating landowners are provided with yellow access cards, signs, hats, and free advertising. They also have the option of discussing an additional access fee with the

member. With only 210,000 acres and 530 participating landowners, AIO has not seen any major growth in its program (B. Middendorf, Two Rivers Research Conservation and Development Area, email). A survey done by Miller et al (2002) showed that 17% of the participants were extremely dissatisfied, 30% of those were Illinois participants.

#### **Miller et al. 2002**

- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) started Access Illinois Outdoor in 1995.

Four mail surveys were conducted with the following results:

- 59% of Illinois hunters depend on private land for hunting.
- Liability was the most frequent reason for Illinois landowners to not allow hunters on their property.
- 63% of AIO participating hunters surveyed rated the program “good to excellent.”
- 37% of AIO participating hunters surveyed rated the program “poor to fair.”
- 17% of AIO participating hunters surveyed were “extremely dissatisfied,” with the AIO program, of that, 30% were Illinois participants.
- Participating AIO landowners believed reduced liability was one of the most important incentives the AIO program offers.
- Of the AIO landowners surveyed, 81% rated the program “good to excellent.”

#### **Miller and Vaske 2003**

- Liability, leasing, and corporate farms have been linked to fewer lands accessible to hunters.
- 26% listed “no land available for hunting” as a constraint on their hunting participation.

#### **Two Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Area 2006**

- AIO is made for consumptive (hunting & fishing) and non-consumptive (camping, hiking, bird watching, etc.) purposes.
- Estimated \$5,000,000 in tourism dollars from AIO.

#### **Two Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Area 2007**

- \$25 annual membership fee for individual participants.
- \$50 annual same household family membership fee.
- Must complete an application before you can gain access.
- After landowner gives permission you are then given an access card, which needs to be on you when using the property.

#### **Brenda Middendorf, Two Rivers Resource Conservation Development Area, email communications, 23 Feb, 2007**

- The program provides access cards, hats, and signs.
- Two Rivers advertises for the landowner by giving out contact information to members.

- 2,800 people are enrolled to participate in outdoor activities on private land, including hunting.
- 530 participating landowners.
- A total of 210,000 acres are enrolled.
- Membership fees cover the costs of AIO along with grant money.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Kansas**

**Program Title:** Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA)

### **Program Summary:**

Kansas Wildlife and Parks (2006) started the Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) program in 1995 as a pilot program. Since the start of WIHA the number of acres have increased and the program is in need of additional funds. According to the Kansas Private Lands report at the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual meeting (2006), the 2005 fall WIHA season had fallen to 1,000,000 acres enrolled, a slight decrease from 2004. In addition to mentioning the 2005 downslide, they also find that the average lease price for the WIHA program is \$1.26 per acre and nearly 75% of the leases are in the Western half of Kansas. Payments are based on numerous factors such as size, type, location, and habitat quality determined by a biologist (Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks 2005c). Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land is ideal for WIHA but similar areas can also be enrolled. Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (2005c) states that “CRP is ideal for WIHA although land with similar qualities and hunting opportunities, such as native rangeland, weedy wheat stubble, milo stubble, and riparian and wetland areas will also be considered.” The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (2005b) also provides services like patrolling conservation officers on the contracted area, and reduced liability for contractors in the program. WIHA currently has two seasons, fall and spring; fall is a general hunting season for big and small game and the spring is geared towards turkey hunting (Kansas State University Department of Agriculture 2004). A turkey hunter survey done by Van Why et al (2004) shows that despite a low user rate, there is still strong support by turkey hunters to increase the amount of property in WIHA. The 2006 Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Department Hunting Atlas shows that funds for WIHA are received from the Sportsmen Federal Aid program and Wildlife Restoration grant. There also is program set up for donations called WIHA Donation Program.

### **Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks 2006**

- WIHA started as a pilot program in 1995.
- Funded by Sportsmen and Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration grant, along with money received from the WIHA donation program.

### **Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks 2005a,b,c,d**

- Access Donation Program accepts donations to partially fund the WIHA program.

- They accept donation of \$25 or more and in return, they either give a one-year subscription to Kansas Wildlife and Parks magazine or a hat.
- Monetary payments, patrolling conservation officers, and reduced liabilities are all benefits for enrolling in WIHA.
- “CRP is ideal for WIHA although land with similar qualities and hunting opportunities, such as native rangeland, weedy wheat stubble, milo stubble, and riparian and wetland areas will also be considered.”

**Van Why et al. 2001**

- Turkey hunters were found to use private land the most.
- WIHA was used the least out of all turkey hunting areas.
- Despite a low user rate, WIHA had a high interest (50%) for leasing more land in the program.

**Kansas State University Department of Agriculture 2004**

- Land leases in Kansas can vary depending on the size, type, location, and characteristics of the land.
- “In 2003, the statewide average annual payment was \$1.25 per acre.”
- In order to enroll in the program there must be at least 80 acres of qualifying land.
- “Fall leases run from either September 1 or November 1 to January 31, of the following year. Other acreage can also be leased for spring turkey hunting.”

\*\*\*\*\*

**Michigan**

**Program Title:** Hunter Access Program (HAP), Commercial Forest Program (CFP)

**Program Summary:**

Michigan’s Hunter Access Program (HAP) started in 1977 as the Public Access Stamp Program in order to create more public access areas for hunting. Once enrolled, landowners receive a payment per acre based on the hunting value of the land (Oliver 2005). The program requires hunters to sign in; either at the landowners place of residence or at a sign-in box, before hunting on property. After hunters sing-in they are issued a yellow tag; each site receives a certain amount of tags depending on the size of HAP land (Michigan Department of Natural Resources 2006). Funding for HAP is obtained from the Pittman Robinson Wildlife Restoration and Game and Fish funds (M. Sargent, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Personal Communication). HAP’s enrollment has been declining in the past decade. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (2006) shows that there are currently only 11, 982 acres enrolled in HAP. Oliver (2005) states that the peak enrollment was 189,000 acres. Declining numbers may be contributing to negative issues associated with HAP such as: hunter confrontations with the landowners, low dollar amounts on price per acre, not enough control for landowners, and landowner misconception of liability laws (Oliver 2005).

Commercial Forest Program (CFP), is a tax incentive program for private commercial forest landowners, which is limited to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. CFP allows landowners to pay a reduced general property tax price of \$1.20/acre while the state of Michigan pays the county an additional \$1.20/acre on behalf of the landowner. In order to be eligible the landowner must have at least 40 continuous acres of land and allow public hunting access on the enrolled property (Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Forest, Mineral, and Fire Management 2007). The program currently has 2.2 million acres with 1700 landowners that allow access for hunting, fishing, and trapping purposes (Michigan department of Natural Resources 2006a).

### **Michigan Department of Natural Resources 2006b**

- 11, 982 acres enrolled in HAP.
- Land available on a first come, first serve basis.
- All users must sign in at a registration site.
- Landowner information, location, habitat type, amount of permits available, and service type are all provided in this publication.

### **Oliver 2005**

- HAP started in 1977, it was called the Public Access Stamp Program (PASP).
- Landowners sign three-year leases that are operable September 1 thru May 31.
- There has to be a minimum of 40 acres on each HAP lease.
- "Rates of payments are based upon amounts of specific habitats identified upon the HAP application."
- Average payment for a HAP lease is about \$5.55 per acre.
- Hunter issues such as, confrontations and property damage, was the main reason past HAP participants removed their property from the program.
- Oliver looks at giving landowners more access control, and ensuring them that they are protected in liability laws, as a way to increase continued participation.

### **Mark Sargent, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, phone interview, 27 Feb, 2007**

- Funding for Hunting Access Program (HAP) provided by Pittman Robinson Wildlife Restoration Act, along with Game and Fish Funds.
- HAP is only available in southern peninsula.

Commercial Forest Program (CFP) is only available in the Northern Peninsula.

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## **Montana**

**Program Title:** Block Management Areas (BMA)

### **Program Summary:**

Montana started using Block Management Areas (BMA) in 1985 to help landowners manage wildlife on their lands and create public hunting opportunities (Charles and Lewis 2004). According to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (a), the 2006 Block

Management season had 1,250 cooperators with more than 8.5 million acres. There are two types of BMA's: type I requires the hunter to receive their own permission and type II requires someone other than the hunter to give permission (Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks 2005). According to the Private Lands/ Public Wildlife Advisory Council (2005) there is a "...\$250 annual enrollment payment and up to \$10 per hunter per day in annual impact payments, with an optional 5% additional weed management payment." Payments do not exceed \$12,000. Montana Fish and Parks (b) also gives "...livestock loss reimbursement, and a complementary Sportsmen License or, for nonresidents, a Big Game Combination License, in lieu of compensation." Montana Fish and Parks (a) also provide funding for this program through "resident and nonresident hunting access enhancement fee, nonresident upland game bird licenses and non resident variable-priced, outfitter-sponsored combination deer/elk licenses." The Block management program has been a benefit to both the landowner and hunters. In a study done by Charles and Lewis (2004), most landowners (79%) were satisfied with the compensation from the program; a majority of the hunters (86%) were at least somewhat satisfied with the hunting opportunities Block Management provided.

#### **Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks a**

- Funding comes from "resident and nonresident hunting access enhancement fee, nonresident upland gamebird licenses and non resident variable-priced, outfitter-sponsored combination deer/elk licenses."
- Block Management contracts are negotiated annually with the landowners.
- Block Management started in 1985.
- "For the 2006 hunting season, approximately 1,250 landowners have enrolled more than 8.5 million acres of land in the Block Management Program."

#### **Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks b**

- 65% of Montana's land is privately owned.
- "Incentives include compensation to offset public hunting access impacts (up to \$12,000 per cooperator), limited liability coverage, livestock loss reimbursement, and a complementary Sportsmen License or, for nonresidents, a Big Game Combination License, in lieu of compensation."
- "... FWP may provide tools such as maps, signs, permission slips, and in some cases, seasonal staff to patrol and assist hunters."

#### **Charles and Lewis 2004**

- Block Management program was established in 1985.
- "Approximately 80,000 people hunted on BMA in 2003 (which resulted in approximately 400,000 hunter days on all BMAs combined)."
- Most Landowners (79%) found that the Block Management program helped them manage the wildlife on their BMA properties.
- "79% of the landowners responding to the survey reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the total compensations they received for the 2003 hunting season."

- Majority of the hunters (86%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with the hunting opportunities the Block Management program brought in 2003.

**Private Lands/ Public Wildlife Advisory Council 2005**

- In 2004 there were 1,262 cooperators with 8,767,805 acres enrolled in the Block Management program.
- Region 7, of the seven regions in Block Management, had the most acres enrolled in the program for 2004 with 3,167,281 acres.
- “A landowner participating in the program may receive benefits, including compensation up to \$12,000 annually, for providing public hunting access to enrolled land.”
- “Benefits will be provided to offset impacts associated with public hunting access including but not limited to general ranch maintenance, conservation efforts, weed control, fire protection, liability insurance, and road/parking-area maintenance.”
- Average payment given out to participating landowner in 2004 was \$3,129.
- “A portion of the revenue generated by the sale of variable-priced nonresident hunting licenses set aside for clients of licensed outfitters is used to fund the hunting-access programs.”
- “The current system, articulated in 12.4.206 ARM, provides for cooperators to receive a \$250 annual enrollment payment, and up to \$10 per hunter day in annual impact payments, with optional 5% additional weed management payment.”

**Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks 2005**

- Two types of BMA, “Type I BMA’s are areas where hunters administer their own permission. This includes areas that use sign-in boxes, places that do not require hunters to obtain specific permission, or places where some other method of self-administered permission is used.”
- “Type II BMA’s are areas where someone other than the hunter administers permission. This includes areas where landowners issue permission slips, department staff administered permission, or some other permission method is used.”
- Each area in the program has certain species that can be hunted.

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**Nebraska**

**Program Title:** Conservation Reserve Program- Management Access Program (CRP-MAP)

**Program Summary:**

Nebraska’s Conservation Reserve Program- Management Access Program (CRP-MAP) was created in 1997 with a total of 20,000 acres enrolled, as of 2005, there are 180,000 acres enrolled (Nebraska Game and Parks Commission 2005). Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (c) states “In order to qualify for CRP-MAP a landowner must agree to improve 10% of the CRP land by lightly disking or conducting a prescribed burn and interseeding with a legume.” The landowner also must have at least two years left on their CRP contract. In return, the landowner will receive payments anywhere between \$1-

\$5 per acre, depending on the management plan (Nebraska Game and Parks Commission *b*). Hunting permits, habitat stamps, donations from the Nebraska Pheasants Forever chapters, and lottery proceeds create funding for CRP-MAP (Nebraska Game and Parks Commission 2005).

**Nebraska Game and Parks Commission 2005**

- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NPC) supports CRP-MAP through funds created by hunting permits and habitat stamps, as well as donations from the Nebraska Pheasants Forever chapters, and lottery proceeds.
- CRP-MAP began in 1997 and now has 180,000 acres in 2005.

**Nebraska Game and Parks Commission 2007a**

- “Landowners whose CRP tracts have been seeded or partially reseeded within the last four years may be eligible to receive \$3 per acre for the entire tract.”
- “Any CRP or Non-CRP tract with excellent wildlife habitat may be eligible to receive \$1 per acre.

**Nebraska Game and Parks Commission 2007b**

- Landowners enrolled must have at least two years left on their CRP contracts.
- Guidelines:
  - o “The landowner will agree to improve 10% of the CRP field by lightly disking and interseeding with an approved legume in the fall or spring.”
  - o Noxious weeds can be controlled in interseeded acres manually or by spot spraying only. All other vegetation must remain undisturbed.”
  - o “No haying or grazing will be allowed on the entire CRP field. Some exceptions apply for counties opened up for emergency haying.”
  - o Landowners will be responsible for site preparation, planting and seed costs.”
  - o The entire CRP field including the interseeded area will be open to walk-in access for hunting during the hunting season.”
- Participating landowners may receive payment anywhere from \$1-\$5 per acre depending on the management plan.

**Nebraska Game and Parks Commission 2007c**

- “In order to qualify for CRP-MAP a landowner must agree to improve 10% of the CRP land by lightly disking or conducting a prescribed burn and interseeding with a legume.”
- To determine where the best place for light disking is a biologist will conduct a site evaluation.

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**New York**

**Program Title:** Fish and Wildlife Management Act Cooperative Area Program (FWMA)



**Program Summary:**

Michael Schiavone of the New York State Department of Wildlife Conservation provided most of the information about the FWMA program through email. Michael stated in his email, “The Fish and Wildlife Management Act Cooperative Area Program (FWMA) has 132,154 acres open to hunting and/or trapping under the FWMA Co-op.” He also mentions that there are no financial benefits to landowners through this program. The New York State Department of Wildlife (2007) website states that the program provides management services to FWMA contractors. In order to find out more information on FWMA contact Jed Hayden, either by email [jmhayden@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:jmhayden@gw.dec.state.ny.us), or by phone 518-402-8943.

**Michael Schiavone, New York State Department of Wildlife Conservation, email communication, 27 Feb, 2007**

- No financial incentive involved with FWMA.
- “The FWMA program has 132,154 acres open to hunting and/or trapping under the FWMA Co-op.”
- “(91%) of the FWMA acreage is found in DEC Region 6 (St. Lawrence Valley and Portions of the northern and western Adirondacks) and is comprised primarily of Fort Drum (90,000 acres; Jefferson County) and DMU 67 (30,000 acres; Lewis and Herkimer counties).”
- New contact for land management issues is Jed Hayden; email [jmhayden@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:jmhayden@gw.dec.state.ny.us), phone number 518-402-8943.

**New York State Department of Wildlife Conservation 2007**

- FWMA areas provide management services to area enrolled in the program.
- Laws provide limited liability for non-paying recreationists.

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**North Dakota**

**Program Title:** Private Lands Initiative (PLI)

**Program Summary:**

The Private Land Initiative (PLI) has 8 programs listed under the Private Land Open to Sportsmen (PLOTS) program: Working Lands Program, CRP Cost-sharing Program, Habitat Plots Program, Coverlocks, Wetland Reserve Program, Tree Planting Cost-sharing Program, Food Plots Program, and Private Forest Conservation Program. Each program has different payment rates or cost share percentages (North Dakota Game and Fish Department 2005). The most popular program has been the Working Lands Program with 415,000 acres enrolled in 2006 and the second most popular was CRP Cost-sharing with 303,000 acres (Leier 2007). The most recent numbers show that PLI currently has about 850,000 total acres enrolled and 2,800 active agreements. The 2005-2007 biennium budget is 10.8 million and there are currently 14 biologists used in this program. (D. Howie, North Dakota Fish and Game, email).

## North Dakota Game and Fish Department 2005

- 8 programs are listed under PLI as part of the PLOTS program.
- **Working Lands Program (WLP)**- “Two-year rental contracts to recognize and reward landowners for activities and resources that have a positive impact on wildlife habitat without requiring land retirement and provide public access.”
  - o Biologist review areas based on the size, habitat, conservation management practices, and location. The locations are then ranked according to those qualifications.
  - o Payments range from \$1.00 to \$3.00 per acre with a two-year contract.
- **CRP Cost-sharing Program**- “Assists in habitat establishment (grass, trees, and food) and provides public access on Conservation Reserve Program acres.”
  - o There are two options for CRP grass seed cost-sharing: 1) a plan that allows limited haying or grazing with a management plan and pays \$1-\$3 per acre, 2) a managed area that allows no haying or grazing under any circumstances along with a management plan and pays \$2-\$4 per acre.
  - o North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) will pay up to half of the costs plus \$100 per CRP shrub acre.
  - o Cost sharing provides up to half of all cost of grass seed, shrubs, and trees. In addition, there is an annual established payment for all crops left unharvested.
  - o Cost share for tree, shrub and grass seed can vary depending on number of years left on the CRP contract:
    - 8 or more years, half the costs will be covered.
    - 6-8 years, 40% of costs are covered.
    - 6 years or less, 25% of the costs are covered.
  - o Food plot areas with undisturbed crops will get:
    - \$30 per acre for small grain.
    - \$50 per acre for row crops.
- In return the landowner must agree to:
  - o Have a minimum of 80 acres CRP land.
  - o Sign an agreement that allows open hunting access from September 1- April 1.
  - o Allow NDGFD to sign and advertise the land.
- **Habitat Plot Program**- “multi-year rental contracts to create/protect/enhance habitat and provide public access.”
  - o Two options: short term and long term.
    - Short-term option will allow either a 6-year agreement for new habitat establishment or a 3-year agreement for existing habitat maintenance.
    - In a long-term option landowners will receive an up front payment for signing a contract. A 10 year agreement will receive an up front payment of 65%, 15 year-75%, 20 year-85% of the total cumulative payment.
  - o Payments for existing and New Habitats:

- NDGFD will cover half of the costs for up to \$30 per acre for new habitats.
  - The payments depend on the soil type and location for new habitats. Each soil type has a different class, class payments can vary by location:
    - Class I-III - \$24-\$34 per acre
    - Class IV – \$17-\$24 per acre
    - Class VI-VII – \$9-\$12 per acre
    - Maps of different regions and class payments are shown on the website.
  - Existing Habitats include grassland, wetlands, woodlands and riparian woods.
  - Pay scale is similar to class VI-VII.
  
- **Coverlocks (CREP)**- “Uses USDA’s Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to establish 20 acre habitat complexes (15 ac. grass and 5 ac. trees) along priority watersheds and provides public access to the 160 acres encompassing the complex for a period of 30 years.”
  - 160 continuous acres must be enrolled with 20 of them set aside for the herbaceous cover and trees. The landowner can use the remaining 140 acres for whatever they need it for.
  - In return, the landowner must agree to allow access to the entire 160 acres for 30 years and maintain the 20 acres of Coverlock.
  - Incentives:
    - Farm Service Agency (FSA) will give CRP payments on the Coverlock for 15 years. NDFGD will pay an additional 95% of the CRP payment up front. In addition FSA and NDFGD will provide cost share for any trees, grass seed and weed barrier based on FSA cost share rates.
    - \$750 will be given as a sign up incentive for the 5-acre tree planting.
  
- **Wetland Reserve Program**- “Incentive is a partnership program between USDA and North Dakota Game and Fish Department which provides additional incentives to producers enrolling their land in WRP. The primary purpose of WRP Incentive is to restore, protect or enhance wetlands and uplands on private property and provide public access.”
  - Enrollment will be decided by ranking system using size, accessibility, wetland/upland ratio, location, and habitat diversity as the criteria.
  - In return, landowners enrolled in the program will receive incentive payment of 15% of the projected value of the land. If their land is enrolled in a USDA and NDFGD partnership then they are eligible for up to 90% of the projected value of their property.
  - Only 30-year contracts are available.
  
- **Tree planting Cost-Sharing Program**- provides assistance with the establishment costs of tree plantings. The goal of this program is to enhance wildlife habitat and conservation on private land. This program provides higher incentives to producers who provide public access.

- Two options are given:
  - Option 1 requires landowner to provide 10 years of access to a tree planting area. A 10-row minimum with 80 acres or more is required. The NDGFD will provide 25%-50% of the cost on trees and shrubs and 25% of weed barrier costs.
  - Option 2, doesn't require the landowner to provide hunting access to the enrolled area. In return, the landowner will receive a lower cost share percentage of 10%.
- **Food Plot Program**– “The NDGFD Food Plot Program provides an annual establishment and rental payment for the planting of agricultural crops left unharvested for a wildlife food source during the winter.”
  - Non CRP croplands:
    - Establishment payments: \$30 per acre for small grain and \$50 per acre for row crops.
    - Rental based payments are based off the soil classification and regional location.
  - CRP croplands, establishment payment only:
    - \$30 per acre on small grains.
    - \$50 per acre on row crops.
- **Private Forest Conservation Program**– “multi-year rental contracts to protect/enhance unique forest tracts and provide public access.”
  - Short term leases pay \$9-\$12 per acre with an annual option to renew annually within a 3-6 year contract period.
  - Long term leases range from 10-30 years and payments are based on forest acres, land value and conservation agreement terms. Incentive payments start at 35% of the land value and increase 1.5% each year. Maximum of 65% of land value can be paid out.

### **Leier 2007**

- CRP Cost sharing program started in 1998 with 24,000 acres.
- 2006 CRP Cost sharing program has 303,000 acres.
- The most popular program is the Working Lands program, which has just over 415,000 acres enrolled.
- Other program acreage as of September 22, 2006 includes: “CREP/Coverlocks, 13,941; Native Forest, 14,223; Wetland Reserve Program incentive, 6,434; Beginning Farmer, 2,720; Tree Planting cost-share 3,177; and Food plots, 1,247.”

### **Doug Howie, North Dakota Fish and Game, email, communication, 28 Feb, 2007**

- There are currently 2,800 active agreements and about 850,000 acres enrolled in Private Lands Open to Sportsmen (PLOTS).
- There are three main programs that contribute to the majority of their PLOTS acres: Working Lands program, CRP Cost-sharing program and Habitat Plot program.
- 2005-2007 biennium budget of 10.8 million with a staff of 14 biologists in 9 district offices.

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## Oregon

**Program Title:** Access and Habitat Program (A&H)

### **Program Summary:**

The Access and Habitat Program (A&H) started in Oregon in 1993 and now has over 6 million enrolled acres (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife 2005). This program began in order to increase wildlife habitat and create more public hunting access. Since A&H's beginning, it has created 2,017,055 acres of open public hunting land (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Access & Habitat Board 2005). Funding for this program comes from a \$2 surcharge on hunting licenses, an annual raffle, and auctioning of deer and elk tags, and funds from the Green Forage and Deer Enhancement and Restoration Program (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife 2005). To enroll in a project, an application must first be filled out with the project details and sent to a regional advisory council, which makes its recommendations and sends it to the Access and Habitat committee, who then sends it to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission for final approval (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Access & Habitat Board 2005). Two studies done by Bloom (2004 a,b) found that most participating hunters and landowners saw the A&H as successful. Hunters (80%) gave their experience with the program a positive evaluation (Bloom 2004a). The majority of the landowners (86%) believed the program met their needs (Bloom 2004b).

### **Bloom 2004a**

- "The University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory completed 504 anonymous telephone interviews with adult Oregonians between July 1<sup>st</sup> and July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004."
- 
- 61% of A&H program participants have hunted on A&H sites for five years or more.
- 30% surveyed said they hunt on A&H sites 1-2 times per year, 37% hunted once every few years, and 7% said they have never hunted on A&H sites.
- 80% of animals hunted on A&H sites were big game.
- 80% surveyed gave their experience a "somewhat positive" to "very positive" evaluation.
- Conclusion resulted in a number of findings, including:
  - "Familiarity with and use of the Access and Habitat Program is widespread, but with room for growth;"
  - "Familiarity with and use of specific Access and Habitat sites varies a great deal from very low to substantial;"
  - "Most Access and Habitat Hunters use Access and Habitat Sites occasionally, but have been doing so for several years;"
  - "Access and Habitat sites are overwhelmingly for big game hunters;"
  - "A large majority of Access and Habitat hunters are happy with the program, the largest group being very happy with it."

**Bloom 2004b**

- “The University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory completed 90 confidential telephone interviews with adult Oregonians between August 22<sup>nd</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004.”
- Majority of the landowners (51%) surveyed heard of the program from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Staff.
- 69 of the 90 survey participants, included public access hunting on their properties.
- Most A&H landowners (86%) believed the program met their needs.

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Access & Habitat Board 2005**

- The A&H program started in 1993.
- A&H has produced 2,017,055 acres of private land for public hunting.
- A&H program authorizes grants to private landowners, agricultural and timber corporations, sportsmen, and natural resource agencies for projects that either improve habitat or increase public hunting access.
- A&H program is funded by a \$2 surcharge on hunting licenses along with funds from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Green Forage program, Deer Enhancement and Restoration program, and annual auction money for elk and deer tags.
- In order to receive a grant you must first submit an application stating the project, amount of money needed, work schedules, location, and funding commitment. The application then goes through three boards: Regional advisory council, A&H board, then the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission, who make the final decision.
- Most A&H projects during the 2003-2005 biennium that were approved (80%) provide public hunting access.
- Law enforcement, ODFW staff, and landowners monitor access areas.

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife 2005**

- A&H program passed in legislation in 1993.
- The A&H program is funded by a \$2 surcharge on hunting licenses, annual raffle and auction of deer and elk tags, and funds from the Green Forage and Deer Enhancement and Restoration Program.
- Over 6 million acres of private land enrolled.

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**Pennsylvania**

**Program Title:** Farm Game Cooperative Program, Safety Zone Cooperative Program (SZC), Forest Game Cooperative Program

**Program Summary:**

Pennsylvania currently has three programs that provide open hunting access: Farm-Game Cooperative Program, Safety Zone Program (SZC), and Forest-Game Program. Each of these programs began in different years. The most successful of the three programs has

been the Farm-Game Cooperative Program. This program started in 1936 and now has 2,527,227 acres enrolled in the program (Pennsylvania Game Commission 2006*a,b*). The Safety Zone Cooperative Program started in 1954 and current numbers show that there are 1,173,899 acres open to the public for hunting (Pennsylvania Game Commission 2006*a,c*). The Forest-Game Cooperative Program was started in 1971 and now has 694,330 acres enrolled. The incentives for these programs are not financial but instead other benefits are provided to landowners. The Pennsylvania Game Commission (2006*b*) states that the “The Game Commission will provide a variety of benefits to the cooperating landowner including: law enforcement patrols to deter visitors from hunting unlawfully, illegally using all-terrain vehicles or littering and dumping waste. Landowners also receive free food and cover seedlings, and advice on soil conservation and habitat improvements.” These programs have worked to developed many new open hunting opportunities on private land. Currently there are a total of almost 4.3 million acres in all three programs combined with 29,216 participating landowners (Pennsylvania Game Commission 2006*a*).

### **Pennsylvania Game Commission 2006*a***

- The report showed 189 Farm-Game projects located in 59 counties with 2,527,227 acres open for hunting.
- SCZ had 1,173,899 acres open for hunting with 7,294 agreements.
- Forest-Game program was created in 1971.
- Fiscal year 2005 showed the Forest-Game Program produced 694,330 acres of open hunting.
- There are a total of 29,216 landowners with almost 4.3 million acres in all three programs.

### **Pennsylvania Game Commission 2006*b***

- 21,000 landowners with more than 2.5 million acres enrolled in the program.
- 1,000 acres is the minimum amount of acres that can be enrolled.
- Farm-Game Program was started in 1936.
- “The Game Commission will provide a variety of benefits to the cooperating landowner including: law enforcement patrols to deter visitors from hunting unlawfully, illegal all-terrain vehicle use, littering or dumping, free food and cover seedlings, and advice on soil conservation and habitat improvements.”

### **Pennsylvania Game Commission 2006*c***

- Forest Game Program has established more than 600,000 acres.
- “The program benefits participating landowners by providing enhanced property protection and heightened awareness.”
- A minimum of 1,000-forested acres is required.
- Just like in the SZC, signs are provided around the hunting area.
- “Roads and trails that maybe damaged or misused during certain periods of the year are considered officially closed when posted with signs provided by the agency.”

## **Pennsylvania Game Commission 2006d**

- SZC started in 1954 and now has more than 1.1 million acres enrolled.
- There is a minimum of 50 acres necessary in order to participate in the program.

SZC provides signage 150 yards from occupied dwellings to make hunters aware of the zones they are permitted to hunt.

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## **South Dakota**

**Program Title:** Walk-In Access Program (WIA)

### **Program Summary:**

South Dakota's Walk-In Access Program (WIA) has been a generally successful program. Since the program started in 1988 with 23,161 acres, it has grown to 1,038,793 acres in 2005 (Gigliotti 2006). WIA is split into two different contract regions: East South Dakota (East of the Missouri river as well as Lyman, Gregory, and Tripp counties) and West South Dakota (West of the Missouri river and not including Lyman, Gregory, and Tripp counties). Each region has a different contract system: the west generally works on a negotiated contract and the east works on a fixed \$1 per acre system (South Dakota Games, Fish and Parks 2006). There is also the option for a CRP retention bonus that allows the landowner to receive an up front payment of \$1 per acre for each season remaining on their CRP contract. The current contract system is designed to secure CRP lands or undisturbed habitat areas suitable for pheasant hunting in the east along with using negotiated rates to obtain large tracts of land for big game hunting in the west (South Dakota Games, Fish and Parks 2006). Reduced liability, money, and hunting limited to only foot traffic, are some of the benefits found when enrolling in WIA. The funding for WIA comes from a \$5 surcharge on adult hunting licenses along with funds from Pittman Robinson Wildlife Restoration (South Dakota Games, Fish and Parks 2006).

### **Gigliotti 2006**

- 1,038,793 acres enrolled in WIA for 2005.
- Most hunting still occurs on private land not enrolled in WIA, but the use of walk-in areas went up 2.2% for residents, and 5.3% for nonresidents. This data was compared to the 1999 report.
- Private and public lands get more use than WIA lands, even with an 18% increase in total walk-in areas.
  - Numbers compared to 1999 survey:

Resident Grouse: +5.1%	Nonresident Grouse: +6.5%
Resident Pheasant: +2.7%	Nonresident Pheasant: +1.2%
Resident Waterfowl: +1%	
Resident East River Deer: +2.6%	
Resident West River Deer: +7.4%	
Resident Antelope: +9.8%	



- 76% of resident and 77% of nonresident participants are satisfied with the program, compared to the 1999 survey resident WIA user satisfaction is up 5.6% and nonresident WIA user satisfaction is up 12.4%.
- In 2005, an estimated 1.8 million dollars in payments were made to landowners, which produced 160 thousand days of hunting, and 11 million in additional hunting related expenses.

**South Dakota Games, Fish and Parks 2006**

- 36% resident and 26% nonresident hunters use WIA program.
- Eastern SD (East river plus Lyman, Gregory, and Tripp counties), payment system is setup to give \$1/acre plus \$5/acre for any undisturbed habitat during the contract year.
- Western SD (West river minus Lyman, Gregory, and Tripp counties) is based on negotiated rates.
- A CRP retention bonus is offered in both regions. Bonus is used to maintain long-term walk-in area agreements on CRP lands. Rate is 1/acre up front payment for each season remaining on their CRP contract.
- In order to enroll in WIA landowners must agree to:
  - Allow full public access to their property, without having to obtain permission.
  - Offer land with a reasonable amount of habitat available for harvesting game animals.
  - Have a continuous tract of 80 acres or more (smaller can apply if hunting opportunity is good enough).
  - Land must hold exclusive hunting rights.
  - Reasonably protect the enrolled property from degradation; contracted land that has been degraded will also include a reduction in payment for the amount of land removed.
- Funding for WIA comes from a \$5 surcharge on adult hunting licenses, and also from Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration federal funds.

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**Utah**

**Program Title:** Walk-In Access Program (WIA)

**Program Summary:**

Information was provided by Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (2006) website.

Utah currently has a pilot program called Walk-In Access (WIA) that started in 2005 and is scheduled to continue for three years. The program only runs in the northern region of Utah. To enroll in the program minimum requirements for acreage amounts must be met. Payments to the participating landowner can depend on the amount of property enrolled and whether it is being used for fishing or hunting. Unlike many of other programs, Utah's WIA pilot program provides a set yearly payment determined by the factors given. In return for receiving payments the landowner must open their property to public hunting, provide designated parking areas, determine where the program signs need to be

posted, decide on a time period for hunting access, and determine what type of contact with the public they would like. The type of contact can be one of three options: 1) open up access to all the public without any interaction, 2) require registration before they access the property, or 3) require all users of the property to contact the landowner directly. “Monies from Habitat Council, Blue ribbon Fisheries Advisory Council, Sportsmen’s Dollars, Federal aid, and the Pittman/Robertson Fund are used to fund landowner payments.”

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## Washington

**Program Title:** Private Lands Wildlife Management Area (PLMA)

### Program Summary:

The current status of the Private Lands Wildlife Management Area (PLWMA) program is unavailable on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife website but reviews show that the program is either being updated or cancelled. The review process is located in PLWMA Stakeholder Group (2003), along with a survey done by Responsive Management (2003). In order to check on the current status of PLWMA go to <http://www.wa.gov>.

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## Wyoming

**Program Title:** Walk-In Area Hunting Program (WIA), Hunter Management Area (HMA)

### Program Summary:

There are two hunting access programs that are a part of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department’s Private Lands Public Wildlife Access Programs: Walk-In Area Hunting Program (WIA) and the Hunter Management Program. The two programs combine for a total of 1,180,000 acres of private land open to public hunting (Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2006d).

WIA was started in 1998 as a pilot program until 2001 when it was entered as a permanent state program (Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2006d). In order to enroll property in this program, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (2006c) requires at least 80 continuous acres of property that meet established criteria. The size of the property and the length of the contract decide what the payments will be (Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2006c). In addition to monetary benefits, WIA also offers reduced liability, safety zones around buildings and livestock, and occasional patrols of the enrolled property to prevent any illegal activity (Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2006c).

The Hunter Management Area (HMA) is also designed to allow public hunting access on private properties, but it is run differently when compared to WIA. As a part of the benefits for enrolling in this program, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department

(2006*b,d*) takes a management roll in all HMA's. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (2006*b*) states "A Hunter Management Area (HMA) is a parcel of land where the Wyoming Game and Fish Department facilitates management of hunters in return for free public access to hunt." In order to be eligible to hunt on an HMA written permission must be obtained from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (2006*d*).

### **Wyoming Game and Fish Commission 2006**

- WIA has restricted dates and species in which they can be hunted.
- A list of season dates and areas are provided in a pamphlet.

### **Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2006*a***

- The website gives directions on how to use the WIA maps.
- Maps state specific species that can be hunted on that particular property.
- There is a table stating specific dates and times for hunting species in a given area.
- WIA areas are marked with signs that indicate the hunting area in the program, vehicle specifications (parking and road restrictions) and specific species that can be hunted.

### **Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2006*b***

- "A Hunter Management Area (HMA) is a parcel of land where the Wyoming Game and Fish Department facilitates management of hunters in return for free public access to hunt."
- There are only a certain number of permission slips available to hunt these lands.

### **Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2006*c***

- "Almost anyone who owns 80 continuous acres (or 40 acres if waterfowl hunting is available) of Wyoming land can qualify"
- Size and quality of property are part of qualifying criteria for WIA.
- Size of enrolled property and length of contract can determine the amount of payment received (Payment table is available on this website).
- Reduced liability, occasional patrolling of WIA area, and safety zones set up around building or livestock are additional benefits to the WIA program.

### **Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2006*d***

- WIA started in 1998 as a pilot program and continued until 2001 when it was then established as a permanent program.
- Hunter Management Program enlists a combination of private, state trust lands, and federal lands within a boundary area in effort to create more public hunting property.
- In order to hunt on specific Hunter Management Areas (HMA) the Wyoming Game and Fish Department must give written permission to do so.
- In total, 1,180,000 private acres are enrolled in WIA and HMA.

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