

Landowner Incentive Program FAQs

How do I enroll? By first filling out an application and submitting it to the LIP coordinator, Shelley Tovell-DiBona, at 6180 Hay Point Landing Rd, Smyrna, DE 19977 or electronically at Shelley.Tovell@state.de.us.

How many years will I have to enroll my property? Five or 10 years for all habitat restoration types, and up to 15 years for forest protection.

How much financial assistance will I receive from enrolling in the program? LIP will cover between 74-100 percent of the costs for project implementation. In addition, all agricultural producers will receive an annual rental payment for land that is taken out of production. For restoration and enhancement activities, agricultural landowners will receive \$146.52/acre in the fall of every year of the active contract. Any landowner entering into a forest protection easement will receive an annual payment of \$48.65/acre to maintain their forested property.

Does my property qualify? Qualified landowners must own property that currently benefits species-at-risk or will do so after restoration/enhancement activities. Depending on the type of habitat restoration, landowners must meet specific qualifications, such as land must connect two forest blocks.

Other kinds of LIP possibilities:

- **Forest Protection of Coastal Plain Forests and/or Coastal Plain Forested Floodplains and Riparian Swamps:** Qualified lands include 1) large forest blocks (100+ acres in size), 2) forests that are mature, 3) forests that provide habitat for Delmarva fox squirrels, and/or 4) forests that are identified as HCC (Habitat of Conservation Concern) in the Delaware Wildlife Action Plan.
- **Reforestation/enhancement:** Qualified lands must 1) connect two forest blocks, 2) be adjacent to an existing forest block, and/or 3) adjacent to a stream/ditch.
- **Wetland Restoration/Enhancement:** Qualified lands include existing Coastal Plain Seasonal Ponds and Piedmont Stream Valley Wetlands or restorable lands adjacent (less than ½ mile away) to these wetland types.
- **Grassland Establishment:** Qualified lands adjacent (less than ½ mile away) to existing early successional habitat. Preference is given to sites that are permanently protected and/or adjacent to protected lands.

What are species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) in Delaware? In the state's Wildlife Action Plan, species were identified and placed into Tiers based on **species rarity** at state and global levels, **legal status** at the state and Federal levels, and criteria developed by the Northeast Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity

Committee(NETC), Bird Conservation Region 30 (BCR 30), American Fisheries Society (AFS), and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Although game species have been identified in the Wildlife Action Plan, species that are hunted are not likely to receive funding under LIP as the ranking criteria favors projects that are expected to benefit an endangered, threatened, or candidate species under the Federal Endangered Species Act, or expected to benefit a state listed species. However, in some circumstances actions proposed to benefit game species may provide suitable habitat for other SGCN on the property.

Can I plant a food plot for deer and/or turkey? You cannot use LIP funds to plant food plots for deer and/or turkey because these species are not considered species in greatest conservation need.

Can I hunt in areas enrolled? Yes. Occasionally restrictions may be placed on the time allotted for hunting in an effort to keep the restored habitat a place that primarily attracts wildlife.

Can I introduce onto my property ducks, quail or other gamebirds once the habitat has been restored? No.

What happens after the contract ends? Can I re-enroll? Can I till the area again? The LIP will fund and re-enroll landowners as long as funding is available. Once the contract life is over, your property again is yours to do with what you like.

Can I break the contract? It is preferred that landowners complete the full length of their contract. However, if a landowner decides to withdraw from a contract, all expenses made by LIP must be repaid by the landowner.

What happens if I sell the property? If the incoming landowner does not wish to commit to the terms of the habitat lease, the current landowner will be required to reimburse the state on a pro-rated scale.

How much assistance can I expect from the Division of Fish & Wildlife when establishing habitat? There currently are three biologists dedicated to the Landowner Incentive Program. Both are available to assist in all aspects of the habitat restoration/enhancement process. They work with landowners to collaborate on and create an appropriate management plan, choose suitable vegetation, and provide materials and coordinate the use of other supplies, all while overseeing the implementation of the project. Technical assistance and recommendations are provided to every landowner throughout the length of the agreement.