



**USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program**

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for private landowners and local and state land managers who want to develop, improve, or restore fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP provides both technical assistance and financial support to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat on non-federal lands.

NRCS can assist landowners with up to 75 percent cost-sharing to improve fish and wildlife habitat. The landowner is responsible for providing the remaining 25 percent of necessary funds. Federal or state wildlife agencies or private organizations may provide additional funding or expertise to help complete a project. Or, under some circumstances, the landowner may contribute equipment time as part of their 25 percent obligation.

WHIP contracts last for three to ten years from the date the contract is signed. The landowner agrees to maintain the cost-shared practices and allow NRCS access to monitor the effectiveness of the practices over the course of the contract period.

WHIP is a continuous sign-up program: landowners and managers may apply for financial assistance at any time throughout the year. Funding is competitive through a project ranking process. Proposed projects must meet at least one of the Alaska WHIP Plan priorities which are:

- 1) anadromous fish habitat with emphasis on improved fish passage, instream conditions and/ or identified habitat resource concerns
- 2) reducing habitat fragmentation, with emphasis on species state and federal species of concern, and sensitive ecological settings
- 3) shallow water areas for wildlife, focusing on shorebirds and waterfowl

An application packet consists of a signed [CCC-1200 and Appendix](#), Wildlife Habitat Development Plan, and WHIP ranking form. NRCS staff are available to help landowners develop a Wildlife Habitat Development Plan on a first-come, first-served basis. A wetlands determination and other USDA program eligibility material will also need to be completed prior to projects being funded. All applicable federal, state, and local permits must be obtained by the landowner prior to construction.

Please call your local NRCS office to help you get started on developing a Wildlife Habitat Development Plan or for more information on WHIP:

Mark Kinney, District Conservationist
Homer NRCS Field Office
(South Kenai Peninsula)
907.235.8177
4014 Lake Street, Suite 201
Homer, Alaska 99603

Meg Mueller, District Conservationist
Kenai NRCS Field Office
(North Kenai Peninsula, including Hope and Seward)
907.283.8732
110 Trading Bay Drive, Suite 160
Kenai, Alaska 99611

Or click on the following link:
<http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov>



Before shots of Leaf Creek culvert located in the Gray Cliffs subdivision along the North Road Extension. WHIP project will replace the debris and culvert to make more spawning and rearing habitat accessible. (NRCS Photos)



After shot of a newly installed, bedded culvert. A perched and undersized culvert was replaced to improve fish passage on Bean Creek in Cooper Landing using WHIP dollars. (NRCS photo)