

Abstract

Creative Project: Evaluation of Two USDA Contracts on A Family Farm in Southern Indiana

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USDA programs available to private landowners can play a role in preventing wildlife declines through land use change. In the Fall of 2006 through a family decision, with the goal of improving wildlife on my grandparent's 60 acre farm located in Switzerland County, Indiana, two contracts were signed, one being a WHIP contract and the other being a CP-33 contract both funded by the USDA. Both contracts involved planting native, warm season grasses with different seed mixtures and rates on two adjacent sites with one being a pasture landscape (WHIP) and a crop field (CP-33). The WHIP contract also included a shrub or tree planting component on two types of sites: a wetland site and other areas throughout the pasture. For both contracts, everything was completed in the Spring of 2007 following Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) guidelines, along with an Indiana Wildlife Biologist's plan for the farm. Since the completion of the contracts, additional shrub planting has occurred every year up to the Spring of 2010. Since the establishment phase of these two contracts, my family started the mid-contract management aspect in the Spring of 2010 outlined in both contracts

by the NRCS and Biologist's plan and will continue this practice in the Spring of 2011. The goal of this study is to determine if the habitat change on this farm will increase species richness for both wildlife and plants through land use change funded by two USDA programs, by comparing before contracts and after contracts on the family farm.