

REPORT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL
UPLAND GAME BIRD ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

September 2024



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The Goal of the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program is to efficiently and responsibly conserve and enhance upland game bird habitats and populations—providing quality public hunting opportunities for upland game birds for present and future generations.

OVERVIEW

Montana is fortunate to have a program dedicated to upland game bird habitats and hunting access opportunities. The Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program (UGBEP) advances game bird conservation, providing the means for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and its partners to work directly with interested landowners and conservation partners to achieve abundant game bird populations. As changes in land uses intensify and hunting access becomes more difficult to attain, the value of the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program appreciates (Figure 1).

This biennial report chronicles program achievements, summarizes revenue and expenditures, and tabulates habitat enhancement projects and upland game bird releases conducted during FY23 and FY24 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024). This report is intended for Montana legislators, the UGBEP Citizens Advisory Council (CAC), FWP staff, and interested organizations and citizens.



Figure 1. The UGBEP advances game bird conservation for the benefit of present and future generations.

INTRODUCTION

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks administers the statewide Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program, which is organized into two parts:

1. Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement Program (Montana ARM 12.9.7)
2. Upland Game Bird Release Program (Montana ARM 12.9.6)

The primary outcomes of the UGBEP are:

- establishment or enhancement of game bird habitats that benefit gray partridge, forest grouse, ring-necked pheasants, sage-grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, and wild turkey;
- conservation of valuable game bird habitats;
- enhanced public game bird hunting opportunities;
- release of pen-raised pheasants into suitable habitats to establish or enhance populations; and
- wild turkey transplants in suitable areas generally void of turkeys.

A portion of the funds received from the sale of each upland game bird hunting license must be used by the department for the exclusive purpose to preserve and enhance upland game bird populations in Montana (87-1-246 through 87-1-249, MCA). The following license types contribute specific amounts to the Program:

- Class A-1, resident upland game bird, \$2
- Class B-1, nonresident upland game bird, \$23
- Class B-2, 3-day nonresident upland game bird, \$10
- Class AAA, combination sports, \$2; and
- Class B-10, nonresident big game combination, \$23

Resident bird license sales, excluding resident combo licenses, appear to be trending downwards since the last licensing adjustments in 2016, which included base hunting prerequisites and elimination of most free licenses (See Appendix A: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks 10-Year License Sales – Upland Game Bird). There appears to be some fluctuation in numbers due to the quality of bird hunting in a particular year, but the many combination licenses that include upland bird hunting buffers the effect of individual bird license sales. Nonresident bird license sales, excluding nonresident combo licenses, generally appear to be trending upwards.

Program implementation is focused and strategic, guided by the long-term UGBEP Strategic Plan (adopted by the Fish & Wildlife Commission in 2011, revised in 2014). The program is

delivered statewide through projects located on private or public lands and spans collaborative involvement with private landowners, government agencies, and conservation partners.

PROGRAM MILESTONES

The UGBEP continues to grow and evolve in ways that increase program enrollment interest and participation. Each year, the program continues to increase cooperator enrollments, expanding access and habitat enhancement activities successfully. In the past biennium, the following program milestones were noteworthy:

REVISION TO STATUTE

UGBEP has been statutorily required to set aside 15% of its annual revenue to fund bird planting activities. Of that set-aside, 25% was required to be spent annually, specifically on pheasant releases. The 8-year decline in enrollment interest resulted in a buildup of unspent bird planting funds. In response, the CAC recommended that the department remove the statutory requirement to release pheasants but also recommended the program could still fund releases when program eligibilities are met. The CAC's recommendation was intended to help prevent a build-up of unspent funds and to make funds available to accommodate increased landowner interest in habitat projects.

During the 64th Legislature, Rep. Ross H. Fitzgerald sponsored HB 74 to eliminate the requirement of the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program to set aside funds for game bird releases. The bill passed and was signed into law on April 18, 2024.

VOLUNTEER PUBLIC ACCESS – HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM GRANT (FY20 – FY 24)

In September 2020, UGBEP was awarded \$1,894,060 through USDA's Voluntary Public Access – Habitat Incentive Program to expand public access on private lands and to conserve high quality upland game bird habitats. UGBEP successfully accomplished and expended the grant between 2020 and 2023, enrolling 144 new landowners, enhancing 32,201 acres of game bird habitat, and opening 61,498 acres of park and walk game bird hunting access. Contract lengths range from two (2) to fifteen (15) years, with an average contract length of seven (7) years.

UGBEP STRATEGIC PLAN, REVISED

Program delivery is guided by the Strategic Plan, developed through recommendations made by the 2009 CAC. Written in 2011, the 114-page plan describes objectives and strategies to meet those objectives and the overall program goal, as well as identifies specific focus areas for directing program resources.

The current CAC proposed revisions to the Strategic Plan that address (1) increasing program capacity by collaborating with conservation partners state-wide, (2) expanding regional focus areas, and (3) prioritizing habitat enhancement and conservation of upland game bird (UGB) populations in Montana. The draft revised plan was released for public review and comment on November 1, 2023, for a period of sixty (60) days. In response, FWP received a total of forty-five (45) submissions, including three (3) from conservation organizations. The department is incorporating revisions into the plan. Finalization is expected in September 2024.

BIENNIAL REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

Annual Revenues and Expended Funds

Table 1 reports the annual license revenue and expenditures during the biennium. The total income was \$1,899,260, which includes funding for habitat enhancement projects, program administration, and earmarked bird planting activities. The program expended a total of \$916,271 on habitat projects during the biennium, making payments on contracts executed during the biennium and previous years' obligations. Payments are typically for habitat cost-share reimbursements, annual leases, and cooperative conservation positions.

Administrative expenditures totaled \$409,645 during the biennium and include all costs attributable to the overall operation and implementation of the program such as operations costs, signage, and the annual Projects Access Guide. Administrative costs also included \$28,051 in support of 4 UGBEP Council meetings. Council expenditures included daily honorariums, mileage and lodging costs, per-diem allowances, and meeting expenses.

Table 2 provides fiscal information for Pittman-Roberson Federal Aid funds. During the biennium, \$522,372 were used to fund the UGBEP Coordinator, three UGBEP Habitat Specialists positions, and habitat enhancement activities in Denton and Missoula.

Between FY23 through FY24, UGBEP expended \$1,152,335 Voluntary Public Access - Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) grant dollars to enroll productive game bird habitats in Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters and expand hunting opportunities for game bird hunters. The grant expired March 2024.

The program expended a total of \$16,395 on bird planting during the biennium, releasing a total of 1,103 pen-raised pheasants (Table 3). In addition to program-specific enrollments, UGBEP funded pen-raised pheasants released on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) for the Youth Pheasant Opener to promote youth hunting opportunities and recruitment, consistent with passage of House Bill 637.

Table 1. UGBEP Revenue and Expenditures for FY23 and FY24.

FY23							
UGBEP Funding (\$)			UGBEP Expenditures (\$)				
License Revenue	Interest Revenue	Total Income	Bird Planting	Habitat Enhancement	Admin	Overhead	Total Expenditures
808,457	89,483	897,940	14,250	358,153	215,190	68,706	656,300
FY24							
UGBEP Funding (\$)			UGBEP Expenditures (\$)				
License Revenue	Interest Revenue	Total Income	Bird Planting	Habitat Enhancement	Admin	Overhead	Total Expenditures
865,816	135,503	1,001,320	2,145	558,118	194,455	126,287	881,006

Table 2. Non-license funds that contributed to UGBEP in FY23 and FY24.

Program Grant	FY23			FY24		
	Habitat Enhancement	Admin	Total Expenditures	Habitat Enhancement	Admin	Total Expenditures
Pittman-Robertson	NA	\$234,032	\$234,032	NA	\$288,340	\$288,340
VPA-HIP	\$718,682	NA	\$718,682	\$433,653	NA	\$433,653
General License	\$0	\$16,744	\$16,744	\$0	\$27,206	\$27,206

Table 3. UGBEP-funded pen-raised pheasant releases during the biennium.

Program	FY 23		FY 24		Biennium Totals
	# Pheasants	Expenditures	# Pheasants	Expenditures	
UGBEP Bird Planting	0	0	153	\$2,351	\$2,351 (153 Pheasants)
WMA Youth Pheasant	950	\$14,250	0	\$0	\$14,250 (950 Pheasants)
TOTAL	950	\$14,250	153	\$2,351	\$16,601 (1,103 Pheasants)

BIENNIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Habitat Project Accomplishments

The UGBEP provides funding for habitat enhancements and conservation through partnerships with landowners, organizations, state, and federal government agencies (See Appendix B for a list of partners). During the biennium, the UGBEP enrolled 186 new habitat projects, including the 144 enrollments funded by VPA-HIP, enhancing and conserving approximately 33,365 acres of upland game bird habitats and providing 228,255 acres of free public upland game bird hunting opportunity (Table 4). Project types included:

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) add-on leases;
- Renovation of stagnant cover through light disking and interseeding;
- Unharvested blocks of grain available to birds through early spring;
- Grain stubble management, leaving stubble height 15-inches or greater;
- Habitat Management Leases where light cover, nesting cover, and winter cover are left idle during the term of the contract;
- Managed haying or grazing leases;
- Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters;
- Shelterbelts; and
- Diverse brood/winter food cover plots.

Leasing productive upland game bird habitats (e.g., grain food sources, security/nesting cover, and winter cover) was a popular program option during the biennium. Out of 186 habitat projects, 179 (96%) projects involved leases of idled, productive game bird habitats.

The total estimated cost for projects initiated during the biennium was \$2,635,877 (Table 4). FWP obligated¹ \$1,742,080 of UGBEP funds or 66% of the overall estimated cost. The remaining 34% is a combination of partner or cooperator cash and in kind contribution.

UGBEP contracts with cooperators involve both leases and cost share agreements. Habitat leases involve annual payments, spanning 3 to 10 years in length. When a lease is executed, FWP obligates sufficient program funds to cover all payments for the life of the lease. This ensures FWP will honor the full extent of the contract. Cost-share contracts (e. g., shelterbelts, grazing management, nesting cover seedings) provide reimbursements to cooperators for the cost of materials, which normally results in program funds being expended in the first 3 years of the contract length. Cooperators commonly provide equipment use and labor as their cost

¹ Obligated funds are defined as the program's financial commitment to a specific contract. Once obligated, funds are deemed unavailable to other contracts. UGBEP contracts may be active up to 15 years. Contracts that require annual payments may result in unspent balances that decrease over the term up until the contract expires.

share contribution. Specific to cost-share contracts, cooperators contributed a total of \$33,218 or 18% of the costs. Two Habitat Management Lease projects were eligible to receive FWP's Migratory Bird Wetland Program funding of \$18,000 (0.6%). The remaining \$867,527 (33%) of obligated funds were from the Federal Farm Bill Program Voluntary Public Access - Habitat Incentive Program.

Table 4 provides information on individual projects, including project types, FWP Region/County, project length, habitat and access acres, and funding obligations.

As of August 2024, the program manages a total of 475 active contracts that enhance over 350,000 acres of upland game bird habitat and providing approximately 700,000 acres of game bird hunting access. Figure 2, from the 2024 UGBEP Projects Access Guide, shows the general location of each of these active UGBEP contracts. The colored symbols inform users as to public or private landownership and how access might be obtained (e.g., Block Management, landowner contact, or walk-in with no further permission).

Table 4. UGBEP Obligation habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Length (Years)	Project Acres	Access Acres	Obligated Funds (\$)			Project Total
						UGBEP	Cooperator (in-kind)	Other	
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Daniels	8	524	764	23,580	0	0	23,580
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Daniels	5	177	240	3,547	0	0	3,547
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Daniels	4	75.6	396	1,512	0	0	1,512
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Daniels	7	320	320	16,000	0	0	16,000
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Daniels	10	320	320	16,000	0	0	16,000
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Daniels	12	33	397	1,992	0	0	1,992
CRP Add-on Lease	7	Fallon	9	90	320	4,050	0	0	4,050
CRP Add-on Lease	7	Fallon	9	266	320	11,970	0	0	11,970
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Hill	9	159	160	7,955	0	0	7,955
CRP Add-on Lease	7	McCone	9	175	320	7,875	0	0	7,875
CRP Add-on Lease	7	McCone	9	320	320	14,400	0	0	14,400
CRP Add-on Lease	6	McCone	10	320	643	16,000	0	0	16,000
CRP Add-on Lease	6	McCone	8	320	320	12,800	0	0	12,800
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Phillips	7	320	320	11,200	0	0	11,200
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Phillips	9	320	320	16,000	0	0	16,000
CRP Add-on Lease	7	Richland	10	20	318	1,000	0	0	1,000
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Richland	10	304	320	15,215	0	0	15,215
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Sheridan	8	77	160	3,062	0	0	3,062
CRP Add-on Lease	6	Sheridan	5	222	222	5,561	0	0	5,561
CRP Add-on Lease	5	Stillwater	4	320	526	6,400	0	0	6,400
CRP Add-on Lease	4	Teton	11	157	158	6,029	0	0	6,029
CRP Add-on Lease	4	Teton	5	148	160	3,695	0	0	3,695
CRP Add-on Lease	4	Toole	6	257	269	8,989	0	0	8,989
CRP Add-on Lease	4	Toole	6	312	312	10,915	0	0	10,915
Disking Project	7	Carter	4	320	1,890	9,600	0	0	9,600
Disking Project	6	Daniels	5	75	300	1,500	0	0	1,500

Project Type	Region	County	Project Length (Years)	Project Acres	Access Acres	Obligated Funds (\$)			Project Total
						UGBEP	Cooperator (in-kind)	Other	
Disking Project	6	Phillips	4	285	2,683	8,550	0	0	8,550
Grain Food Plot	7	Carter	3	40	4,098	12,000	0	0	12,000
Grain Food Plot	7	Custer	3	40	22,128	12,000	0	0	12,000
Grain Food Plot	6	Daniels	3	2	640	450	0	0	450
Grain Food Plot	7	Dawson	3	20	954	6,000	0	0	6,000
Grain Food Plot	7	Fallon	3	20	1,200	6,000	0	0	6,000
Grain Food Plot	7	Richland	3	20	3,633	8,000	0	0	8,000
Grain Stubble Management	7	McCone	3	320	639	10,240	0	0	10,240
Grain Stubble Management	6	Sheridan	1	320	2085	2,560	0	0	2,560
Grain Stubble Management	6	Sheridan	1	82	560	652	0	0	652
Grain Stubble Management	6	Sheridan	1	479	560	3,828	0	0	3,828
Grain Stubble Management	6	Sheridan	1	283	308	2,264	0	0	2,264
Grain Stubble Management	6	Sheridan	1	264	280	2,112	0	0	2,112
Habitat Management Lease	4	Cascade	10	160	438	48,520	0	0	48,520
Habitat Management Lease	6	Daniels	5	43	300	8,518	0	0	8,518
Habitat Management Lease	6	Daniels	6	79	80	9,306	0	0	9,306
Habitat Management Lease	6	Daniels	5	320	800	40,925	0	0	40,925
Habitat Management Lease	7	Dawson	10	150	320	39,400	0	0	39,400
Habitat Management Lease	7	Dawson	10	163	320	61,940	0	0	61,940
Habitat Management Lease	7	Dawson	10	227	2,040	89,260	0	0	89,260
Habitat Management Lease	7	Dawson	10	100	2,040	38,000	0	0	38,000
Habitat Management Lease	7	Dawson	5	80	640	14,925	0	0	14,925
Habitat Management Lease	7	Dawson	3	211	1,054	22,329	0	0	22,329
Habitat Management Lease	7	Dawson	3	91	155	10,269	0	0	10,269
Habitat Management Lease	7	Dawson	3	90	480	10,710	0	0	10,710
Habitat Management Lease	7	Dawson	3	80	160	9,315	0	0	9,315

Project Type	Region	County	Project Length (Years)	Project Acres	Access Acres	Obligated Funds (\$)			Project Total
						UGBEP	Cooperator (in-kind)	Other	
Habitat Management Lease	7	Garfield	9	65	66	22,230	0	0	22,230
Habitat Management Lease	7	Garfield	3	170	4,146	34,000	0	0	34,000
Habitat Management Lease	7	McCone	3	160	1,916	26,400	0	0	26,400
Habitat Management Lease	7	McCone	10	70	640	26,500	0	0	26,500
Habitat Management Lease	7	McCone	4	150	960	22,700	0	0	22,700
Habitat Management Lease	7	McCone	8	145	320	44,080	0	0	44,080
Habitat Management Lease	7	Prairie	9	165	643	4,455	0	49,680	54,135
Habitat Management Lease	7	Richland	9	34	318	12,920	0	0	12,920
Habitat Management Lease	6	Richland	9	58	320	21,990	0	0	21,990
Habitat Management Lease	7	Richland	5	323	643	61,370	0	0	61,370
Habitat Management Lease	7	Richland	5	320	320	60,800	0	0	60,800
Habitat Management Lease	7	Richland	5	82	299	16,205	0	0	16,205
Habitat Management Lease	7	Richland	5	155	160	29,950	0	0	29,950
Habitat Management Lease	6	Roosevelt	3	320	480	36,593	0	0	36,593
Habitat Management Lease	7	Rosebud	3	320	17,884	36,480	0	0	36,480
Habitat Management Lease	6	Sheridan	9	32	320	611	0	7,335	7,946
Habitat Management Lease	6	Sheridan	8	75	603	43,064	0	0	43,064
Habitat Management Lease	6	Sheridan	5	141	900	20,608	0	0	20,608
Habitat Management Lease	6	Sheridan	5	153	560	18,433	0	0	18,433
Habitat Management Lease	6	Sheridan	5	43	160	9,045	0	0	9,045
Habitat Management Lease	6	Valley	10	17	629	6,460	0	0	6,460
Habitat Management Lease	6	Valley	10	30	160	6,477	0	10,500	16,977
Habitat Management Lease	7	Wibaux	10	210	320	79,800	0	0	79,800
Habitat Management Lease	7	Wibaux	10	160	320	60,800	0	0	60,800
Habitat Management Lease & Fence	7	Garfield	3	35	2,303	11,902	1,000	0	12,902

Project Type	Region	County	Project Length (Years)	Project Acres	Access Acres	Obligated Funds (\$)			Project Total
						UGBEP	Cooperator (in-kind)	Other	
Habitat Management Lease & Fence	7	McCone	5	160	2,884	37,365	9,240	0	46,605
Habitat Management Lease & Fence	7	McCone	5	18	960	7,995	4,620	0	12,615
Habitat Management Lease & Fence	7	Rosebud	3	313	17,844	41,492	3,490	0	44,982
Habitat Management Lease/Migratory Bird Program	6	Daniels	5	87	640	6,580	0	9,000	15,580
Habitat Management Lease/Migratory Bird Program	6	Sheridan	7	320	320	2,200	0	9,000	11,200
Interseeding Project	6	Daniels	5	75	300	2,250	0	0	2,250
Interseeding Project	6	Phillips	5	285	2,683	11,400	0	0	11,400
Managed Grazing + Fence	7	Wibaux	10	160	320	36,000	8,000	0	44,000
Managed Hay Lease	6	Daniels	4	86	1,914	6,020	0	0	6,020
Managed Hay Lease	6	Daniels	4	150	1,914	10,500	0	0	10,500
Managed Hay Lease	6	Daniels	4	37	610	2,590	0	0	2,590
Managed Hay Lease	7	McCone	4	320	2,884	22,400	0	0	22,400
Managed Hay Lease	7	Richland	4	30	3,633	2,100	0	0	2,100
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Cascade	10	198	198	0	0	9,910	9,910
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Chouteau	8	159	159	0	0	7,950	7,950
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Chouteau	8	301	301	0	0	13,527	13,527
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Chouteau	10	320	320	0	0	16,000	16,000
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Chouteau	12	312	320	0	0	18,690	18,690

Project Type	Region	County	Project Length (Years)	Project Acres	Access Acres	Obligated Funds (\$)			Project Total
						UGBEP	Cooperator (in-kind)	Other	
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Chouteau	12	140	140	0	0	6,987	6,987
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Chouteau	10	326	405	0	0	15,837	15,837
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Chouteau	10	157	157	0	0	7,854	7,854
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Chouteau	10	230	332	0	0	11,502	11,502
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Daniels	9	142	308	0	0	7,081	7,081
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Daniels	4	260	320	0	0	5,200	5,200
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Daniels	9	211	240	0	0	9,521	9,521
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Daniels	12	53	359	0	0	2,702	2,702
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Fergus	8	320	480	0	0	12,800	12,800
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	7	Garfield	9	232	265	0	0	11,600	11,600
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Glacier	10	319	319	0	0	15,950	15,950
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Glacier	10	320	400	0	0	16,000	16,000
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Hill	8	160	160	801	0	7,212	8,014
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Hill	8	320	556	1,600	0	14,400	16,000

Project Type	Region	County	Project Length (Years)	Project Acres	Access Acres	Obligated Funds (\$)			Project Total
						UGBEP	Cooperator (in-kind)	Other	
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Hill	8	189	322	945	0	8,505	9,450
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Hill	8	320	640	1,600	0	14,400	16,000
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Hill	8	155	155	775	0	6,975	7,750
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Hill	10	317	316	0	0	15,839	15,839
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Hill	10	255	357	0	0	12,749	12,749
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Liberty	4	142	200	0	0	2,832	2,832
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Liberty	10	320	520	0	0	16,000	16,000
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Liberty	2	58	58	0	0	871	871
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Liberty	2	162	165	0	0	2,422	2,422
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Liberty	3	317	238	0	0	4,748	4,748
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	McCone	9	320	585	0	0	16,000	16,000
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	McCone	9	164	205	0	0	8,215	8,215
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	McCone	9	208	318	1,041	0	10,411	11,452
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	McCone	9	281	320	0	0	14,050	14,050
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	McCone	9	229	320	0	0	10,307	10,307

Project Type	Region	County	Project Length (Years)	Project Acres	Access Acres	Obligated Funds (\$)			Project Total
						UGBEP	Cooperator (in-kind)	Other	
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	McCone	9	283	320	0	0	12,717	12,717
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	McCone	9	291	320	0	0	13,113	13,113
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	McCone	10	292	318	0	0	14,611	14,611
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Phillips	8	313	400	0	0	14,090	14,090
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Phillips	10	314	1280	0	0	15,700	15,700
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Phillips	10	296	320	0	0	14,778	14,778
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Phillips	3	20	30	0	0	306	306
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Pondera	9	160	160	800	0	8,000	8,800
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Pondera	6	189	633	0	0	5,120	5,120
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Pondera	4	309	320	0	0	6,183	6,183
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Pondera	4	162	410	0	0	3,237	3,237
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Pondera	10	104	410	0	0	5,204	5,204
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Pondera	8	56	410	0	0	2,243	2,243
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	7	Prairie	9	320	614	0	0	14,400	14,400
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	7	Prairie	8	320	639	0	0	14,400	14,400

Project Type	Region	County	Project Length (Years)	Project Acres	Access Acres	Obligated Funds (\$)			Project Total
						UGBEP	Cooperator (in-kind)	Other	
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	7	Prairie	9	320	638	0	0	14,400	14,400
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	7	Prairie	9	145	151	0	0	6,525	6,525
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Roosevelt	10	158	160	0	0	7,895	7,895
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Sheridan	9	162	162	0	0	8,121	8,121
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Sheridan	7	233	240	0	0	9,326	9,326
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Sheridan	9	230	304	0	0	11,600	11,600
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Sheridan	9	320	894	0	0	16,000	16,000
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Sheridan	9	283	320	0	0	12,735	12,735
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Sheridan	10	16	640	0	0	657	657
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Sheridan	10	222	640	0	0	10,161	10,161
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Sheridan	10	197	200	0	0	9,862	9,862
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Sheridan	8	320	804	0	0	12,800	12,800
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Sheridan	5	152	160	0	0	3,793	3,793
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Teton	4	142	142	0	0	3,537	3,537
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Teton	4	320	384	0	0	8,000	8,000

Project Type	Region	County	Project Length (Years)	Project Acres	Access Acres	Obligated Funds (\$)			Project Total
						UGBEP	Cooperator (in-kind)	Other	
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Teton	8	296	480	0	0	13,317	13,317
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Teton	9	299	320	0	0	14,950	14,950
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Teton	8	281	281	0	0	12,631	12,631
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Teton	9	297	297	0	0	13,127	13,127
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Teton	7	42	438	173	0	1,494	1,667
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Toole	8	265	400	0	0	11,916	11,916
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Toole	4	240	240	0	0	6,000	6,000
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Toole	9	156	156	780	0	7,800	8,580
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Toole	5	157	157	0	0	3,925	3,925
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Toole	9	68	100	337	0	3,374	3,711
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Toole	9	316	316	0	0	14,241	14,241
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Toole	9	49	520	0	0	2,450	2,450
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	4	Toole	9	320	520	0	0	16,000	16,000
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Valley	8	320	640	0	0	12,800	12,800
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters	6	Valley	10	130	160	0	0	6,477	6,477

Project Type	Region	County	Project Length (Years)	Project Acres	Access Acres	Obligated Funds (\$)			Project Total
						UGBEP	Co-op (in-kind)	Other	
Shelterbelt(s)	7	Dawson	15	3	625	9,392	3,131	0	12,523
Shelterbelt(s)	4	Teton	15	1	790	11,111	3,737	0	14,848
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	6	Chouteau	3	10	2,000	5,100	0	0	5,100
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	7	Custer	3	32	22,128	14,400	0	0	14,400
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	7	Custer	2	15	21,206	5,400	0	0	5,400
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	6	Daniels	5	6	300	5,400	0	0	5,400
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	6	Daniels	3	10	1,150	5,100	0	0	5,100
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	7	Dawson	3	10	954	5,400	0	0	5,400
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	7	Dawson	3	10	1,273	5,400	0	0	5,400
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	7	Fallon	3	10	4,471	5,400	0	0	5,400
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	7	Fallon	3	10	5,765	5,400	0	0	5,400
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	7	Fallon	5	8	1,200	7,200	0	0	7,200
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	6	Phillips	5	10	2,683	9,000	0	0	9,000
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	7	Richland	4	10	3,633	6,000	0	0	6,000
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	6	Roosevelt	5	10	790	9,000	0	0	9,000
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	6	Sheridan	3	8	160	4,320	0	0	4,320
Winter Food/Cover Plot(s)	6	Sheridan	3	5	215	2,520	0	0	2,520
SUMMARY: 186 habitat projects			7 (Avg)	33,365	228,255	1,742,080	33,218	860,578	2,635,877

Cooperative Conservation Positions

The UGBEP currently contributes toward partner agreements that support cooperatively-funded positions. These positions help deliver upland game bird habitat improvement and conservation. This section describes those individual agreements and the work they accomplished. Additional contributors to these positions include the Natural Resources and Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management, United States Forest Service (USFS), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), local Pheasants Forever chapters, and others.

During the past biennium, the department renewed contracts for the following work:

- FY23: A cooperative position between the USFS and FWP, administered by the National Wild Turkey Federation, to promote forest health and the enhancement of Montana's national forest lands, primarily benefiting wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and other game and non-game species.
 - Management area is primarily within FWP Region 2, but also including portions of Regions 1 and 3.
 - Agreement term is for 4 years, with UGBEP contributing \$40,000 per year. Total contract obligation is \$160,000.
 - Currently, the cooperative position is vacant and in the process of being refilled.
- FY23: A cooperative position between USFWS and FWP, and administered by Pheasants Forever, Inc. This contract focuses primarily on renovating upland habitats on USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas and on FWP Ninepipe Wildlife Management Area (WMA), all in the Mission Valley.
 - Management area is within FWP Region 1, Lake County public lands.
 - Contract is for 2-1/4 years, with UGBEP contributing \$28,125 total.
- FY24: UGBEP provides \$15,000 annually (up to \$45,000 for 3 years) to expand program outreach by supporting Pheasants Forever Montana Team (14 staff) at various locations across the state. Several of the Pheasants Forever positions are stationed at USDA service centers and, in particular, help promote UGBEP projects during federal CRP sign-up periods.

In addition to contract renewals listed above, UGBEP supports active contracts with Pheasants Forever in partnership with government agencies and conservation organizations to conduct habitat enhancement and maintenance work at two locations:

- Pheasants Forever and UGBEP: Denton, Montana.
This partnership primarily focuses on five properties: Pheasants Forever (PF) Coffee Creek (800 deeded acres); PF Wolf Creek (1,000 deeded acres); DNRC Wolf Creek (2,500

acres); DNRC Coffee Creek (640 acres); and the Beckman WMA (6,568 acres), totaling over 11,500 acres of habitat and hunting opportunity.

Throughout the biennium, habitat work comprised mostly of maintenance of existing enhancement projects. Ongoing maintenance efforts include mechanical tillage, in-row hand weeding, control of currant worms in the golden currant and tent caterpillars in the chokecherries, spraying and cultivating field bindweed infestations, and planting and maintaining food plots. The contract term is for four years, and UGBEP obligated \$200,000 for work accomplished.

- **Pheasants Forever and UGBEP: Billings, Montana**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Pheasants Forever, and FWP partnership continue to support a Billings-area Pheasants Forever farming position. The habitat work is intended to restore and enhance pheasant and other upland game bird habitats on public lands open to hunting, primarily along the Yellowstone River.

Habitat enhancement and maintenance efforts were focused on the BLM-administered Pompeys Pillar National Monument and FWP properties: Yellowstone Wildlife Management Area, Voyager's Rest Fishing Access Site, Clarks Fork Fishing Access Site, and Grant Marsh Wildlife Management Area, along the Bighorn River. Habitat management has been conducted on irrigated and dry land food plots, nesting cover, brood plots, wetland development, riparian vegetation restoration, shelterbelt/winter cover plantings and general equipment maintenance. Where available, flood and sprinkler irrigation are used to improve habitat enhancement results.

FWP obligated \$60,000 for habitat enhancement activities between FY23 through FY24. FWP and the partnership re-evaluated the benefits and associated costs of this work, which included a change with BLM's management priorities. The partnership decided to discontinue this work at the end of the current contract, September 2025.

UGBEP Pen-raised Pheasant Releases

The program's purpose of releasing pen-raised pheasants, as identified in statute (87-1-246 through 87-1-248, MCA), is to establish or enhance pheasant populations in suitable habitats that have combinations of permanent winter cover, idle cover (e.g., CRP), and cultivated grain. Each release consists of up to 40% cocks (12.9.602(1)(b), ARM), and all releases take place from August 1 through September 15.

Cooperators are eligible to participate in the pen-raised pheasant releasing program for up to 5 consecutive years (12.9.602(1)(r), ARM). An additional 5-year release period is allowed if habitat improvements are established that address factors limiting pheasant numbers.

During the biennium, the program awarded four contracts to release a total of 153 pen-raised pheasants (Table 5).

Table 5. Summary of pheasant release contracts awarded by UGBEP.

Region	FY23			FY24		
	# Contracts	# Pheasants ¹	Expenditures (\$)	# Contracts	# Pheasants	Expenditures (\$)
3	0	0	0	1	62	882
4	1	0	0	0	0	0
6	1	0	0	1	91	1,263
TOTAL	2	0	0	2	153	\$2,145

¹ In FY23, prior to releases, the two cooperators requested to withdraw their contracts over concerns pertaining Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

UGBEP Wild Turkey Transplants

No wild turkey transplants occurred during the past biennium.

Supplemental Feeding

The option of supplemental feeding for game birds is restricted to a 3-county area in Region 6 in northeast Montana (12.9.615(1), ARM). Monitoring of winter conditions on established routes was conducted by department staff from January through March during FY23 and FY24. Winter conditions were average. Supplemental game bird feeding is only supported by the program when extreme weather and snow cover condition criteria are met, which didn't occur during the biennium and no supplemental feeding expenditures were incurred.

UGBEP Projects Access Guide

The annual Access Guide is the catalog of program accomplishments and related hunting opportunities for upland game bird hunters (Figure 3). The guide provides detailed information about every active UGBEP project and the methods used to obtain permission from landowners for hunting access. The guide is published annually both in printed form and electronically by download through the program's web page: fwp.mt.gov/ugbep

2024

ACCESS GUIDE

FWP | Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program Projects



"An old bird dog enjoying the results of good habitat in eastern Montana. Photo by Justin Hughes."



Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program

Your opinion matters! See page 3 for details
TURN IN POACHERS: 1-800-TIP-MONT

Figure 3. Cover of the 2024 UGBEP Projects Access Guide, comprising a compilation of all active projects and associated maps, available for fall upland game bird hunting.

Within the guide, private lands projects include geospatially represented project access boundaries that are color-coded to indicate whether the access area is open to: (1) walk-in game bird hunting with no further permission needed from the landowner (brown polygons), (2) landowner permission needed prior to hunting game birds (black polygons), or (3) private land projects enrolled in the Block Management Program (green circles). Public land projects are represented by brown triangles. See Figure 4 for an example map page.

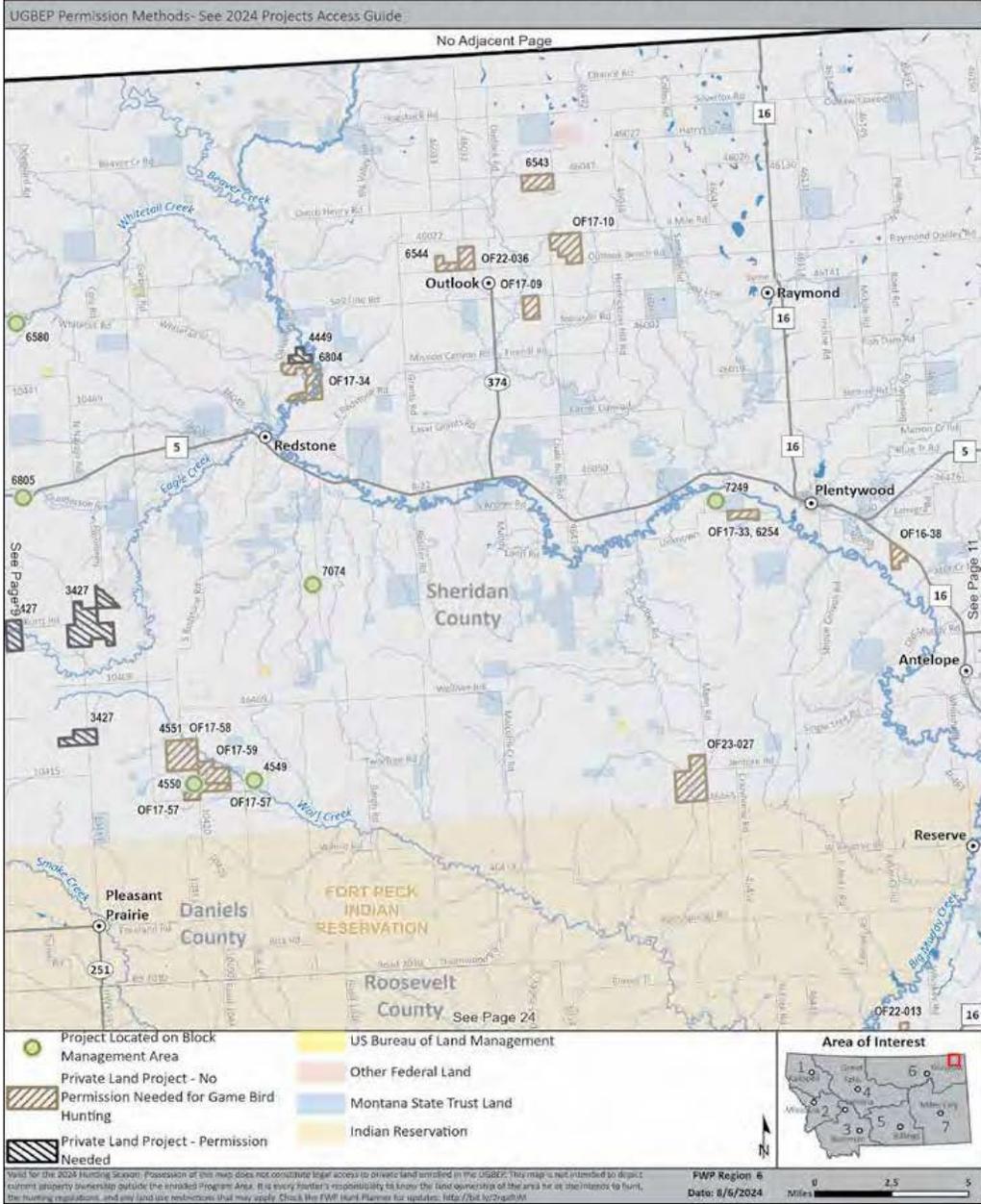


Figure 4. Example of a Map Page provides hunters with key information on project access.

Each year the UGBEP Access Guide is distributed to all FWP regions by late August. Hunters may also request a guide be mailed to them via a web link.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND ONGOING ADAPTATION

The UGBEP receives evaluation or feedback in a number of ways, which helps the program adapt to changing circumstances, improving performance. These include: (1) project monitoring, (2) ongoing assessment of needs, (3) input from the CAC, and (4) hunter and cooperator feedback.

Contract/Project Monitoring

FWP Habitat Specialists and biologists conduct monitoring of all annual contracts, including Open Fields, Habitat Management Leases, grazing systems, and food plots. Project types such as nesting cover, shelterbelts, and conservation leases are monitored less frequently, on an established schedule. Unscheduled monitoring also occurs whenever staff stop by a project or to “check in” with the cooperator to collect receipts for reimbursements or to note progress of a project that is underway. Generally, well over 200 projects are monitored in a given year.

UGBEP Citizens Advisory Council

The CAC and department staff met four times in this past biennium to review work planning and progress, receive public input, and to make program recommendations. Since 2009, the CAC’s input has consistently served to improve program performance. The department appreciates the CAC’s dedication and support for the program.

UGBEP Hunter Surveys

During the past biennium, UGBEP invited hunters, via an on-line survey, to provide comments about their experiences with the program during the hunting season. A separate survey for Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters was also available. The survey link was published in the UGBEP Projects Access Guide and on the program web page. During the biennium, 155 respondents provided comments on the UGBEP and 85 respondents commented on their Open Fields experiences.

UGBEP Survey

Out of the 155 respondents, 98 (63%) comments were from hunters who specifically hunted on UGBEP enrollments during 2021 to 2023. Of the 98 comments, 74 hunters provided their level of satisfaction. One response was omitted because it was not related to UGBEP (Table 6).

Overall, approximately 79 percent of the respondents were satisfied/very satisfied with their UGBEP hunting experiences over the past two years. Conversely, approximately 6 percent of the respondents were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with their UGBEP hunting experiences.

Table 6. Summary of UGBEP hunter survey satisfaction responses (n=73).

Residency	# Responses (%)					Total
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
Resident	11 (20%)	31 (56%)	7 (13%)	4 (7%)	2 (4%)	55 (75%)
Nonresident	9 (50%)	7 (39%)	2 (11%)	0	0	18 (25%)
Totals	20 (27%)	38 (52%)	9 (12%)	4 (5%)	2 (3%)	73

The following statements are samples of hunters' comments:

"I cannot tell you how much our trips to Sheridan County over the past 20 years have been nothing but outstanding and high quality outdoor experiences. Thank you for all you do!"

"We found birds plentiful on one parcel. Enough to carry our spirits through several that had no birds!"

"Thank you for all you guys do in making some of the best habitat and hunting areas I've found in the recent years."

"Great program and staff with excellent land owners"

"Thank you for what your are doing. I love bird hunting"

"Would like to see more land with cover open to the public. Lots of blm seemed to be grazed pasture or mowed crp."

"Tough dry year - habitat quality on projects typically reflected poor vegetation growth due to drought conditions."

"The worst one I saw was so bad with a spiny weed, it was unhunttable with dogs."

Open Fields Survey

Out of the 85 respondents, 54 (64%) were from hunters who hunted specifically on Open Fields enrollments during 2021 to 2023 (Table 7). Of the 54 respondents, 50 left rated their satisfaction levels (Resident = 35 (70%) and Nonresident = 15 (30%).

Overall, approximately 42 percent of all respondents were satisfied/very satisfied with their Open Fields hunting experiences over the past two years. Conversely, approximately 16 percent of the respondents were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with their Open Fields hunting experiences.

Table 7. Summary of UGBEP Open Fields hunter survey satisfaction responses (n=50).

Residency	# Responses (%)					Total
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
Resident	12 (34%)	17 (49%)	0	5 (14%)	1 (3%)	35
Nonresident	9 (60%)	4 (27%)	0	2 (13%)	0	15
Totals	21 (42%)	21 (42%)	0	7 (14%)	1 (2%)	50

The following statements are samples of hunters' comments:

"I hope this program expands. I know this is a landowner based program. But it would be nice to see some of the state trust lands enrolled too."

"Very thankful to have this opportunity!"

"Most of the CRP has been mowed repeatedly during the drought and has become a mono-culture of forage grass."

"I utilize it as much or more than focusing on BMAs. Thank you for all your hard work. I look forward to being out there in fall of 2022."

"Felt like some of the fields were registered for the sake of enrollment rather than habitat quality. Some were very sparse and dry. Overall most others were worth hunting."

"This is a terrific program, linking land enrolled in CRP with hunters and compensating landowners for this access. This is a win-win-win for everyone!"

"All of the open fields that I hunted had been hunted way too hard during the season to provide a high quality hunting experience."

"There needs to be some better signage or messaging on the proper use of open fields. I witnessed big game hunters on Open Fields and that is not allowed as I understand. There is some confusion out there that 'open fields' are like BLM or State ground and that should be cleared up."

"The fact that it existed during this drought is a wonderful accomplishment for game management and hunter opportunity."

APPENDIX A: 10-YEAR LICENSE SALES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE UGBEP REVENUE (2013-2023).

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE, & PARKS
10-YEAR LICENSE SALES UPLAND BIRD**

LICENSE TYPE	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Res. Bird	26,820	26,417	28,105	24,131	21,259	19,642	18,341	20,535	19,047	18,736	19,512
Res. Senior/Youth/Disabled Bird	1,299	1,289	1,533	12,733	11,658	10,721	10,067	10,894	10,614	10,434	10,760
Res. Sportsman (w/o bear)	19,126	19,330	18,945	23,199	23,892	24,217	24,662	26,490	29,419	28,926	29,308
Res. Sportsman (w/bear)	15,977	16,536	16,422	17,931	19,081	19,226	20,339	23,010	26,271	27,362	29,055
Res. Youth Sportsman	6,305	6,426	6,232	6,964	6,200	5,607	5,469	4,969	5,558	5,164	5,141
Res. Senior Sportsman	1,548	1,842	1,926	11,523	12,366	13,030	13,486	13,258	14,831	15,353	16,169
Military Recognition Sportsman	904	856	740	555	428	324	247	222	305	220	312
Cooperators Sportsman	629	614	607	631	622	567	549	585	954	934	930
Res. Free Youth Sportsman	5,194	4,872	4,661	1							
Total Resident Upland Bird Season	77,802	78,182	79,171	97,668	95,506	93,334	93,160	99,963	106,999	107,129	111,187
Nonres. Bird	5,144	5,215	5,590	5,419	4,318	4,213	4,328	5,328	6,291	6,792	8,001
Nonres. Bird - Youth	161	186	211	188	137	103	94	180	163	178	198
Nonres. Big Game Combo-General	12,362	12,570	12,376	12,303	11,657	12,241	11,817	11,769	11,876	11,570	11,743
Nonres. Big Game Combo-Family Sponsor	20	12	10	183	263	296	296	388	437	322	302
Nonres. Elk Combo-Family Sponsor						39	53	53	60	46	63
Nonres. Deer Combo-General	9,777	9,776	10,158	10,316	10,653	10,838	11,326	11,203	11,176	10,832	11,279
Nonres. Deer Combo-Landowner	1,284	971	960	893	884	948	1,010	857	916	950	880
Nonres. Deer Combo-Family Sponsor	20	15	12	98	128	148	192	208	215	160	142
Nonres. Elk Combo-General	2,529	2,756	4,316	4,641	4,800	4,638	5,432	5,016	5,030	4,225	5,082
Nonres. Youth Sponsored Big Game Combo	511	548	592	628	594	311	266	310	321	354	406
Nonres. Youth Sponsored Elk Combo						28	34	36	40	31	53
Nonres. Youth Sponsored Deer Combo						451	560	830	988	944	1,076
Nonres. College Student Big Game Combo	409	463	477	115	106	90	77	93	100	66	71
Nonres. College Student Elk Combo						3	4	1	4	19	12
Nonres. College Student Deer Combo						22	30	40	49	67	69
Nonres. College Student Upland Game Bird											
Nonres. Cooperators Big Game Combo	123	129	136	147	147	166	178	183	187	210	204
Nonres. Native Upland Game Bird	595	653	683	73	60	53	44	46	75	47	47
Nonres. Native Big Game Combo					887	845	815	785	926	880	854
Nonres. Native Elk Combo						77	97	85	115	144	127
Nonres. Native Deer Combo					379	347	335	324	355	396	371
Total Nonresident Upland Bird Season	32,935	33,294	35,521	36,314	35,018	35,857	36,988	37,735	39,304	38,283	41,076
Nonres. 3-Day Bird Stamp-Shooting Preserve	507	479	521	505	473	505	431	409	583	539	497
Nonres. 3-Day Bird Stamp	1,911	1,989	2,432	2,539	2,200	2,112	2,007	2,356	2,869	3,035	3,491
Grand Totals	113,155	113,944	117,645	137,026	133,197	131,808	132,586	140,463	149,755	148,986	156,251

APPENDIX B: LIST OF PARTNERSHIPS PARTICIPATING IN UGBEP PROJECTS

Region 1	Region 2
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Five Valleys Chapter of Pheasants Forever Pheasants Forever, Inc Mission Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever US Fish Wildlife Service	Blackfoot Community Conservation Area National Wild Turkey Federation US Forest Service
Region 3	
Beaverhead Chapter of Pheasants Forever Bureau of Land Management, Butte Field Office Gallatin Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever	Headwaters Chapter of Pheasants Forever
Region 4	
Bureau of Land Management, Havre Field Office Central Montana Chapter of Pheasants Forever DNRC State Lands, Conrad Unit Ducks Unlimited Farm Service Agency, Cascade County Farm Service Agency, Chouteau County Farm Service Agency, Glacier County Farm Service Agency, Pondera County Farm Service Agency, Teton County Farm Service Agency, Toole County Golden Triangle Chapter of Pheasants Forever	Montana Salinity Control Association NRCS Field Office, Cascade County NRCS Field Office, Chouteau County NRCS Field Office, Glacier County NRCS Field Office, Pondera County NRCS Field Office, Teton County NRCS Field Office, Toole County Pheasants Forever, Inc Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists Pondera County Conservation District Upper Missouri Chapter of Pheasants Forever USFWS Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge USFWS Benton Lake Wetland Management District USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife
Region 5	
Billings Rod & Gun Club Bureau of Land Management, Billings Field Office Conoco Phillips-Phillips 66 Montana Chapter of Safari Club	National Wild Turkey Federation Pheasants Forever, Inc Yellowstone Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever

Region 6	
<p>Daniels County Conservation District DNRC State Lands, Glasgow Unit Ducks Unlimited Farm Service Agency, Blaine County Farm Service Agency, Daniels County Farm Service Agency, Hill County Farm Service Agency, McCone County Farm Service Agency, Phillips County Farm Service Agency, Richland County Farm Service Agency, Roosevelt County Farm Service Agency, Sheridan County Farm Service Agency, Valley County National Fish and Wildlife Foundation National Wild Turkey Federation Northeast Montana Chapter of Pheasants Forever NRCS Field Office, Blaine County NRCS Field Office, Daniels County</p>	<p>NRCS Field Office, Hill County NRCS Field Office, Phillips County NRCS Field Office, Richland County NRCS Field Office, Roosevelt County NRCS Field Office, Sheridan County NRCS Field Office, Valley County Northeast Chapter of Pheasants Forever Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists Phillips County Conservation District Roosevelt County Conservation District Sheridan County Conservation District The Nature Conservancy USFWS Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge USFWS Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program</p>
Region 7	
<p>American Bird Conservancy Bureau of Land Management, Miles City Office Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Rosebud County Farm Service Agency, Dawson County Farm Service Agency, McCone County</p>	<p>NRCS Field Office, Baker County NRCS Field Office, Carter County NRCS Field Office, Custer County NRCS Field Office, McCone County NRCS Field Office, Richland County</p>