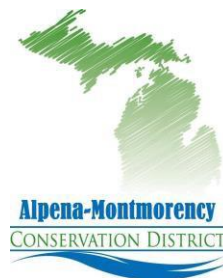


2019 Deer Habitat Improvement Program



Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District



SCHEDULE FOR Deer Habitat Improvement Program grants

Request for Proposals Begin.....	October 15, 2018
Grant Application Must be Received by	January 1, 2019
Review & Selection Process Completed-Awards Announced	February 1, 2019
Project Period Begins.....	Upon execution of Grant
Project Period Ends.....	September 15, 2019

Initiative summary

The Northern Lower Peninsula Deer Habitat Improvement Program (DHIP) is a grant program designed to improve deer habitat to assist in reducing the transmission of Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) and agricultural and forest regeneration damage caused by deer.

Project Focus Area

This competitive program will have a focus area within the Northern Lower Peninsula. The focus area for 2019 is private land in the following counties: **Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, Oscoda, and Presque Isle**. These counties were selected for this program because there is both Bovine Tuberculosis in the deer herd and a high incidence of crop damage by deer.

Initiative goals and expectations

The purpose of the DHIP is to develop a collaborative approach between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Districts to manage deer habitat on private land ownerships in the Northern Lower Peninsula. Department of Natural Resources Wildlife staff and/or Conservation District staff must have access to the property to inspect the approved proposals. All projects must be feasible and will score highest if they meet the following five objectives.

1. To produce and/or improve on-the-ground deer habitat in the project focus area
2. To increase partnerships between private landowners, agricultural producers, Conservation Districts, DNR, and other partners
3. To increase deer availability to hunters on private land
4. To reduce transmission of Bovine Tuberculosis, agricultural damage and forest regeneration damage caused by deer
5. To increase the harvest of deer, especially antlerless deer and testing of deer for Bovine Tuberculosis

DHIP funding

DHIP is funded from the Deer Range Improvement Program (DRIP) Fund. DRIP funds come from \$1.50 that is collected from every deer hunting license sold. The intent of the DRIP fund is to provide financial support to improve deer habitat statewide.

The required partner cost share for approved projects must be at least 25% of the total project cost. This can include labor or in-kind services. A total of \$50,000 will be awarded in 2019. Grant applications will be accepted for a minimum funding amount of \$500 and a maximum of \$2000.

Grant Application Process and requirements

Applicants interested in applying for a multiple year project may do so as long as they can demonstrate completing a portion of the project each year. Multiple year funding is not guaranteed based on acceptance of the first year's application. Applicants must also be willing to reapply each year of the project.

Proposal Criteria and Selection Process

Examples of desired habitat improvement projects include but are not limited to: wildlife opening creation, rehabilitation, or existing opening maintenance; increasing hard or soft mast by planting mast bearing shrubs or trees; non-commercial timber stand improvement activities; direct mechanical habitat manipulation (e.g. regeneration of aspen or alder habitat). Planting of trees or shrubs should include adequate protection (fencing) where appropriate.

Specific activities that will not be considered are: plantings of exotic or invasive species; commercial timber sale preparation, and construction of ponds. Proposals that increase undesired habitat fragmentation; increase wildlife disease transmission potential; have human safety implications; are contrary to deer management goals; or will have known direct adverse impacts on state or federally listed threatened and endangered species will not be considered.

Project properties that are adjacent to or in close proximity (within 1 mile or less) to active agriculture will be given additional points towards the final score (see Appendix A).

Harvest of deer, especially antlerless deer, is an important component of proper deer management and is crucial to decreasing the prevalence of Bovine Tuberculosis in the deer herd.

All applicants are encouraged to monitor deer activity by filling out a Deer Camp Survey that will be made available. The Deer Camp Survey can help the applicant track deer population trends. A copy of the completed survey will be collected by the Conservation District. The data will be compiled after the deer season and participants will receive a summary that will include data from all participants in the program. Only data summaries will be sent out, no individual property information will be made public.

Immediately following the application deadline, a selection committee of a Conservation District forester and a DNR wildlife biologist will evaluate proposed projects. All projects meeting the eligibility requirements will be reviewed. The selection and project scoring process is designed to be standardized, treat all applicants fairly and be as transparent as possible (Appendix A). The selection committee may approve, reject, or request modifications to project(s). Selection committee decisions will be final. Notification of project acceptance will be made by February 1, 2019. Notification of unfunded projects will be made shortly thereafter. Failure to meet project obligations or noncompliance as spelled out in the project contractual agreement will result in project termination and ineligibility for future applications.

A work agreement including project description will be signed by successful applicants and the release of grant funds will occur after the project has been successfully completed and a final site inspection has been held.

Implementation

For all approved projects, the applicant or their representative will be required to periodically report to the designated Conservation District staff on the project status, expenditures to date, future objectives to be completed, and estimated timeline for completion throughout the implementation process (final deadline is September 15, 2019). Once the project is complete Conservation District staff will need to do a site visit verify that the project was completed BEFORE final deadline of September 15,2019.

REQUIRED CONTENT FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

- Project location map
- Documentation of Proximity to Agricultural Land (e.g. air photo)

Appendix A-Grant Scoring Criteria

The Conservation District forester and DNR wildlife biologist will review all grant applications and determines their eligibility. For eligible project proposals, the application is scored using the following criteria which reflect the goals and objectives of the program.

Scoring Criteria	Maximum Score
Improvement or creation of deer habitat.	5
Active Forest Management	3
Proximity to active agricultural property	5
Deer Population Management	5
Total Maximum Score	18

Scoring Breakdown: Each criterion is broken down below and each one indicates what is necessary to score each point.

Improvement Or Creation Of Deer Habitat	
Projects that produce a combination of long and short term benefits that include 3 of the following: Hard Mast Tree Plantings (10) Soft Mast Tree and Shrub Plantings (10) Creation of Early Successional Habitat (non-commercial timber harvesting, brush regeneration) Perennial and/ or Annual Food Plots	5
Projects that produce a combination of long and short term benefits that include 2 of the following: Hard Mast Tree Plantings (10) Soft Mast Tree and Shrub Plantings (10) Creation of Early Successional Habitat (non-commercial timber harvesting, brush regeneration) Perennial and/ or Annual Food Plots	3
Projects that produce a combination of long and short term benefits that include 1 of the following: Hard Mast Tree Plantings (10) Soft Mast Tree and Shrub Plantings (10) Creation of Early Successional Habitat (non-commercial timber harvesting, brush regeneration) Perennial and/ or Annual Food Plots	1

Active Forest Management	
Current forest management plan prepared by a professional forester available and being followed	3
A regeneration harvest has taken place within the last three years	1

Proximity To Active Commercial Agricultural Property	
Project property is itself or is adjacent to a property that is being actively used for commercial agricultural purposes	5
Project property is within 1 mile to a property that is being actively used for commercial agricultural purposes	3
Project property is >1 mile from a property that is being actively used for commercial agricultural purposes	0

Deer Population Management	
Applicant Agrees to: Fill out and return Deer Camp Survey Fill out online Deer Hunter Harvest Survey Harvest more Antlerless Deer than Antlered Deer Have all deer that are harvested on the property checked at a DNR check station	5
Applicant Agrees to: Fill out Deer Camp Survey Have all deer that are harvested on the property checked at a DNR check station	3
Applicant Agrees to: Fill out Deer Camp Survey	1
Applicant is unwilling to participate in population management	0