

BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB AND THE 2018 FARM BILL

Highlighted below are the provisions and titles of the 2018 Farm Bill that the Boone and Crockett Club worked on and directly impact sportsmen, wildlife, and habitat. More information can be found on page 10. The Boone and Crockett Club applauds the passage of the new Farm Bill, which includes several critical conservation and forest management provisions.

CONSERVATION TITLE

FUNDING: There were no funding cuts to the Conservation Title.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP): The bill allows for an increased acreage cap of 27 million acres by 2023. It includes provisions to increase the conservation of grassland by 2 million acres, which are important to species such as sage grouse and pronghorn.

FERAL SWINE ERADICATION AND CONTROL PILOT: According to U.S. Department of Agriculture, feral swine cause an estimated \$1.5 billion in damage to property, crops, and wildlife habitat annually and present a risk for the transmission of several catastrophic diseases. The bill establishes the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot program with \$75 million for threat assessment, control methods, and land restoration.

VOLUNTARY PUBLIC ACCESS: The bill provides \$50 million for the Voluntary Public Access Program, which funds walk-in access for hunting and fishing across the country.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP): The bill continues comprehensive working lands conservation by reforming and adding much needed flexibility to CSP. By removing the average \$18 per acre funding requirement for the program, the bill intends to better incentivize farmers to address local resource concerns.

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM (ACEP): The bill restores funding for ACEP to \$450 million per year. It increases the amount of land in a county that can be restored to wetlands from 10 percent to 15 percent of a county's cropland base. The bill continues to perform the functions of conserving wetlands and bottomland hardwoods through Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE), which are important to waterfowl and played a major role in the recovery of the Louisiana black bear.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP): The bill continues the commitment to working lands by increasing funding for EQIP to \$2.025 billion by fiscal year 2023. Furthermore, the bill increases its emphasis on enhancing and restoring wildlife habitat and invasive species control by up to \$200 million annually.

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP): The 2014 Farm Bill consolidated the authorities of the many regional programs into RCPP, where USDA partners with private organizations to address natural resource concerns. Targeted conservation initiatives are developed on the local level and selected by USDA through a competitive, merit-based application process. The bill increases funding for RCPP to \$300 million per year and streamlines the program to allow greater flexibility.

INCREASING LANDOWNER PARTICIPATION: The bill removes impediments to conservation adoption by eliminating requirements for entities to have a SAM/DUNS number and providing USDA the ability to waive AGI limits for environmentally sensitive land of special significance, such as corridors for big game movement.

FORESTRY TITLE

EXPEDITES ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS: The bill encourages proper management for healthy and productive forests, and incentivizes infrastructure and new market opportunities while simplifying environmental reviews. It reduces the threat of catastrophic wildfires by renewing the insect and disease categorical exclusion (CE). The bill also expedites treatment of federal land by authorizing a CE of up to 4,500 acres to provide habitat for the greater sage grouse and mule deer.

PROMOTES CROSS-BOUNDARY WILDFIRE MITIGATION: The bill authorizes new collaborative tools to treat hazardous fuel loads on bordering non-federal lands.

TIMBER INNOVATION ACT: For successful construction, tall wood buildings require research to ensure their safety and compliance with all building standards. The bill establishes a performance-driven research and development program to help advance tall wood building construction in the United States, therefore increasing the demand for wood.

EMPOWERS STATE AND LOCAL DECISION MAKING—GOOD NEIGHBOR AUTHORITY (GNA): The bill also promotes forest management by empowering partners to remove timber through cooperative agreements or contracts to perform watershed restoration and forest management services on National Forest System lands. The Bill expands that authority to include counties and Indian Tribes to provide more localized forest management and timber removal on our federal forests.

REPORT ON WILDFIRE, INSECT INFESTATION, AND DISEASE PREVENTION ON FEDERAL LAND: The bill directs USDA to update Congress on management efforts to address forest health.

COMMUNITY WOOD ENERGY (AND WOOD INNOVATION) PROGRAM: Markets are essential for healthy forests and habitat for species such as elk and deer. The bill modifies the Community Wood Energy Program to support grants for new infrastructure, new mills, and added capacity that will use low value, small-diameter material.

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE RIGHTS-OF-WAY VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PILOT: The bill authorizes the U.S. Forest Service to create a privately-funded pilot program to conduct vegetation management near electricity infrastructure outside of a right-of-way. This program will help reduce fuel load, decrease wildfire risk, and promote electricity reliability.

STATE AND PRIVATE FOREST LANDSCAPE-SCALE RESTORATION PROGRAM: The bill expands existing authorities to focus the Landscape Scale Restoration Program on cross-boundary restoration to address concerns such as watershed restoration, wildfire risk reduction and wildlife habitat conservation.

RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES (RAC): The bill empowers local governments and local decision making by streamlining the RAC appointment process to allow more effective, local collaboration on management projects and to expedite results.

RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND RELATED MATTERS TITLE

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE: The title prioritized chronic wasting disease research (CWD), which will help land-grant universities throughout the United States better understand and combat the spread of CWD.

