

United States Senate Committee on
**AGRICULTURE
NUTRITION
& FORESTRY**

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman

Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation

Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012

The 2012 Farm Bill will strengthen efforts to protect critical wildlife habitats. Healthy habitats and clean, fishable waters are not only good for our environment, but they also support hunting, fishing, and bird watching that benefit rural economies and creates jobs.

Public Access to Private Land

The bill continues to encourage private landowners to allow public access to their land for recreational uses such as hunting, fishing and bird watching.

Greater Focus on Wildlife Habitats

The bill strengthens the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to increase support for wildlife habitats on working lands. At least five percent of the program funding is directed to projects that support wildlife habitats, and wildlife considerations can be included in the application selection process.

Conservation Reserve Program Continues to Support Habitat

The Conservation Reserve Program is designed to prevent soil erosion and improve water quality. The bill establishes a new, 1.5-million acre grasslands enrollment option to encourage farmers to conserve critical grasslands. It also protects options for farmers and foresters to develop wildlife habitats on their land.

Conservation Stewardship Program and Locally Identified Resource Concerns

The bill increases flexibility for wildlife habitat priorities to be included in the Conservation Stewardship Program, creating additional opportunities for conservation activities that benefit wildlife species.

Easement Program Protects Wetlands and Valuable Grasslands

The bill streamlines and consolidates programs to create an easement program with mandatory funding to protect wetlands as well as farmlands or grasslands that are threatened by suburban sprawl. The bill protects access to wetland easements for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities.

Regional Conservation Partnerships Program Creates New Opportunities for Partners

The bill significantly expands opportunities for conservation organizations and local communities to partner with farmers to maintain watersheds and wildlife habitats.

Nationwide Sodsaver Provision to Preserve Critical Grassland Habitats

The bill includes a nationwide provision to encourage farmers to protect critical grassland and prairie habitats and not convert that land to agricultural production. Grasslands are prime wildlife habitats that support healthier wildlife populations.