

# The Cerulean Warbler

## Appalachian Forestland Enhancement Project

### Step-by-Step Program Guide



The **Cerulean Warbler Appalachian Forestland Enhancement Project** is an initiative to enhance wildlife habitat in forests and improve forest health. The project is aimed at improving habitat for the declining Cerulean Warbler, but the same habitat benefits deer, turkey, and many songbirds such as the Scarlet Tanager. Funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) may be available to help cover some costs of habitat management on private lands.

**Named for the male's brilliant blue coloration, the Cerulean Warbler is a small songbird that breeds in deciduous forests of eastern North America.**

**Over the last 50 years, about 70% of the Cerulean Warbler population, or about 1 million birds, have been lost.**

#### Key Personnel of the Program

##### Coordinator

The project Coordinator is the first point of contact for those interested in the program, and guides landowners through the enrollment process.

##### Foresters

Foresters with American Bird Conservancy and Department of Conservation & Natural Resources will prescribe activities that address forest health.

##### NRCS Staff

Natural Resources Conservation Service staff and partner biologists will write contracts and provide cost-share information.

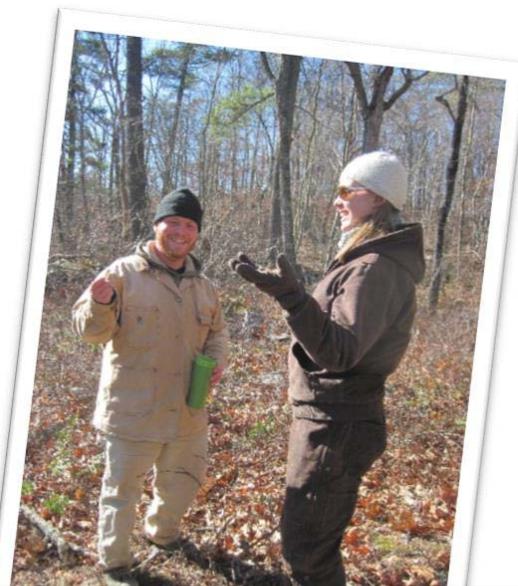


# The Process

There are several steps you will need to take to participate in the Cerulean Warbler Habitat program. Don't worry, you'll have a team of professionals to help you along the way!

## 1. The Initial Site Visit

One of the first steps is the initial site visit where a team of biologists, foresters, and staff from cooperating agencies all meet with you on your property. We'll talk about your objectives and how they may fit with a Cerulean Warbler project. We will work together to identify areas of your property that are both suited to your personal objectives and appropriate for Cerulean Warbler habitat.



## 2. Filling out an NRCS application

This step may be completed before or after the initial site visit. The application is non-binding (you can cancel it at any time during the planning stage) and helps determine if you are eligible for cost-share programs and how your project ranks against (compares to) other potential Cerulean Warbler projects.

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

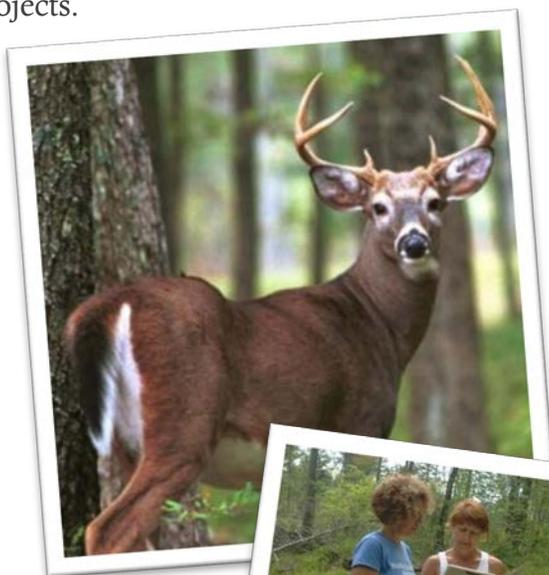
### CONSERVATION PROGRAM APPLICATION

Name:	Application Number:
Address:	Application Date:
Email:	County and State:

## 3. Planning Management Projects

After the initial site visit and submission of an application, the foresters and biologists work together to draft a habitat management plan highlighting potential projects.

Once area(s) and project(s) are chosen, data will be collected by foresters to ensure sustainable forestry and to document the conditions of your forest before management occurs.



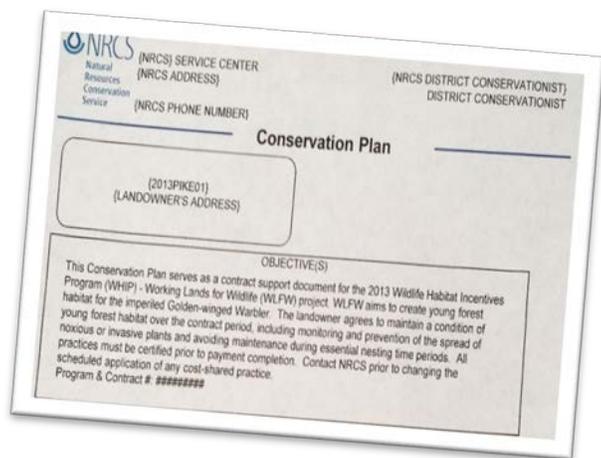
## 4. Plan Review

When the draft of the habitat management plan is complete, you will review the plan and determine what works best for you. When you, the biologist, and foresters agree on the plan of action, the draft plan will be finalized.

# The Process (cont.)

## 5. NRCS Plan & Contract

NRCS and partners produce a draft plan and contract for your review. The contract includes reimbursement amounts for management practices and timelines for completion. If everything looks good, the plan, contract, and other supporting documents are finalized and sent for review at higher levels. If your project is selected for funding, NRCS will let you know and contract signing can begin.



## 6. Signing the NRCS Plan & Contract

At this time, an NRCS employee will sit down with you and explain in detail all steps and requirements of the contract. Up until this point you are not obligated to complete any of the habitat management work. However, after signing you are legally responsible to ensure the contract is completed correctly and on time. But don't worry, our team of professionals are here to help see your project through to completion!



## 7. Contract Implementation

Once the NRCS contract is signed, foresters can begin to mark project boundaries, mark trees to be reserved during the harvest, and assist with any other project forestry needs. Note that the Cerulean Warbler project foresters cannot assist in predicting timber value or selling your timber, and we **highly recommend** hiring a consulting forester to work with you to cut and/or sell your timber.



## 8. Practice Completion

Cerulean Warbler habitat projects often have several steps (such as herbicide application(s) and timber harvest). All management practices need to be completed as the plan specifies, in order, and on time. After each step is completed the practice will be certified by NRCS and a forester. Following certification, you will be reimbursed for the completed practices according to the amounts specified in your contract.

# Tips for a Successful Project

- Take advantage of the advice and professional opinions of the biologist, Cerulean Warbler foresters and DCNR service foresters. Their services are free and unbiased.
  - Before you sign your NRCS contract, do your homework! Look at the habitat management practices that the contract identifies, then shop around and find contractors willing to do the work for the price you are willing to pay BEFORE you sign. This is where hiring a consulting forester really pays off. A good consulting forester will know the contractors in your area who do quality work and are reputable operators.
  - Tell your consulting forester (and contractors) that you have an NRCS habitat management project. Many contractors understand that you will be getting reimbursed after the habitat work is complete and will wait for payment until the work is complete and NRCS has reimbursed you. Your consulting forester can help you work out these details with contractors.
  - Understand that this initiative, which is funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP, funded through the 2014 farm bill) is not designed to cover the whole cost of the project. However, by doing your homework and choosing the competitively-priced contractors, you can make the reimbursement go farther.
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- Ask your Cerulean Warbler and DCNR service foresters what to look for in a good consulting forester and/or contractor. They can provide lists of consulting foresters and contractors and can assist you in knowing what questions to ask them. They may even be able to meet with you and your consulting forester to talk about the planned habitat management.
  - If you have timber that might be of value we **highly recommend** hiring a consulting forester to help with the sale. They know what important items to include in the contract between you and the operator, and will make sure the operator adheres to the promised work. The consulting forester will work to protect you and your property! Furthermore, using a consulting forester often increases financial return.

## Questions about the Cerulean Warbler Project?

Contact:

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