



West Virginia Priority Species

A Guide to Wildlife Targeted by
USDA NRCS Conservation Programs



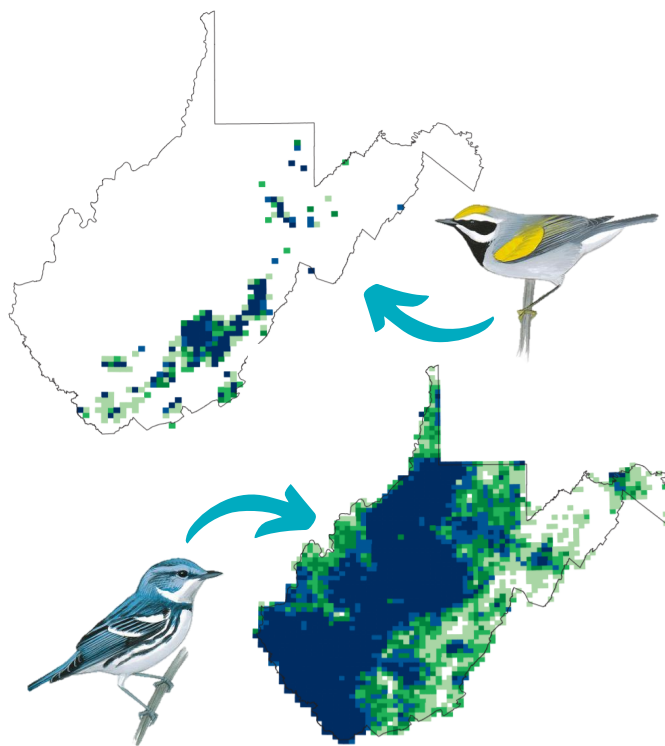
Introduction

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides financial and technical assistance to land users interested in improving forest health and wildlife habitat.

This guide will walk through management practices, recommendations, and common goals of participants to help land users determine which conservation practices may be the best fit on their land.

Golden-winged and Cerulean Warbler Distributions

The maps below show the distributions of Golden-winged Warbler and Cerulean Warbler. Pollinators are found statewide.



Golden-winged Warbler

The Golden-winged Warbler is a migratory songbird that breeds primarily in the Great Lakes and Appalachian mountain regions. Lack of young forest habitat has contributed to an over 90% decline in population size since 1966. In West Virginia, 70% of Golden-winged Warbler populations occur on private lands.

What type of management creates young forest?

A variety of management practices can be used and a single management plan can involve multiple practices. Listed are examples of common management practices:

- Planting native grasses, trees, shrubs, and wildflowers
- Controlling the spread of invasive plants
- Rotational mowing or grazing
- Forest stand improvement through patch cuts, cutback borders, and crop tree release

Recommended elements for a successful project

- Breeding pairs are attracted to habitat patches at least 10 acres in size (can count adjoining property)
- Ideal elevation is at least 1500 feet
- Surrounding landscape should be primarily deciduous forest

If you want to..

- Manage overgrown fields or abandoned farmland
- Improve your forest health
- Control invasive plants
- Harvest timber
- Help a variety of wildlife that use young forest



..a Golden-winged Warbler project may be for you!

Overgrown fields might look like a mess, but with a little management they can mean Golden-winged Warbler success!

Cerulean Warbler

The Cerulean Warbler is a migratory songbird with a third of its breeding population residing in West Virginia. Lack of habitat has contributed to an over 70% decline in population size since 1966. Cerulean Warblers require forests with gaps in the canopy, which allow sunlight to reach the forest floor and new plants to grow. New plant growth creates structure in the forest understory that many wildlife rely on.

What type of management creates forest structure?

A variety of management practices can be used and a single management plan can involve multiple practices. Listed are examples of common management practices:

- Controlling the spread of invasive plants
- Constructing living brush piles to promote and protect new plant growth to create a dense understory
- Forest stand improvement through patch cuts, cutback borders, and crop tree release to improve light levels on the forest floor
- Allowing occasional grapevines to grow

Recommended elements for a successful project

- Breeding pairs are attracted to habitat patches at least 10 acres in size (can count adjoining property)
- Project site should be on ridgetops or upper slopes
- Forest should be dominated by white oak, chestnut oak, hickory, sugar maple, cucumber magnolia, yellow poplar, black cherry, and/or black locust



If you want to..

- Improve your forest health
- Harvest timber
- Help a variety of wildlife that rely on forest structure
- Control invasive plants

..a Cerulean Warbler project may be for you!

Pollinators

Pollinators provide irreplaceable economic services, pollinating approximately 35% of our crops or 1 in 3 bites of food. Nearly 90% of plant species require pollinators to successfully reproduce. Worldwide, pollinators are declining due to habitat loss, pollution, disease, and climate change. By creating a rich, diverse habitat we can help our native pollinators.

What type of management benefits pollinators?

A variety of management practices can be used and a single management plan can involve multiple practices. Listed are examples of common management practices:

- Planting native grasses, trees, shrubs, and wildflowers to host pollinators and provide pollen/nectar
- Removing invasive species through brush management and herbaceous weed treatment
- Forest stand improvement to improve light levels on the forest floor and promote plant diversity

Recommended elements for a successful project

- Pollinators are attracted to habitat patches at least 0.10 acres in size (can count adjoining property)
- Select and plant native wildflowers that differ in size, shape, color, and bloom time (early, mid, late / spring, summer, fall)
- Plant a minimum of 9 species (although 20-30 is recommended)

If you want to..

- Grow native plants on meadows, overgrown fields, or abandoned hay fields
- Beautify your property with native wildflowers
- Control invasive plants
- Assist declining species, including a variety of wildlife and pollinators



..a pollinator project may be for you!

Get Involved

Contact a Partner Biologist or your local NRCS Service Center for more information.

North Region

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West Virginia Wildlife

Natural Resources Conservation Service

