Providing high-quality, dependable wetland habitat in working landscapes is difficult because of the need of agricultural producers to maintain profitable land use. However, the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI), which provided financial incentives for private landowners to flood production agriculture fields during the winter, was extremely successful during the years it was funded (2010 – 2013). While several studies associated with the MBHI demonstrated the potential for providing wetland habitat in working landscapes, funding for such activities is limited. Increasing waterfowl habitat on the landscape of the Mississippi Delta is a high priority that was addressed by the MBHI, but the MBHI did not address key issues such as strategic targeting of habitat acres. The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) and Delta Waterfowl have partnered to provide financial incentives to increase wetland habitat in close proximity to selected Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the Mississippi Delta. The goal of this program is to increase the overall amount of wetland habitat in the landscapes immediately surrounding managed waterfowl WMAs, in an effort to create wetland habitat complexes that are more attractive to wintering waterfowl and to increase the wetland “footprint” of these areas on the landscape. Projects will be implemented in conjunction with outreach and education efforts to increase landowner awareness of the benefits of wetlands.

The MDWFP and Delta Waterfowl will provide financial incentives to private landowners for flooding of crop fields and existing shallow-water wetlands in the Mississippi Delta portion of the state. Potential for infrastructure improvements to create shallow-water wetlands will also be targeted around selected existing WMAs in the Mississippi Delta.

Targeted WMAs will include:

- Sunflower WMA
- Twin Oaks WMA
- Lake George WMA
- Mahannah WMA
- Howard Miller WMA
- Muscadine Farms WMA
- Sky Lake WMA
- Malmaison WMA
- Charlie Capps WMA
- William C. “Billy” Deviney WMA
- O’Keefe WMA

1. Eligible properties will include existing agricultural fields that have not been tilled following harvest, as well as managed moist-soil wetlands with natural vegetation (non-cropland).
   a. Properties eligible for enrollment will be determined by an on-site visit from a biologist.
   b. Properties eligible for enrollment must have pumping capabilities on all enrolled acres.
   c. Habitats not eligible for enrollment include:
i. Forested habitats
   ii. Open water habitats

2. Cooperating landowners will sign an agreement with habitat requirements specified.
   a. At least four (4) and no more than eighteen (18) inches of water must be maintained by natural flooding or by pumping groundwater if needed. Note: Some areas may necessarily have more than 18” of water because of topography and should not be disqualified.
   b. Board placement and flood initiation must be completed by specified dates within each practice.

3. Projects will be competitively ranked to enroll in the program based on set criteria (habitat type, distance from target WMA, etc.).

4. Incentive payments will be based on crop or habitat type and flooding timelines selected (see practices and payment rates below).

**To Apply:** Please contact a MDWFP biologist listed below to schedule a visit to the property. During the visit, we will discuss program options and complete an application for enrollment if the property is eligible.

Houston Havens at 662-299-0273, Houston.Havens@wfp.ms.gov
Darrin Hardesty at 662-588-2596, Darrin.Hardesty@wfp.ms.gov
## Practices and Incentive Payment Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Incentive Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EARLY SEASON SHALLOW WATER DEVELOPMENT –</td>
<td>Flooding to create shallow water habitat to hold no less than 4 and no more than 18 inches of water 15 Sept. – 15 Feb. Boards must be inserted no later than 15 Sept. If needed, pumping should be initiated no later than 1 Oct. Agricultural areas must not be fall tilled. The deadline to apply for this practice is September 6, 2019.</td>
<td>$40 / water acre</td>
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<tr>
<td>agricultural areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>EARLY SEASON SHALLOW WATER DEVELOPMENT –</td>
<td>Flooding to create shallow water habitat to hold no less than 4 and no more than 18 inches of water 1 Sept. – 15 Feb. Boards must be inserted no later than 1 Sept. If needed, pumping should be initiated no later than 15 Sept. The deadline to apply for this practice is August 23, 2019.</td>
<td>$35 / water acre</td>
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<td>MID SEASON SHALLOW WATER DEVELOPMENT –</td>
<td>Flooding to create shallow water habitat to hold no less than 4 and no more than 18 inches of water 15 Oct. – 15 Feb. Boards must be inserted no later than 15 Oct. If needed, pumping should be initiated no later than 1 Nov. Agricultural areas must not be fall tilled. The deadline to apply for this practice is October 4, 2019.</td>
<td>$30 / water acre</td>
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<td>MID SEASON SHALLOW WATER DEVELOPMENT –</td>
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<td>$25 / water acre</td>
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<td>LATE SEASON SHALLOW WATER DEVELOPMENT –</td>
<td>Flooding to create shallow water habitat to hold no less than 4 and no more than 18 inches of water 15 Nov. – 15 Feb. Boards must be inserted no later than 15 Nov. If needed, pumping should be initiated no later than 1 Dec. Agricultural areas must not be fall tilled. The deadline to apply for this practice is November 1, 2019.</td>
<td>$20 / water acre</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$15 / water acre</td>
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Legend

- WILLIAM (BILLY) C. DEVINEY WMA
- 5 MILE BUFFER

BOLIVAR COUNTY

SUNFLOWER COUNTY

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Legend

- WILLIAM (BILLY) C. DEVINEY WMA
- 5 MILE BUFFER