USDA
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VPA-HIP

Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program

Overview

The Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) is a competitive grants program that helps states and Indian tribes increase public access to private lands for wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting, fishing or hiking.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill programs that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

Benefits

State and tribal governments may apply to use VPA-HIP grant funding to expand or improve habitat in existing public access programs or provide incentives to improve habitat on land enrolled in their public access programs. These incentives include payments for conservation services to landowners who allow the public to hunt, fish, hike, horseback ride or otherwise recreate on their land and increase acreage enrolled for public access.

Nothing in VPA-HIP preempts liability laws that may apply to activities on any property related to grants made in this program.

Helping People Help the Land

Eligibility

Only states and tribal governments are eligible to apply for VPA-HIP grants. Private forest, farm or ranch lands are eligible for assistance under these state grants.

Allowable grant amounts are reduced by 25 percent if the opening dates for migratory bird hunting are not consistent for residents and non-residents. This requirement does not apply to American Indian tribe grantees.

How to apply

NRCS, on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation, will periodically publish a Request for Applications (RFA) on the Federal Government's grants portal—www.grants.gov. The RFA will provide objectives for projects, eligibility criteria and the application forms and instructions needed to apply for a VPA-HIP competitive grant.

Funding priority will be given to public access programs that address these objectives:

- Maximize private lands acreage available to the public
- Ensure that land enrolled in the program has appropriate wildlife habitat
- Provide incentives to strengthen wildlife habitat improvement efforts
- Supplement funding and services from other federal or state agencies, American Indian tribes or private resources provided in the form of cash or in-kind services
- Provide information to the public about the location of public access land

More Information

For more information visit your local USDA service center or www.nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill.

Find Your Local USDA Service Center

http://offices.usda.gov

What's new in VPA-HIP

Previously administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency, VPA-HIP was transferred to NRCS. A performance reporting requirement was added for participants.

VPA-HIP helps make private lands available for public recreation such as fishing.

www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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