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## Conservation Notes

*Current topics and issues affecting hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation in our North Dakota.*

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### **Improving the 2023 Farm Bill**

The Farm Bill is vitally important legislation that touches every North Dakotan resident. It is especially important for its impact on wildlife habitat. Habitat loss in North Dakota is the driving force (more than weather and disease) for reduced deer, duck, pheasants, and other game numbers. Conservation provisions of the Farm Bill have the potential to address this habitat loss.

The Federal Crop Insurance Program (CIP) of the Farm Bill is an irreplaceable tool for agricultural producers to manage risk against financial losses caused by market conditions and adverse growing season conditions. Farm Bill provisions can and should work together with North Dakota's agricultural economy and our rural infrastructure to ensure a resilient landscape for wildlife, their habitats, and our local communities.

Unfortunately, Federal Crop Insurance provisions result in more North Dakota native prairies, marginal lands and wetlands plowed and planted despite their low yield. Yet native prairie, marginal lands, and wetlands provide wildlife habitat, clean water, pollution and flood retention.

Currently, farmers must agree to fundamental soil and wetland conservation provisions to protect wetlands and reduce soil erosion in exchange for receiving certain farm program benefits. The next Farm Bill needs to strengthen conservation compliance provisions in order to receive crop insurance premium subsidies, ensuring taxpayer money encourages good stewardship. Conservation compliance can help turn the tide of habitat loss on marginal agricultural lands and prevent significant amounts of soil erosion. It must be expanded in the 2023 Farm Bill.

For more information on this or other conservation topics, contact: John Bradley, Executive Director, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, ([jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com](mailto:jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com)), Mike McEnroe, Past President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation ([memcenroe@midco.net](mailto:memcenroe@midco.net)) or Rick Nelson, Past President, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, ([bluebill@bis.midco.net](mailto:bluebill@bis.midco.net)). For a complete list of Conservation Notes visit ([ndctws.org](http://ndctws.org))-Library.