**Lawn Conversion Planting Plan Template**

**Conservation District:**

**Project Contact:**

**Lawn Conversion Type:**

**Landowner Name:**

**Site Location:**

**Acres:**

**Site Details:** What is the current land use? Resource concerns? (Utilities, invasives, etc.) What is proposed and what benefits will occur from the conversion?

**Establishment Plan and Timeline (including site prep):**

**Species List and Seedling Plan:**

**Project Map:**

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*DCNR Watershed Forestry Specialist or Service Forester*

**Lawn-to-Habitat Plantings Minimum Requirements, Guidance, and Recommendations**

Lawn-to-Forest Plantings:

* All plantings must take place in an area that is currently maintained as a lawn.
* Lawns are areas of primarily non-native grass mowed at regular intervals to a height of less than 6-8 inches.
* Areas that have been “let go”, “naturalized”, or not mowed regularly are no longer lawns.
* All C2P2 CWF-funded lawn-to-forest plantings should add new forest acreage.
* Existing invasive trees and woody vegetation must be removed prior to conversion as a part of site prep.
* Hazardous standing dead trees may be felled, and removed from planting sites as needed, prior to planting as a part of site prep if the dead trees pose safety concern, as long as the cost of removal is a minimal portion of the overall site budget.
* Minimal existing tree canopy covering less than 50% of that area is allowable.
* Areas that already have more than 50% canopy coverage are considered already forested and therefore are not eligible.
* All lawn-to-forest plantings must take place more than 300ft from a waterway.
* Plantings within 300ft of a waterway are considered riparian forest buffers. Please see minimum guidelines for riparian forest buffers instead.
* Lawn-to-forest plantings must consist of at least 3 rows of trees or must be at least 35ft wide and must be maintained as forest.
* Mowing during the establishment phase is allowed, but no mowing amongst the planting area should occur after 5-years post planting.
* Plant approximately 150-200 trees/acre, or plant at a density that will allow the planting to achieve canopy closure at maturity.
* 200 trees/acre is more desirable, and some mortality is expected.
* A minimum of three (3) genera is required per planting; a higher species diversity is strongly encouraged.
* Plant a diversity of both tree and shrub species, as appropriate.
* A 70/30 split of trees and shrubs is recommended but not required.
* Choose appropriate plants for light and moisture conditions present on site.
* Plant trees in rows for maintenance ease; 10’x10’-15’x15’ spacing is recommended.
* Adjust spacing as needed to accommodate maintenance equipment to be used by the staff, contractors, and/or landowners who will be maintaining the site.
* Control any existing competing vegetation, especially invasive species, via mechanical and/or chemical removal.
* Follow herbicide label instructions carefully.
* All trees should have adequate protection from deer browse and rodents.
* 5-foot tree shelters with a bird net, and a wooden or fiberglass stake secured with a zip tie or similar, are strongly recommended.
* Alternative tree protection methods may be considered if they are appropriate for the site.
* Herbicide rings, weed mats secured with staples, stone mulch, or appropriate alternative should be applied around the base of each tree/shrub.
* ALL plantings MUST have adequate post-planting establishment care regularly during the grant term.
* Post-planting establishment care includes mowing and competing plant control, as well as replanting, and stake/shelter/bird net care.

Lawn-to-meadow Plantings:

* All plantings must take place in an area that is currently maintained as a lawn.
* Lawns are areas of primarily non-native grass mowed at regular intervals to a height of less than 6-8 inches.
* Areas that have been “let go”, “naturalized”, or not mowed regularly do not qualify as lawns.
* All C2P2 CWF-funded lawn-to-habitat plantings should add new meadow acreage.
* Native tree canopy should not be removed to make space for a meadow planting; consider a forest planting instead, if appropriate.
* Minimal existing tree canopy covering may be acceptable in some cases.
  + The minimal existing tree canopy is approximately 20 trees/acre, depending on tree size/species.
  + Contact your Service Forester or Regional Watershed Forestry Specialist if you need assistance determining whether a meadow is appropriate based on existing tree canopy coverage.
* Invasive trees/woody vegetation present on site may be removed as a part of site prep activities if they are growing/located in an existing lawn area.
* Lawn-to-habitat sites must not have significant invasive plant pressure present within the planting area.
* All invasive herb weeds should be controlled prior to site prep to ensure meadow establishment success.
* Areas adjacent to the planting should also be examined, and any invasive plants nearby controlled, if possible, to remove any possible invasive seed sources.
* All lawn-to-habitat plantings must take place more than 300ft from a riparian area.
* Planting within 300ft of a riparian area may be considered on a case-by-case basis if a riparian forest buffer at least 35ft wide is also planted, or if a riparian forest buffer at least 35ft wide is already present, or if a riparian forest buffer is not appropriate due to overhead or underground utilities.
* All lawn-to-habitat sites must be prepared by removing all the current exiting vegetation.
* Removal of existing vegetation via herbicide is strongly encouraged due to timing and budgetary concerns associated with grant-funded projects. Projects that utilize methods for non-herbicide site prep may be considered if approved by a Regional Watershed Forestry Specialist.
* All seed mixes must be appropriate for the site and consist of at least three genera.
* Seed mixes should be primarily native seed; a small percentage of non-native seed can be utilized on a case-by-case basis as a cue-to-care, if approved by a Regional Watershed Forestry Specialist