



## Fw: Technical Tuesday (on a Tuesday) - Urban/Small-scale Ag WHAG

**From** Soil & Water Conservation Program <soil&waterconservationprogram@swcd.mo.gov>

**Date** Wed 3/5/2025 9:07 AM

**To** DNR.Soil and Water Conservation Districts staff <dnr.soilandwaterconservationdistrictsstaff@dnr.mo.gov>

**Cc** DNR.MGS SWC Staff <dnr.swcstaff@dnr.mo.gov>

2 attachments (711 KB)

000\_MO\_EST\_WHAG\_Urban\_Small-scale\_Ag\_Instructions\_2025.pdf; 000\_MO\_EST\_WHAG\_Urban\_Small-scale\_Ag\_2025.pdf;

Good morning.

Please see below for this week's NRCS training video.

Thank you,

Soil & Water Conservation Program  
Phone 573-751-4932

*We'd like your feedback on the service you received from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Please consider taking a few minutes to complete the department's Customer Satisfaction Survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MoDNRsurvey>. Thank you.*

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**Sent:** Tuesday, March 4, 2025 4:27 PM

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Planners,

To disseminate information in an alternative way rather than a set Teams meeting lasting an hour or more, Ecological Services Staff will on occasion send out pre-recorded, on-demand trainings known as Technical Tuesday. These trainings will be available for anyone who has access to the [FPAC-NRCS- Mo Conservation Planners Team](#). A link to a new recording will be provided in each email, but they will be stored in the channel [Training Videos Library](#).

These recordings will allow planners to view them at their leisure, or to review at some point in the future when they need that information. For our partners that do not have access to the USDA Microsoft Teams Channels, such as Missouri Department of Conservation employees, please check with your Area Biologist, as I believe we've been able to make these available on the MDC SharePoint.

This Technical Tuesday is reviewing a new Wildlife Habitat Appraisal Guide (WHAG) for sites where NRCS and partners are providing increasing technical assistance, Urban & Small-scale Agriculture.

The WHAG and its instructions document is also attached to the email as a way to provide them to the field, as State Office staff have not had the ability to upload to Section 4 of the FOTG for many weeks. Once that is restored, it will be uploaded to the Section 4 > Ecological Sciences Tools folder, where all wildlife appraisals and evaluations are located.

Access the training at this link:  [Urban\\_Small-scale Ag WHAG-03-04-2025.mp4](#)

*Selma Mascaro*

Missouri State Resource Conservationist



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## Missouri

### Urban / Small-scale Ag Community Model

### Wildlife Habitat Appraisal Guide (WHAG) Instructions

This Urban / Small-scale Ag Community Model is appropriate for developed land occupied by buildings and related facilities used for residences, commercial sites, public highways, airports, and open space associated with towns and cities.

This WHAG is also appropriate for small-scale agricultural operations. Small-scale farms could have multiple land uses, such as farmstead, crop, pasture, associated ag land, and/or developed land, which could be scored using this single WHAG rather than separate WHAGs for each land use. If there are multiple land uses, they must be contiguous. This WHAG should not be used on the forest land use. While there is no maximum acreage for a small-scale operation, it is usually characterized by the entire operation on a compact footprint, a diverse production of agricultural products, and most labor done by hand or with small or compact machinery.

**This WHAG should not be used on larger row crop or cattle operations as a substitute for evaluating individual communities or land uses with other more appropriate WHAGs such as the Farmstead, Cropland, or Prairie/Grassland Community WHAGs. The Other Agricultural Land Community Model WHAG should be used for operations that are primarily orchards, vineyards, pecan or walnut groves, or sod farms.**

Planned conditions should be based on when the contract expires or what you expect the site to look like 10 years from evaluation.

#### **A. Vegetation Structure and Diversity**

##### **A.1) Herbaceous Cover:**

- Measure the percentage of the site with established or planned native grasses and wildflowers. Wildflowers (i.e. native forbs/legumes) should be at least 40% of the composition to score 15, 12, or 9 points, and at least 25% of the composition to score 6 or 3 points. Do not consider space occupied by man-made structures, but do consider space covered with gravel, concrete, or other hardscape materials.
  - Assign 15 points if native grasses and wildflowers comprise at least 20% of the site and the vegetation is allowed to stay in place throughout the dormant season.
  - Assign 12 points if native grasses and wildflowers comprise at least 20% of the site but the vegetation is NOT allowed to stay in place throughout the dormant season.
  - Assign 9 points if native grasses and wildflowers comprise 15-19.9% of the site and the vegetation is allowed to stay in place throughout the dormant season.
  - Assign 6 points if native grasses and wildflowers comprise at least 15-19.9% of the site regardless of if the vegetation is or is not allowed to stay in place throughout the dormant season.
  - Assign 3 points if native grasses and wildflowers comprise at least 10-14.9% of the site regardless of if the vegetation is or is not allowed to stay in place throughout the dormant season.
  - Assign 0 points if native grasses and wildflowers comprise <10% of the site.
- **Suggested practices that would increase Planned Score:**
  - i. Wildlife Habitat Planting (Code 420)
  - ii. Conservation Cover (Code 327)
  - iii. Field Border (Code 386)
  - iv. Hedgerow Planting (Code 422)

**A.2) Woody Cover:**

- Assign points based on the number of **species** of native trees and/or shrubs that are growing on the site.
- To receive 10 points in (a), at least 1 species of a native tree AND native shrub must be represented in the 5 species required.
- If at least 5 species are present, but all species are trees OR shrubs, then assign 5 points.
- Assign 5 points if <5 species (3 or 4) of native trees OR native shrubs are present.
- Assign 1 point if <3 species (1 or 2) of native trees OR native shrubs are present.
- **Suggested practices that would increase Planned Score:**
  - i. Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612)
  - ii. Wildlife Habitat Planting (Code 420)
  - iii. Hedgerow Planting (Code 422)
  - iv. Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation (Code 380)

**B. Introduced or Undesirable Species****B.1) Invasive Species:**

- SUBTRACT points if non-native invasive species are present on the site. Do not consider turf grasses typically maintained in a manicured condition, such as fescue or bluegrass.
- **Suggested practices that would increase Planned Score:**
  - i. Brush Management (Code 314)
  - ii. Herbaceous Weed Treatment (Code 315)

**C. Wildlife Access****C.1) Crops and Fruit Trees**

- Assign points if the site includes space for growing crops. This can include gardens or small orchards that are part of the overall small-scale ag operation.
  - Assign 10 points if the crops that are grown include native species such as elderberry, blackberry, hazelnut, etc. AND wildlife has access to at least 50% of the growing space. These native species must be grown and cared for to harvest a crop, and not just present within the PLU(s). Points for just their presence would be awarded in A.2. above.
  - Assign 5 points if the site includes growing space for crops but none of the crops are native, though wildlife still has access to at least 50% of the growing space.
  - If wildlife is excluded from >50% of the crop areas by fences, netting, or some other barrier, assign 0 points.
- **Suggested practices that would increase Planned Score:**
  - i. Alley Cropping (Code 311)
  - ii. Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612)

## Missouri Wildlife Habitat Appraisal Guide Urban / Small-scale Ag Community Model

<b>Landowner(s):</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____ <b>Planner:</b> _____				
<b>Farm Number:</b> _____		<b>Tract Number:</b> _____		
<b>Field Number(s):</b> _____		<b>County:</b> _____		
Instructions: Reference the full Instructions document for this WHAG to determine whether this assessment is appropriate for the planning land unit(s) (PLUs) in question. Document whether the PLU(s) represent Urban and/or Small-scale Agriculture, then answer each of the questions (A-C) below by circling the appropriate points for both the existing and planned conditions.			<b>Points if Existing</b>	<b>Points if Planned</b>
Planning Land Unit(s) being assessed are considered to be (select one or both): (    ) Urban, (    ) Small-scale Agriculture				
<b>Vegetation Structure and Diversity</b>				
<b>A.1. Herbaceous Cover - Native grasses and wildflowers (native forbs/legumes), with at least 40% wildflower composition for a, b, and c, and at least 25% wildflower composition for d and e.</b>				
a) ≥20% of site is established in native grasses and wildflowers <b>AND</b> vegetation is left standing over winter for native stem nesting insects			15	15
b) ≥20% of site is established in native grasses and wildflowers			12	12
c) 15-19.9% of site is established in native grasses and wildflowers <b>AND</b> vegetation is left standing over winter for native stem nesting insects			9	9
d) 15-19.9% of site is established in native grasses and wildflowers			6	6
e) 10-14.9% of site is established in native grasses and wildflowers			3	3
f) <10% of site is established in native grasses and wildflowers			0	0
<b>A.2. Woody Cover - Only count native species of trees and shrubs. At least 1 species of both must be present to receive 10 points.</b>				
a) Site has at least 5 species of native trees and/or shrubs			10	10
b) Site has at least 3 species of native trees and/or shrubs			5	5
c) Site has at least 1 species of native tree or shrubs			3	3
d) None of the above			0	0
<b>Vegetation Structure and Diversity Points</b>				
<b>Introduced or Undesirable Species</b>				
<b>B. Invasive Species - Record any non-native invasive species observed.</b>				
a) Subtract 3 points if non-native invasive species are present (including but not limited to Bradford/Callery Pear, Bush/Japanese honeysuckle, Autumn olive, Euonymus, wintercreeper, etc.)			-3	-3
b) No invasive species present			0	0
<b>Introduced or Undesirable Species Points</b>				
<b>Wildlife Access</b>				
<b>C. Crops and Fruit Trees - Crops that wildlife have access to in the PLU(s). Examples of native species includes elderberry, blackberry, hazelnut, etc.</b>				
a) Site includes growing spaces for crops, includes native species, AND wildlife have access			10	10
b) Site includes growing spaces for crops (vegetable gardens, fruit orchards, etc.) AND wildlife have access			5	5
c) Site includes crop spaces, but wildlife are excluded			0	0
<b>Wildlife Access Points</b>				
<b>TOTAL POINTS PLANNED AND EXISTING (MAXIMUM SCORE POSSIBLE IS 35)</b>				
<b>Planner Notes</b> (For example: Exact percentage of herbaceous cover for question A.1, species of native trees/shrub observed, invasive species observed.):          				
<b>SCORING</b>				
Existing Urban / Small-scale Ag Index (Existing Score/35) = _____			(Minimum Quality Criteria = 0.5)	
Planned Urban / Small-scale Ag Index (Planned Score/35) = _____			(Minimum Quality Criteria = 0.5)	
_____ <b>Planner:</b>			_____ <b>Date:</b>	
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