

SUBCHAPTER 10L – WILDLIFE CONSERVATION LAND PROGRAM

15A NCAC 10L .0101 WILDLIFE CONSERVATION LAND

(a) Wildlife Conservation Land is a classification of land that meets the size and ownership requirements specified in G.S. 105-277.15 and on which one or more of the use requirements in Subparagraphs (b)(1) through (b)(3) of this Rule are met and maintained by the owner under a written Wildlife Habitat Conservation Agreement with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission that is submitted by the landowner to the county where an application for reduced property tax assessment is requested.

(b) Use Requirements of Wildlife Conservation Land shall include the following:

- (1) Protection of species on the protected animal list;
- (2) Conservation of priority wildlife habitats; or
- (3) Land managed and actively used as a wildlife reserve.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 105-277.15;
Temporary Adoption Eff. December 3, 2019;
Eff. October 1, 2020.*

15A NCAC 10L .0102 PROTECTION OF SPECIES ON THE PROTECTED ANIMAL LIST

(a) As specified in G.S. 105-277.15(c) and Rule .0101 of this Section the protection of species on the protected animal list shall be a qualifying land use for Wildlife Conservation Land. Eligible species shall be those designated by the Commission in Section 15A NCAC 10I .0100 as endangered, threatened, or special concern.

(b) The following conditions shall apply to the qualification of land as Wildlife Conservation Land under the protection of species on the protected animal list use requirement:

- (1) at least one protected wildlife species shall have been identified on the land;
- (2) the landowner shall be required to manage the land to protect the species through established strategies identified in the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Agreement; and
- (3) the land shall meet the prior use requirements specified in G.S. 105-277.15(c)(3)(b).

*History Note: Authority G.S. 105-277.15;
Eff. October 1, 2020.*

15A NCAC 10L .0103 CONSERVATION OF PRIORITY WILDLIFE HABITATS

(a) As specified in G.S. 105-277.15(c)(3) and Rule .0101 of this Section, the conservation of priority wildlife habitats shall be a qualifying land use for Wildlife Conservation Land. Priority wildlife habitats shall mean those habitats specified in G.S.105-277.15(c)(3)(a)(2).

(b) The following conditions shall apply to the qualification of land as Wildlife Conservation Land under the conservation of priority wildlife habitat land use requirement:

- (1) at least one of the priority wildlife habitats specified in G.S. 105-277.15(c)(3)(a)(2) shall have been identified on the land or planned for establishment;
- (2) the management strategies identified for the continued existence of the priority wildlife habitat shall be in place or planned for as specified in the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Agreement; and
- (3) the land shall meet the prior use requirements specified in G.S. 105-277.15(c)(3)(b).

*History Note: Authority G.S. 105-277.15;
Eff. October 1, 2020.*

15A NCAC 10L .0104 WILDLIFE RESERVE

(a) As specified in G.S. 105-277.15(c) and Rule .0101 of this Section, land that is managed and actively used as a wildlife reserve shall be a qualifying land use for Wildlife Conservation Land. Wildlife reserve shall mean a type of wildlife conservation land that meets the requirements set forth in G.S. 105-277.15(c)3.a. Land managed and maintained primarily for human uses such as large lawns, golf courses, horse pastures, production agricultural fields, monoculture hayfields, solar energy, and commercial timber stands shall not qualify as wildlife reserve land.

(b) As specified in G.S. 105-277.15(c)(3)a.3., to qualify as Wildlife Conservation Land under the wildlife reserve land use requirement, at least three of the following activities shall be maintained on the land as agreed upon in the written Wildlife Habitat Conservation Agreement:

- (1) "supplemental food" shall mean annual or perennial noninvasive plantings that provide a direct or indirect source of food or nutrition for wildlife resources.
 - (2) "supplemental water" shall mean artificial water features or sources that are created or installed for the benefit of wildlife resources.
 - (3) "supplemental shelter" shall mean natural or artificial structures that are created or installed to provide shelter from the weather, nesting sites, or escape cover from predators. Supplemental shelter may include the addition of natural or artificial structures into aquatic habitats.
 - (4) "habitat control" shall mean the implementation of practices to establish, restore, enhance, or maintain upland, wetland, riparian, or aquatic vegetation or physical aquatic habitat.
 - (5) "erosion control" shall mean the implementation of practices to prevent, reduce, or minimize soil erosion. Practices may include streambank and in-stream channel stabilization. Practices established for erosion control shall not be known to harm wildlife or include invasive plant species.
 - (6) "predator control" shall mean a practice implemented to reduce the abundance of a species or suite of species that preys on any life stage of wildlife species for which the land is managed. Predator control includes removal of invasive animal species to manage or protect wildlife or wildlife habitats.
 - (7) "census of animal population on the land" shall mean conducting or participating in periodic surveys and inventories to determine the presence, number, composition, biological condition, or human use of wildlife.
- (c) Qualifying land shall be inspected at least once every five years following the date that the conservation agreement is signed to ensure that at least three of the seven activities specified in Subparagraphs (b)(1) through (b)(7) of this Rule are maintained. The following conditions shall apply to the required inspection:
- (1) a wildlife biologist employed by a state or federal agency, a Certified Wildlife Biologist® credentialed by the Wildlife Society, or a Certified Fisheries Professional credentialed by the American Fisheries Society shall perform the inspection of qualifying land; and
 - (2) inspections shall be recorded by the wildlife biologist on a form provided by the Commission. The landowner shall submit the completed form to the county tax assessor's office during the open enrollment period for the year that the inspection is due.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 105-277.15;
Eff. October 1, 2020.*