



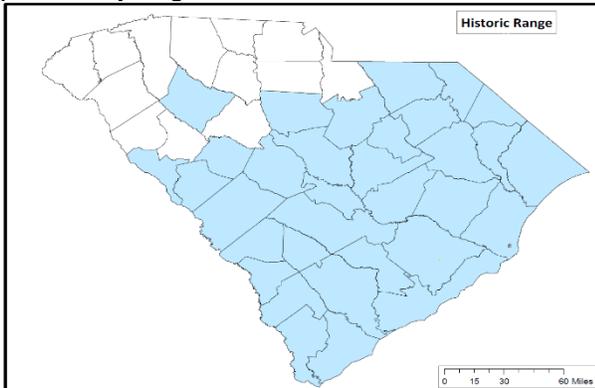
# South Carolina Red-cockaded Woodpecker Safe Harbor Program



## Landowner Information: Is it right for you?

### Program Area

Any non-federal or state property in South Carolina that falls within the historic range is potentially eligible for enrollment.



### Program Goals

- To maintain and enhance Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) populations on private properties through voluntary land management commitments by landowners
- To help South Carolina landowners by removing some of the regulatory restrictions imposed by the Endangered Species Act
- To provide benefits to other plants and animals that inhabit pine uplands

### Eligibility Requirements

The South Carolina RCW Safe Harbor Program will consider any property within the historic range. However, all enrolled properties and the habitat management performed on those properties must provide an overall conservation benefit to RCWs. The South Carolina RCW Safe Harbor Program is interested in properties that meet one or more of the following situations:

1. The property is currently occupied by RCWs (partially or entirely) for nesting and/or foraging
2. The property contains historical records of RCW occupation, or

3. A property contains longleaf, loblolly, and/or pond pine stands that are at least 30 years old

### Landowner Responsibilities

- Enhance and maintain currently existing RCW nesting/foraging habitat (if present)
- Perform additional habitat enhancement activities on the property
- Coordinate and cooperate with SCDNR and any other authorized biologists or consultants

### RCW Habitat Requirements

RCWs require mature pine trees encompassing 75+ acres for nesting and foraging. They prefer open, park-like pine forests with a diverse herbaceous groundcover. They do not tolerate a hardwood midstory component or hardwood species present in the overstory (>20%).



RCWs' preferred habitat are forests maintained by periodic fire, such as the longleaf pine savannas shown above. Periodic fire controls the growth of shrubs and hardwoods. In the absence of fire, an open pine forest can quickly transform into a dense pine-hardwood forest. Pine stands currently unsuitable for RCWs may be restored to suitable conditions using proper habitat management (see next page).

## Beneficial Habitat Management

The South Carolina RCW Safe Harbor Program will require participating landowners to perform one or more habitat enhancement activities on their property. The number and type of habitat enhancement activities performed on an enrolled property will depend on several factors, such as habitat condition and type, presence of RCWs, and proposed land uses. All habitat enhancement activities will be mutually agreed upon by both the participating landowner and DNR.



Examples of Habitat Enhancement Activities:

- Prescribed fire in short intervals (every 2-4 years)
- Midstory and overstory hardwood control using prescribed fire, chemicals, or mechanical removal
- Planting longleaf pine on suitable sites and maintaining pines for more than 30 years
- Lengthening pine timber rotations
- Thinning and maintaining pine stands between 40 - 70 ft<sup>2</sup> of basal area per acre
- Managing timber in ways compatible with RCW habitat requirements
- Installing artificial cavities in occupied or unoccupied habitat and maintaining those cavities

## Other Plants and Animals That May Benefit from RCW Management

Many species of native grasses and wildflowers benefit from RCW management, particularly when short interval prescribed fire is used. Fire promotes growth of native

grasses and wildflowers, especially when it occurs during the growing season. The herbaceous groundcover that develops through the use of fire is beneficial to many animals, such as [bobwhite quail](#) and [Bachman's sparrow](#). In addition, the open, park-like condition of RCW habitat is preferred by eastern bluebirds, red-headed woodpeckers, and many other animal species. Longleaf pine savannas are also home to southeastern [fox squirrel](#) and are utilized by [white-tailed deer](#) and [turkey](#).

## Land Uses Potentially Compatible with RCW Habitat Requirements

Landowners may want to utilize their enrolled property for economic benefit or personal reasons. Many types of land uses are compatible with RCW habitat management. The following are examples of potential land uses:

- Timber production
- Pine straw raking
- Quail Management
- Hiking, hunting, or other recreation
- Home site

## Steps in the Program

1. Contact the RCW Safe Harbor Coordinator
2. Provide a map of the property and proposed management activities or land uses
3. DNR will schedule a site visit
4. After DNR determines eligibility, landowner will hire a consultant to survey the property to determine presence/absence of RCWs
5. The Coordinator will work with you or your consultant/representative to develop a Safe Harbor Agreement

## For more information, contact:

Matt Lerow  
Red-cockaded Woodpecker Project Leader  
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries  
Phone: 803.260.4132  
Email: [RCW@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:RCW@dnr.sc.gov)