

### **307.36 Migratory Big Game Initiative**

**Name and Acronym:** Migratory Big Game Initiative (MBGI)

**Initiative Description:** The MBGI is part of Working Lands for Wildlife. Under the MBGI, NRCS helps farmers and ranchers conserve, restore, and enhance working lands that are also important habitat for migratory big game populations. Priorities for the effort are:

- Maintaining large and intact landscapes that provide diverse seasonal habitats required by migratory big game animals.
- Addressing resource concerns that negatively impact the quality and quantity of habitats.
- Modifying and managing fences to facilitate the movement of wildlife through and across private lands.

**Program Contact Information:** For questions specific to MBGI, please contact the West WLFW coordinator or the chief of the Areawide Planning Branch. For general programmatic questions, please contact the chief of the Financial Assistance Program Division Programs Branch.

**Participating States:** Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

**Eligible Resource Concerns and Geographies:** The state conservationist (STC), with advice from the respective state game and fish agency, will identify priority geographies and eligible resource concerns to focus MBGI Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program resources on. Designations should be made based on what would most benefit migratory big game and where program implementation can be maximized.

**Eligible Conservation Practices:** The STC, with advice from the respective state game and fish agency, will select and make available through MBGI conservation practices that address threats and habitat needs for migratory big game populations. Examples include, but are not limited to, wildlife-friendly fences, noxious weed and invasive annual grass control, wet meadow or riparian restoration, and aspen regeneration.

The core conservation practice for MBGI is Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645). All MBGI contracts must include Code 645 or be completing a conservation system that includes Code 645 on the land being contracted.

**Business Tool Requirements:** This guidance establishes action items to be completed by STCs to support MBGI.

1. **ProTracts Guidance:**

STCs must establish subaccounts in ProTracts and corresponding ranking pools in the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART). STCs must select the “WLFW Migratory Big Game” account type in ProTracts.

2. CART Ranking Guidance:

States must use the MBGI national ranking template and guidance (available in [440 NI 310](#)) to develop the ranking pools for MBGI. The national templates provide the approved land uses and primary resource concerns. The default weightings for each resource concern category and subcategory on the template reflect the relative priority of the concerns. To prioritize state-specific primary natural resource concerns, states may adjust the weightings as needed within the ranges identified on the MBGI national ranking template. The national ranking guidance provides the applicability and ranking questions.

3. Funding and Allocation Guidance:

Funds for MBGI projects may not be used for general program funding. In the event a state cannot use its MBGI-dedicated funding, funds must be returned to national headquarters with the appropriate amount of technical assistance funds.