

# A BOBWHITE REVIVAL

**25 States**

**The Unified Strategy for Bobwhite Restoration**



**The most comprehensive interstate effort on behalf  
of a resident game bird in the history of wildlife management**





## Habitat's the Problem

For most of the 19th and 20th centuries, typical land use shaped habitats that favored bobwhites. Cows grazed native grasslands, timber harvests and frequent purposeful fires created quail-friendly woodlands, and crop fields were small, weedy, and bordered by rough fencerows.

Modern agriculture and forestry technologies and societal attitudes have disconnected bobwhites from working lands by erasing habitats:

- Managing forests and fields with fire has been widely abandoned
- Grazing lands throughout the East have been converted from native “clump-grass” forages to aggressive, sod-forming, exotic grasses such as fescue
- Row crop fields are much larger and “cleaner,” with fewer fencerows and weedy borders
- Forest management has become too intensive — and not intensive enough
  - Millions of acres of southern forests have been converted into dense pine plantations
  - Public sentiments against logging and controlled burning impede forest management on millions of other acres

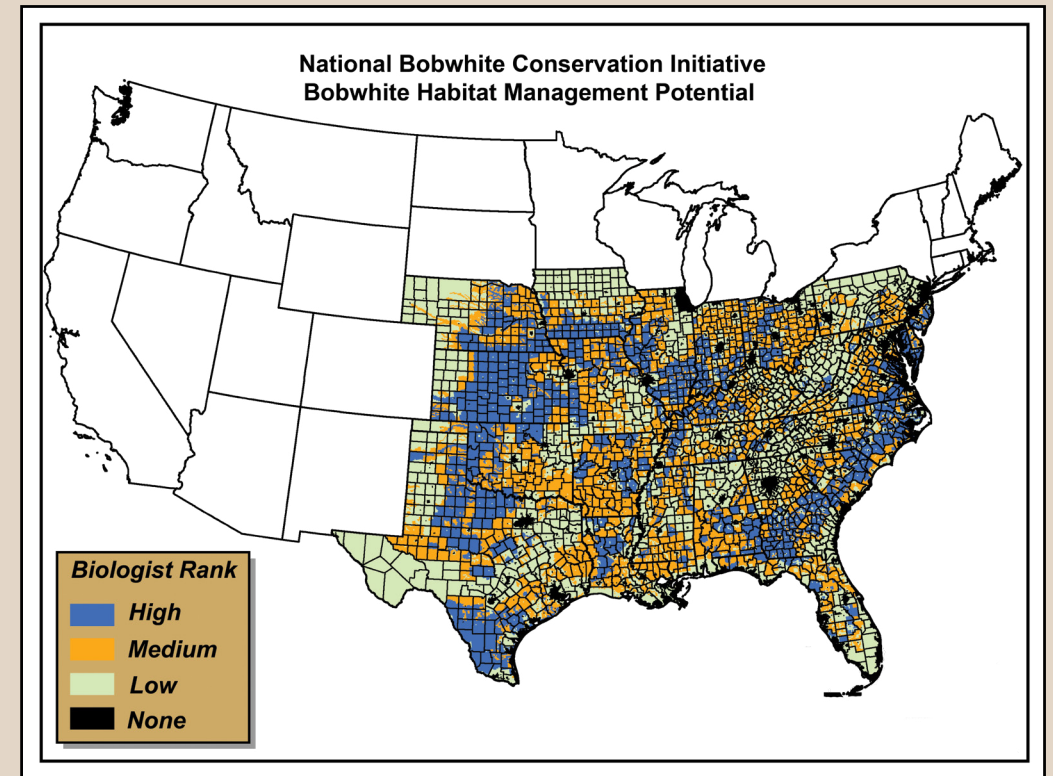
The result across dozens of states is that modern land management practices have destroyed habitats for bobwhites (and scores of other species) across hundreds of millions of acres.



## NBCI Charts the Solution

At its simplest, the NBCI resulted from the state wildlife agencies’ recognition that traditional, small-plot efforts to restore bobwhites are a failure and such efforts must be larger; and key factors and decisions beyond the reach of individual states are hampering a bobwhite revival, requiring a larger scale, regional/national approach.

- NBCI is the first-ever unified, multi-state effort to restore wild bobwhite quail to America’s landscape. The NBCI was created by the state wildlife management agencies comprising the core of the bobwhite range and is funded by these agencies, the Federal Aid in Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration program, the University of Tennessee, and Park Cities Quail. NBCI is charged with developing and coordinating the implementation of a national, habitat-based approach for the landscape-scale restoration of huntable populations of wild bobwhites.
- NBCI draws its technical expertise and guidance from the National Bobwhite Technical Committee, comprised of the state bobwhite biologists/managers, research institutions, and private conservation groups from the 25 states.
- NBCI draws its policy guidance primarily from the NBCI Management Board, the director-level representation from the 25 state wildlife management agencies.
- NBCI is a force multiplier, representing bobwhites at the regional and national levels while coordinating the collective weight of the 25 state wildlife agencies and a variety of research institutions and private conservation organizations.



## NBCI's Key Components

- **Strategy** — NBCI 2.0, an ever-evolving online bobwhite restoration strategy that approaches a bobwhite revival from habitat creation on a landscape-scale rather than the traditional small-scale, individual farm-level approach. ([www.goo.gl/KdqtXZ](http://www.goo.gl/KdqtXZ))
- **Assessment** — A landscape assessment of all 25 states and a ranking of feasibility for bobwhite habitat restoration and management activities. (For a more detailed examination, visit [www.bringbackbobwhites.org/conservation/state-habitat-potential-maps/](http://www.bringbackbobwhites.org/conservation/state-habitat-potential-maps/).)
- **Focal Areas** — The Coordinated Implementation Program (CIP), the latest addition to NBCI 2.0, establishes a pathway with standards and measures for adapting the landscape-scale strategy of NBCI 2.0 at the ground level in each state and clearly documenting successes. ([www.goo.gl/pKcKgf](http://www.goo.gl/pKcKgf))
- **Information** — The Bobwhite Information Network is the first central bobwhite technical database and comprehensive national information service that consolidates and manages data for the benefit of all quail conservation partners. This includes coordinated, consistent bobwhite monitoring and habitat tracking to measure and demonstrate grassland bird responses to habitat management.
- **National leadership** — A small leadership team based at the University of Tennessee, specializing in research, forest management, grasslands, communications, and database management at regional and national levels on behalf of the states. This team helps identify and address big-picture restoration opportunities and obstacles.



## Key NBCI Bobwhite Revival Strategies

- **Reconnecting Croplands & Bobwhites** by advancing the establishment of diverse native grasslands and wildflowers (bobwhite habitat) on idled acres of marginal croplands and other rural landscapes.



- **Reconnecting Cattle & Bobwhites** by converting up to one-third of existing tame pasture acreage to native forage grasses (bobwhite habitat) that are good for both quail and cattle.

- **Reconnecting Forests & Bobwhites** by actively managing pine and other forests on private and public lands—including timber thinning followed by routine prescribed fire—to achieve widespread restoration of open forest savannas (bobwhite habitat).

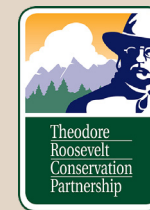


- **Reconnecting People & Bobwhites** by mobilizing key groups and agencies to support the widespread restoration of habitat for bobwhites and other grasslands birds and wildlife species.

Mike Hutchins, Willie Simmons, and Billy Dukes of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources present NBCI's Fire Bird Conservation Award to Spartanburg's Mark Coleman, a citizen activist on behalf of wild bobwhite restoration.

## A Few NBCI Successes

- Made bobwhite restoration a nationally recognized conservation priority
- Organized and mobilized the states on behalf of bobwhites
- Conservation Practice 33 (CP33), known as "Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds," a popular practice in the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program, which has created 250,000 acres of additional bobwhite habitat in agricultural settings
- The recent inclusion in the CP33 program of the un-irrigated corners of agricultural crop fields where center pivot irrigation systems are used, which could soon add another 250,000 acres of bobwhite habitat
- The addition of Conservation Practice 36 (CP36), Longleaf Pine Establishment, to the Conservation Reserve Program, which will add 250,000 acres of longleaf pine ecosystem and bobwhite habitat
- The recent establishment of the Shortleaf Pine Initiative as a separate strategic effort to restore open grassy woodlands that are prime bobwhite habitat while simultaneously producing a valuable wood product
- Approval of two NBCI-led proposals to recognize bobwhites in the NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife program, targeting 232,000 acres in 13 states
- A developing partnership with the National Park Service for management of appropriate NPS lands as NBCI Bobwhite Focal Areas, serving as both public educational opportunities and natural source populations of bobwhites for the adjacent landscapes
- A developing partnership with the U.S. Forest Service beginning with the creation of bobwhite focal areas on national forests in two southern states
- A new alliance between NBCI and Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership to represent bobwhite habitat conservation needs in Washington, D.C., supported by Park Cities Quail
- A new partnership with the Quail and Upland Game Alliance provides substantial, multi-year funding for NBCI priorities



An agreement between NBCI, the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, and the National Park Service (NPS) will create the first-ever NBCI Bobwhite Focal Area on NPS lands at Pea Ridge National Battlefield. The new focal area will include the 4,300-acre battlefield as well as adjacent acreage of interested property owners in the area. In addition to expanding the wild bobwhite population, the project will allow partners to inform the battlefield's thousands of visitors with the reasons behind the decline in bobwhites and other grassland wildlife species, as well as the habitat solutions.



## Join the Bobwhite Revival

- NBCI is an organized effort by the states for the states, so contact your wildlife agency quail coordinator (check our homepage under “About Us” if you’re uncertain who it is), tell them you support NBCI efforts to restore quail to America’s landscape, and ask them how you can help.
- Spread the word about NBCI by sharing our website with friends and acquaintances who care about bobwhite quail (and/or the disappearing suite of other grassland wildlife species).
- Keep current with efforts to save the bobwhite by subscribing to NBCI news releases, the NBCI blog, NBCI’s Facebook page, our YouTube channel, and our Slideshare page, and encourage others to do the same.
- If your state has a specialty vehicle license plate that supports quail management, buy it.



- Join a grassroots conservation organization that is committed specifically to helping create, maintain, and monitor NBCI Bobwhite Focal Areas in your state. Your state agency quail coordinator will know who’s most active in our state.
- Contact your local county extension office and ask them what they are doing to promote improved quail habitat with agricultural interests in the county. Share the NBCI story with them.
- Ask your state forestry commission how they are working with the state’s wildlife biologists to manage forests in a way that will help recover wild quail populations. Share the NBCI story with them.
- If any of your Congressional delegation belong to the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus, contact them about the bobwhite’s plight and the NBCI. Visit [www.sportsmenslink.org/caucuses/congressional](http://www.sportsmenslink.org/caucuses/congressional).
- Finally, if you are a public land manager or a private landowner with substantial acreage, reach out to your respective state agency quail coordinator for habitat management assistance and to see if your property might qualify for inclusion in an NBCI Bobwhite Focal Area, and get your neighbors to do the same.



DNR







**CONNECT WITH US**  
**[www.bringbackbobwhites.org](http://www.bringbackbobwhites.org)**



Cover photo by Ben Robinson, KY Fish & Wildlife Resources

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