

Systematic Conservation Approach to Landscape Enhancement

Project SCALE: Habitat Restoration Blueprint

 Strategic Plan for Landscape-Level Wildlife Restoration

Project SCALE: Give a Little, Create a Lot

1. Vision Statement

Restore and reconnect habitat across South-Central PA to support wild pheasants, quail, pollinators, and songbirds—anchored in stewardship, profitability, and generational legacy.

2. Biological Foundation

- **Species Tiers:** Bees → Bluebirds → Bobolinks → Meadowlarks → Rabbits → Quail → Pheasants
- **Habitat Needs:** Nesting cover, brood-rearing zones, winter shelter, escape corridors
- **Limiting Factors:**
 - Modern farming (alfalfa, clean stubble, early mowing)
 - Fragmented landscapes
 - Lack of year-round cover
 - Predator pressure (non-native and subsidized)
 - Township aesthetics and weed complaints
 - Economic uncertainty and rent pressure

3. Geographic Strategy

- **Core CREP Acreage:** Anchor sites with proven success
- **Spokes and Corridors:** Connect edges, ditches, hedgerows, and fringe fields
- **Human-Managed Zones:** Brush piles, pollinator boxes, birdhouses, edge buffers

4. 🍷 Stakeholder Mapping

5. 🛠️ Action Steps

- **Name Your Acres:** Let landowners “adopt” habitat zones
- **Build a Wildlife Area Kit:** Plans for brush piles, pollinator boxes, signage, Milkweed class project
- **Host a Habitat Day:** Community build, education, celebration
- **Weekly Column:** Biology, ethics, and hope—plain talk for plain folks
- **Press Releases:** Frame success stories, anticipating objections, build consensus
- **Mantra:** “Give a Little, Create a Lot” → every edge counts

6. 🌱 Ethics and Hope

- **Ethics:** Respect for life, stewardship over dominion, restoration over recreation
- **Hope:** Every acre matters. Every person can contribute. Every bird is a signpost of recovery.

🧩 “Are You a Part of the Puzzle?”

A Strategic Framework for Community-Driven Habitat Restoration

🔍 What’s the Puzzle?

- **The Goal:** Restore and reconnect habitat for pheasants, quail, pollinators, and songbirds across South-Central PA.
- **The Pieces:** Farmers, landowners, students, churches, hunters, retirees, townships, and schools.
- **The Picture:** A landscape where wildlife and working lands thrive side by side.

🧠 Why It Works

- **Visual Metaphor:** Everyone understands a puzzle. It’s incomplete without every piece.

- **Emotional Hook:** “I didn’t think I could help—but I’m a piece of the puzzle.”
- **Strategic Logic:** Small actions (brush piles, buffers, signage) add up to big impact.

Puzzle Piece Profiles

Farmer

- *Role:* CREP enrollment, edge buffers
- *Message:* “Profit from the fringe”
- **Landowner**
 - *Role:* Passive habitat contributor
 - *Message:* “Your land, your legacy”
- **Student**
 - *Role:* Projects, monitoring, classroom builds
 - *Message:* “Grow stewards, not just crops”
- **Church**
 - *Role:* Outreach, ethics, volunteer base
 - *Message:* “Creation care in action”
- **Hunter**
 - *Role:* Funding, volunteer labor, habitat advocacy
 - *Message:* “Bring back the wild flush”
- **Township**
 - *Role:* Policy support, mowing schedules, signage
 - *Message:* “Beauty in biodiversity”
- **Retiree**
 - *Role:* Observation, donations, storytelling
 - *Message:* “Hope from the porch”

Puzzle Kit Ideas

- **Signage:** “This acre is a puzzle piece.”
- **Habitat Starter Kit:** Brush pile plan, pollinator box, bluebird house, native seed mix
- **Puzzle Map:** Visual showing connected habitat zones—each labeled with a contributor
- **Classroom Activity:** Students build a puzzle board showing local contributions
- **Outreach Column:** “Puzzle Piece of the Week”—highlighting one person’s impact

Closing Message

“You don’t need 100 acres. You don’t need a tractor. You just need a corner, a commitment, and a little hope. Because when you add your piece, the whole picture starts to come alive.”

“**Mantra** whatever we come up with.”

From here we can fill in what the group thinks best fits

◆ **Step 1: Name Your Project**

Choose a name that reflects your mission and geographic identity. Examples:

- *Habitat Heroes of Mercersburg*
- *South-Central PA Corridor Project*
- *From Margins to Meadows*
- *The SCALE Project (Stewardship, Conservation, Accountability, Legacy, Education)*

Step 2: Define Your Target Area

- **Total Target Acres:** (e.g. 5 acres, 20 acres, 100 acres)
- **Geographic Scope:** Township, school district, watershed, or CREP region
- **Land Types Included:** Residential, ag fields, school grounds, church lots, solar buffers, etc.

Step 3: Map Habitat Corridors & Boundaries

- **Primary Habitat Zones:** Core areas with highest restoration potential (e.g. CREP fields, old pasture)

- **Secondary Zones:** Transitional areas (e.g. field borders, mowed lots, school edges)
- **Fringe Zones:** Small but strategic spaces (e.g. backyards, gravel edges, brush piles)

Use visual metaphors like “**spokes and hubs**” or “**threads and patches**” to help students map connections.

Step 4: Set Habitat Goals by Species Tier

Use your Bee–Bluebird–Bobolink–Meadowlark–Rabbit–Quail–Pheasant ladder to scaffold goals. Maybe something with being a Link just to say you are involved? 🧠 **Human-Managed Field and Edge Habitats**

Residential & Community Spaces

- Backyards (especially near ag fields or developments)
- Lawns (1–3 acres)
- School grounds
- Church grounds
- Community gardens
- Community Parks
- Government Owned Property: Parks, Senior Center ect
- Cemetery edges

Business, Industrial & Vacant Zones

- Industrial parks
- Business campuses
- Vacant lots
- Mowed areas around buildings
- Retention ponds & stormwater basins
- Solar field buffers
- Gravel drive edges

Agricultural & Marginal Land

- Pasture
- Marginal soil zones
- Filter strips
- Field borders
- CREP set-aside plots
- Cover crop fields
- Rotational grazing paddocks

Wooded & Old Field Areas

- Woodlots
- Old fields
- Historic orchards
- Shelterbelts & windbreaks
- Fencerows
- Stone walls & hedgerows

Wet & Transitional Zones

- Wet areas
- Meadow zones
- Rain gardens
- Seasonal snow fence zones

Structures & Microhabitats

- Barn lofts & outbuildings
- Silos & unused grain bins
- Compost piles & brush piles
- Vertical supports (solar arrays, fences)
- Equipment zones used for habitat management

Project SCALE Mantras

Theme: Small Actions, Big Habitat Impact

Effort-to-Impact Logic

- **Give a Little, Save a Lot**
- **Be a Habitat Hero**
- **Give a Little, Create a Lot**
- **One Strip, Many Lives**
- **One Edge, Endless Habitat**
- **One Corner, Whole Community**
- **One Fence, One Field, One Future**

Legacy & Stewardship

- **Build It Small, Leave It Big**
- **Plant It Once, Steward Forever**
- **Restore the Edge, Remember the Land**
- **Habitat Starts with Hands and Hope**
- **Legacy Grows in Margins**

Student Action & Accountability

- **Measure Twice, Steward Once**
- **Design with Purpose, Build with Heart**
- **Every Stake Counts**
- **From Mowed to Meaningful**
- **Edges Matter. So Do You.**

Wildlife-Centered

- **Room for Rabbits, Space for Songbirds**
- **Brush for the Quail, Bloom for the Bees**
- **Shelter the Small, Strengthen the Whole**
- **Pollinators Welcome. Predators Watch.**

Effort to Impact Variations

These keep the core structure but offer different tones or applications:

- **Effort to Impact. Habitat Happens.**
- **Effort, Impact Hero**
- **Partners For Wildlife**
- **Effort to Impact. Stewardship Starts Here.**
- **Effort to Impact. Legacy Grows.**
- **Effort to Impact. Wildlife Wins.**
- **Effort to Impact. Edges Matter.**
- **Effort to Impact. Every Stake Counts.**

Expanded Mantras with Action Logic

These build on your “Give a Little...” phrasing and connect effort to results:

- **Give a Little Effort. Grow a Lot of Habitat.**
- **Give a Little Time. Make a Big Impact.**
- **Give a Little Space. Save a Lot of Species.**
- **Give a Little Margin. Build a Lot of Meaning.**
- **Give a Little Thought. Leave a Big Legacy.**
- **Give a Little Edge. Create a Whole Ecosystem.**

Three-Word Anchors for Posters or Rubrics

These are short, punchy, and great for headers or student pledges:

- **Design. Build. Steward.**
- **Measure. Plant. Protect.**
- **Think. Act. Restore.**
- **Plan. Stake. Impact.**
- **Observe. Reflect. Improve.**

-  **Project SCALE: Habitat Hero Levels**
“Give a Little. Grow a Lot.”
- **Level 1 – Bee**
Title: Pollinator Planter
Action: Plant a 20' x 20' pollinator patch with native flowers and grasses
- **Level 2 – Bluebird**
Title: Bluebird Link
Action: Establish a 15' native buffer with dogwood shrubs and warm-season grasses
- **Level 3 – Bobolink**
Title: Meadow Manager
Action: Convert 1/4 acre of mowed lawn or field to a no-mow grassland with nesting cover
- **Level 4 – Meadowlark**
Title: Songbird Steward
Action: Add perching posts and manage 1/2 acre of open field with rotational mowing
- **Level 5 – Rabbit**
Title: Brush Builder
Action: Create a brush pile and edge thicket with native shrubs and downed limbs
- **Level 6 – Quail**
Title: Covey Connector
Action: Restore a hedgerow or fencerow corridor with mixed cover and bare ground access
- **Level 7 – Pheasant**
Title: Pheasant Partner
Action: Enroll 1+ acre in CREP or create a multi-species habitat block with food, cover, and edge
- **Optional Add-On Titles**
- **Corridor Contributor** – for linking habitat between properties or participating in a school/community corridor
- **Legacy Landscaper** – for those who complete 3+ levels and mentor others
- **Habitat Hero** – for students who document their project and present it to peers or community

Bee (Pollinator Planter)

- Goal: Plant 20' x 20' native pollinator patch
- Location: School grounds, backyard, solar buffer fringe

Bluebird (Bluebird Link)

- Goal: Create 15' native buffer with shrubs and grasses
- Location: Edge of lawn, church lot, field border

Bobolink (Meadow Manager)

- Goal: Convert 1/4 acre to no-mow grassland
- Location: Mowed field, vacant lot, pasture edge

Meadowlark (Songbird Steward)

- Goal: Add perching posts, manage 1/2 acre rotationally
- Location: Open field, CREP zone, solar field interior

Rabbit (Brush Builder)

- Goal: Build brush pile and thicket
- Location: Woodlot edge, fencerow, behind barn

Quail (Covey Connector)

- Goal: Restore hedgerow/fencerow corridor
- Location: Between fields, along gravel drives

Pheasant (Pheasant Partner)

- Goal: Enroll 1+ acre in CREP or build full habitat block
- Location: Marginal soil, old field, pasture

Step 5: Document, Reflect, and Share

- Create **student habitat maps** and project journals
- Use **rubrics and exit tickets** to track effort and impact
- Host a **Habitat Hero Showcase** or write a column for the local paper
- Submit to **Pheasants Forever**, local conservation groups, or school board