



Fact Sheet

State Acres For wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Approved Projects II

Overview

On Feb. 21, 2008, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer and Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Teresa Lasseter announced the second round of projects to be approved under the new continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) conservation practice titled State Acres For wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), also known as CP38. Administrator Lasseter announced 30 projects, covering up to 160,100 acres, which benefit a wide variety of species that are endangered, threatened or high priority (species of concern) in 16 states. This fact sheet provides a brief summary of each project.

FSA approved SAFE proposals to address state and regional high-priority wildlife objectives. SAFE practices provide the flexibility to meet the specific needs of high-value wildlife species in a participating state or region. Conservation practices currently offered under CRP are fine-tuned through SAFE to improve, connect or create higher-quality habitat to promote healthier ecosystems in areas identified as essential to effective management of high-priority species. SAFE, like other continuous CRP practices, targets CRP acres to the most environmentally sensitive land and establishes the highest value conservation practices on generally smaller

acres. General sign-up CRP acreage, on the other hand, often enrolls whole fields and farms.

USDA's national goal is to restore or enhance 500,000 acres of wildlife habitat through SAFE. USDA unveiled the SAFE practice in March 2007. USDA unveiled the first approved SAFE projects in January 2008. That announcement featured 45 projects in 18 states, encompassing close to 260,000 acres.

FSA state and/or local offices will announce sign-up for SAFE in the near future and conduct sign-up on a continuous (ongoing) basis. Through continuous CRP sign-up, USDA accepts year-round producer offers, provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. Producers can offer land for enrollment in SAFE and other CRP programs at their local FSA service center. Service center locations are available online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> by clicking on "State Offices."

Producers within a SAFE area can submit offers to voluntarily enroll acres in CRP contracts for 10-15 years (the contract length depends on the SAFE proposal authorized for the area). In exchange, producers receive annual CRP rental payments, incentives and cost-share assistance to establish habitat-enhancing natural covers on eligible land.

Producers enrolling in CRP enter into contracts with USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). FSA administers CRP on behalf of CCC.

Alabama

Alabama Black Belt Prairie Restoration SAFE

The goal of the Alabama Black Belt Prairie Restoration SAFE project is to enroll 2,500 acres in CRP to improve native grassland habitats for rare, threatened, endangered and declining species that are dependent on native prairie communities found within the Black Belt Prairie region of Alabama. The Alabama Black Belt Prairie Restoration SAFE complements a similar project in Mississippi. A bird-monitoring plan will be implemented to measure bird response to SAFE practices. Butterfly communities will also be monitored and both bird and butterfly populations will be monitored for at least three years after fields are enrolled.

Arkansas

Arkansas Wetlands SAFE

The goal of the Arkansas Wetlands SAFE project is to enroll 4,000 acres in CRP to benefit targeted species to include the bald eagle, American black bear, American black duck and the Mississippi kite. In addition, many species on Arkansas' list

of greatest conservation concern in the State Wildlife Action Plan, including habitat needs related to the ivory-billed woodpecker, will benefit from this habitat restoration. Examples of habitats to be restored include shallow water (emergent) and wetland forested habitat for a host of species such as migratory waterfowl, neo-tropical migrant songbirds, resident wood ducks, shorebirds, wading birds, and many species of amphibians and reptiles that utilize these habitat types.

Arkansas Trees SAFE

The goal of the Arkansas Trees SAFE project is to enroll 2,000 acres in CRP to restore trees, primarily hardwoods, to create habitat that will benefit the following species: American woodcock, swallow-tailed kite, bald eagle and American black bear. Other species that will potentially benefit from this SAFE are on Arkansas' species of greatest conservation concern list in the State Wildlife Action Plan. This project will also provide recreational opportunities to include hunting, hiking, wildlife photography, bird watching and nature viewing.

Arkansas Grass SAFE

The goal of the Arkansas Grass SAFE project is to enroll 3,700 acres in CRP to restore early successional habitat that will benefit bobwhite quail as the focused species. In addition, another 53 species on Arkansas' list of greatest conservation concern in the State Wildlife Action Plan will potentially benefit from this

SAFE. Many songbird species, such as grasshopper sparrows, painted buntings, dickcissels and Henslow's sparrows will benefit from this SAFE. This project will also provide recreational opportunities to include hunting, hiking, wildlife photography, bird watching and nature viewing.

Illinois

Illinois Spoon River SAFE

The goal of the Illinois Spoon River SAFE project is to enroll 1,500 acres in CRP to enhance habitat primarily for pheasants. Other upland game and song bird species will also benefit from the increased acreage of habitat, thus providing increased economic and recreational opportunities. This will be accomplished by seeding mixtures for grasses and forbs as well as other plantings based upon the recommendations of Illinois Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologists and Pheasants Forever.

Illinois Sangamon SAFE

The goal of the Illinois Sangamon SAFE project is to enroll 2,000 acres in CRP in Sangamon County, Ill., to benefit northern bobwhite quail and many other grassland species, including four state listed species: the northern harrier, Franklin's ground squirrel, Kirtland's water snake and the lined snake. The project will restore grassland and forest areas. It will also improve water quality through reduction in soil erosion, sediment, pesticides and nutrient runoff in the 170,000-acre Lake Springfield Watershed.

Indiana

Indiana Bat SAFE

The goal of the Indiana Bat SAFE project is to enroll 2,100 acres in CRP to restore forest habitat and forested riparian habitat for the Indiana Bat which occurs throughout the state and is a federally listed endangered species. More specifically, the project seeks to increase connectivity between existing forested tracts and restore summer habitat in bottomland and riparian forests.

Indiana Northern Bobwhite SAFE

The goal of the Indiana Northern Bobwhite SAFE project is to enroll 3,875 acres in CRP to restore grassland and shrubland habitats for the northern bobwhite quail. This species has declined significantly throughout the state, as well as the Midwest, and is of significant social and economic value to the people of Indiana. More specifically, the project will work to restore grassland habitat for bobwhite quail and maintain the cover in a diversity of successional stages and vegetation structure that meets the bobwhite quail's nesting and brood-rearing requirements. Project coordinators will accomplish this through an increased use of applied management activities (i.e. prescribed burning, strip disking and strip spraying) over the life of the contract.

Indiana Henslow's Sparrow SAFE

The goal of the Indiana Henslow's Sparrow SAFE project is to

enroll 3,875 acres in CRP to restore grassland habitat for the Henslow's sparrow which is at-risk and has suffered significant declines throughout the state and Midwest. More specifically, the project will restore grassland habitat and maintain the cover in a diversity of successional stages and vegetation structure that meets the nesting and brood rearing requirements of the Henslow's sparrow as well as other grassland songbirds. This will be accomplished by increased use of applied management activities over the life of the contract.

Indiana Sedge Wren/Grasshopper Sparrow SAFE

The goal of the Indiana Sedge Wren/Grasshopper Sparrow SAFE project is to enroll 3,250 acres in CRP to restore wetland and grassland complexes as migratory habitat for shorebirds and nesting habitat for the sedge wren and grasshopper sparrow. Their populations are at-risk and have suffered significant declines. Indiana is a significant migratory corridor for these species.

Kansas**Kansas Upland Game Birds SAFE**

The goal of the Kansas Upland Game Birds SAFE project is to improve populations of bobwhite quail and other grassland-associated wildlife by creating nesting/brood-rearing habitat on portions of crop fields. This SAFE effort will establish and maintain 30,100 acres in CRP consisting of diverse native grass and forb

cover. Quail, pheasant and other grassland birds are species that will benefit from SAFE enrollments. Priority will be given to using SAFE to complement local efforts, and project coordinators expect upland birds should respond within the first year it's established. Acres enrolled in the SAFE project will also provide water quality benefits and reduce soil erosion.

Kentucky**Kentucky Early Successional and Bottomland Hardwood SAFE**

The goal of the Kentucky Early Successional and Bottomland Hardwood Restoration SAFE project is to enroll 8,600 acres in CRP to benefit the northern bobwhite quail, which is a species that has suffered significant population decline throughout the state and is of significant social and economic value to the people of Kentucky. More specifically, the project will restore grassland habitats for bobwhite quail and maintain the cover in a diversity of successional stages and vegetation structure that meets the bobwhite quail's nesting and brood-rearing requirements by increased use of applied management activities (prescribed burning, strip disking, strip spraying, and inter-seeding native forbs).

Louisiana**Louisiana Gulf Coast Prairies SAFE**

The goal of the Louisiana Gulf Coast Prairies SAFE project is to

enroll 3,500 acres in CRP to restore grassland and shallow water habitats in the Gulf Coast Prairies region of Louisiana. Grasslands and seasonal wetlands are valuable during winter and breeding periods to mottled duck, northern bobwhite, Attwater greater prairie-chicken, short-eared owl, Henslow's sparrow, Le Conte's sparrow, Sprague's pipit and numerous other bird species whose populations are currently declining or otherwise are of special conservation concern.

Louisiana Bayou Bartholomew SAFE

The goal of the Louisiana Bayou Bartholomew SAFE project is to identify, protect and restore critical examples of quality mussel and bald eagle habitat known to occur in the Bayou Bartholomew Watershed by enrolling 1,700 acres in CRP. The project will restore targeted areas to bottomland hardwood, native grasses and riparian buffers. Targeted species include pink mucket pearly mussel, bald eagle, red-cockaded woodpecker and Louisiana black bear. Numerous plants and fish species will benefit from this project as well.

Missouri**Missouri Bobwhite Quail SAFE**

The goal of the Missouri Bobwhite Quail SAFE project is to enroll 6,250 acres in CRP to provide nesting and brood-rearing habitat necessary for bobwhite quail. The project will provide and maintain 25 percent of bare ground for quail brood-rearing, which research has shown is needed to

sustain optimum bobwhite quail populations. The combination of techniques used in this practice have also been shown to benefit pollinator species and bird species of conservation concern such as loggerhead shrike, Henslow's sparrow, Bell's vireo, field sparrow and dickcissel.

Missouri Sand Grassland SAFE

The goal of the Missouri Sand Grassland SAFE project is to enroll 6,250 acres in CRP to restore sand prairie, sand woodland and sand savannas in specific land-type associations in Southeast Missouri with unique sandy soils, benefiting state endangered and state species of conservation concern, including the Illinois chorus frog, eastern spadefoot toad and northern bobwhite.

Missouri Nesting Habitat SAFE

The goal of the Missouri Nesting Habitat SAFE project is to enroll 6,700 acres in CRP within six Missouri Conservation Opportunity Areas to significantly increase available nesting habitat to benefit the state endangered greater prairie-chicken and other grassland-dependent birds.

New Jersey**New Jersey Grassland SAFE**

The goal of the New Jersey Grassland SAFE project is to enroll 400 acres in CRP to benefit rare and declining grassland-dependent birds across New Jersey, such as bobolink, vesper sparrow, eastern meadowlark, northern bobwhite quail, grasshopper and savannah sparrows, and upland

sandpiper. The project will restore native warm-season grassland habitat on row crop fields and maintain the fields through scheduled mowing outside of the bird nesting season. The project includes restoration of wetlands, creation of vernal (springtime) pools for breeding amphibians and tree planting along riparian corridors. Small wetlands provide important stop-over grounds for migrating waterfowl looking for a place to rest and feed. Shallow wetlands are used by sora and bitterns, dragonflies and damselflies, pollinators, herptiles and a variety of mammals. Vernal pools in agricultural settings offer breeding habitat for spotted salamanders, wood frogs, spring peepers, American toads and the rarer Jefferson and marbled salamanders where conditions are suitable. Planting trees along water corridors helps to keep aquatic temperatures cool and oxygen levels high for the insects and animals that live within. Trees also provide an extra habitat buffer for animals like the clean-stream-centric long-tailed salamander and wood turtle, both listed as threatened species in New Jersey.

New Jersey Raritan-Piedmont SAFE

The goal of the New Jersey Raritan-Piedmont SAFE project is to enroll 300 acres in CRP to benefit grassland birds by protecting and restoring habitat. This project furthers the goals of the New Jersey State Wildlife Action Plan for grassland bird species in this area as well as providing a model of public and private partnership

for cooperative management of public and private land. This project seeks to restore 300 acres of grassland habitat in five years and provide annual management of land through the life of the project.

New Jersey Agricultural Heritage SAFE

The goal of the New Jersey Agricultural Heritage SAFE project is to enroll 300 acres in CRP to benefit grassland nesting birds by restoring native warm- and cool-season grasslands embedded within large agricultural landscapes. Species utilizing riparian habitats will experience improved corridors for migration, foraging and mating (such as wood turtles) as well as improved water quality through cessation of erosion and agricultural run-off. Amphibians, migratory birds, reptiles and waterfowl utilizing vernal pools and other wetlands will also benefit. Grasslands will be planted in native species of vegetation or suitable cool-season grass cover. Prescribed burns and maintenance mowing will commence on established sites within three years (starting in 2011) with approximately one-third of each site mowed or burned per year. This project will further the goals of the NJ Wildlife Action Plan by implementing habitat restoration activities in targeted focal areas, including Important Bird Areas.

New Mexico**New Mexico Lesser Prairie Chicken SAFE**

The goal of the New Mexico Lesser Prairie Chicken SAFE

project is to enroll 2,600 acres in CRP in the eastern part of the state to benefit the lesser prairie chicken by restoring native grasslands for breeding and brood-rearing. In eastern New Mexico, this bird and other species have been petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Priority will be given to sites within five miles of a known prairie chicken mating area. Project organizers will conduct monitoring and bird surveys.

New York

New York Grassland SAFE

The goal of the New York Grassland SAFE project is to enroll 4,900 acres in CRP to benefit grassland birds such as the grasshopper sparrow, Vesper's sparrow, Henslow's sparrow, eastern meadowlark, horned lark, northern harrier, savannah sparrow, sedge wren, upland sandpiper, bobolink, short-eared owl and barn owl. This SAFE will provide additional significant benefits along with protection and management of grassland habitat, including stream buffers to protect and safeguard water quality. Wetland buffers will help maintain habitat integrity and water quality, as well as flood and drought mitigation functions. The project will also maintain open space and rural character.

Ohio

Ohio Grassland and Wetland Complexes SAFE

The goal of the Ohio Grassland and Wetland Complexes SAFE project is to enroll up to 11,600

acres in CRP to benefit high priority species for Ohio, including Karner blue butterflies, frosted elfin butterflies, Henslow's sparrow, dickcissels, wood ducks, northern bobwhite quail and ring-necked pheasants. This project will work to restore and establish grassland and wetland complexes at priority focus areas throughout Ohio.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Mixed Grass Prairie SAFE

The goal of the Oklahoma Mixed Grass Prairie SAFE project is to enroll 15,100 acres in CRP to restore mixed-grass prairie type associations in Northwestern Oklahoma to benefit northern bobwhite, Cassin's sparrow and other grassland birds. In addition, this project will improve habitat suitability for a number of grassland species including Bell's vireo, lark sparrow and lesser prairie chicken. Habitat suitability will be improved locally at the field level and should help to address issues of fragmentation at the landscape level. This SAFE project will indirectly improve water and air quality, reduce soil erosion and provide hunting and nature viewing opportunities.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Seasonal Pools/Early Successional/Grass SAFE

The goal of the Pennsylvania Seasonal Pools/Early Successional/Grass SAFE project is to enroll 5,200 acres in CRP to improve habitat for and populations of sensitive wildlife identified

in the Pennsylvania State Wildlife Action Plan. This includes seasonal pool, early successional and native grassland habitats for spring breeding amphibians, shrub nesting birds and grassland nesting birds and mammals.

South Dakota

South Dakota Sagebrush SAFE

The goal of the South Dakota Sagebrush SAFE project is to enroll 500 acres in CRP to benefit the sage grouse population by restoring cropland to sagebrush habitat suitable for sage grouse and other sagebrush obligate birds such as sage sparrows and sage thrashers. Other sagebrush-associated wildlife will benefit such as sharp-tailed grouse, grey partridge, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sagebrush vole and other small mammals. One of the measurable outcomes will be to stabilize or increase the number of sage grouse leks (mating areas) and to increase the number of sage grouse in the project area.

South Dakota Pheasants SAFE

The goal of the South Dakota Pheasants SAFE project is to enroll 20,200 acres in CRP to provide block grass acreages for ring-necked pheasants and other upland birds in the form of nesting, brood-rearing, winter-roosting and escape cover. This will help increase the overall population of ring-necked pheasants and other economically significant species such as sharp tail grouse, prairie chicken and upland nesting ducks. It will also develop habitat for non-game grassland birds,

improve water quality and reduce soil erosion.

Tennessee

Tennessee Wetlands SAFE

The goal of the Tennessee Wetlands SAFE project is to enroll 500 acres in CRP to restore high quality wetlands habitat that will provide high quality breeding, feeding and winter habitats necessary to waterfowl, shorebirds, amphibians, reptiles, crustaceans and other wetlands wildlife. Habitat gained through these SAFE options will help Tennessee meet goals identified in the North American Waterfowl Plan, the Partners In Flight – North American Landbird Conservation Plan, Tennessee's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) and the Southeast U.S. Waterbird Conservation Plan. While these practices will benefit a wide variety of species, the key at-risk species anticipated on monitoring surveys include the crawfish frog (statewide), barking tree frog and Southern cricket frog (west Tennessee), barking tree-frog (middle Tennessee), mountain chorus frog and gray tree frog (Plateau and east Tennessee).

Tennessee Trees SAFE

The goal of the Tennessee Trees SAFE project is to enroll 600 acres in CRP to establish high quality bottomland hardwoods on wetlands that are important not only for waterfowl but eventually (upon greater maturity) for many forest-dependent songbirds, amphibians and reptiles. Habitat restored through this SAFE option will help Tennessee meet habi-

tat goals identified in the North American Waterfowl Plan, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative and the State Wildlife Action Plan. Bottomland hardwoods provide habitat for an incredibly wide range of wildlife. Key wildlife species that are anticipated to benefit from bottomland hardwoods once they reach full stand maturity include the cerulean warbler, Mississippi kite, Rafinesque's big-eared bats, southeastern bats and potentially the ivory-billed woodpecker in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley.

Tennessee Grass SAFE

The goal of the Tennessee Grass SAFE project is to enroll 6,000 acres in CRP to develop critical habitats that will provide high-quality nesting, brood-rearing and protective woody cover and winter habitats necessary for bobwhite quail and other declining wildlife species that depend on native "early successional" type habitats and travel corridors between habitat blocks. Habitat gained through these SAFE options will help Tennessee meet habitat goals and needs identified in the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, Partners In Flight – North American Landbird Conservation Plan, Tennessee's State Wildlife Action Plan, and Mississippi Alluvial Valley, East Gulf Coastal Plain, and Central Hardwoods joint ventures. Key declining grassland bird species anticipated to benefit from this practice include bobwhite quail, field sparrow, eastern meadowlark, loggerhead shrike and dickcissel.

For More Information

For more information about FSA and its conservation programs, visit your local FSA service center or online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

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