

Fact Sheet

March 2008

Parts of Dane, Green, Iowa and Lafayette Counties

Southwest Wisconsin Grassland Area SAFE



Overview

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, is offering a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice tailored to provide enhanced habitat for bobolinks, eastern meadowlarks, grasshopper sparrow, Henslow's sparrow, and ring-necked pheasant. This practice, established through FSA's State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) initiative, is available to eligible participants in parts of Dane, Iowa, Green, and Lafayette counties.

Goals

The goal of this project is to restore and maintain grassland a prairie habitat for bird species of greatest conservation need in Wisconsin. This area harbors an extraordinary density of original prairie remnants, outstanding populations of grassland birds, and the headwaters of numerous rivers.



▲ Bobolink

Practice Specifications

SAFE practices include establishment of cool season grasses, warm season grasses, and prairie restorations. Grass that is currently existing that meets CRP eligibility requirements may also be accepted.

A large variety of seed mix options are provided to produce a broad spectrum of habitat for the species of focus in this project.

Land Eligibility

To be eligible for placement in a SAFE CRP practice, land must be:

- Cropland (including field margins) that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity 4 of the previous 6 crop years from 1996 to 2001
- Physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity
- Located within the state designated SAFE area
- A maximum of 4,000 acres in the designated counties are available for this project.
- Land need not be determined highly erodible for enrollment.

Participant Eligibility

CRP participants must have:

- Owned or operated the land for the previous 12 months, some exceptions may apply
- An average adjusted gross income of less than \$2.5 million unless 75% or more of income is from farming, ranching, or forestry operations



▲ Henslow's Sparrow

CRP Payments

Participants are eligible for four types of USDA payments:

- Signing Incentive Payment– A one-time payment of \$100 per acre. USDA makes this payment within 30 days after the contract has been approved
- Annual rental payments based on the relative productivity of the soils within the offered area and the average dryland cash-rent or cash-rent equivalent, including a maintenance payment
- Cost share assistance of 50 percent for installing the practice on contracted land
- Practice Incentive Payment– Approximately 40 percent of the total cost for establishing the practice

Management

Participants are required to perform mid-contract management activities. These activities serve to increase the diversity of the habitat during the contract life-span. This could include disking, mowing, burning, herbicide application, and interseeding. A 50% cost-share payment is paid in the year the management is performed.

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement

Monitoring and Compliance

Monitoring

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will complete monitoring activities for all SAFE practices. These reviews will determine the success of the practice in accomplishing the stated goals. Annual reports will be submitted to the National FSA Office. Monitoring for goal success is separate and distinct from participant compliance obligations.

Compliance

SAFE practices are implemented through the Farm Service Agency's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and are therefore subject to all CRP regulations, including but not limited to:

- Control of noxious weeds
- Control of any vegetation not prescribed by the conservation plan
- Establishment and maintenance of the cover as stipulated by the contract and conservation plan
- Adherence to primary nesting season policies (May 15—August 1)



▲ Grasshopper Sparrow

For More Information

For more information about this program, contact your USDA Service Center:

Dane County
608-224-3767

Iowa County
608-935-2791

Green County
608-325-4195

Lafayette County
608-776-4028

Partnering Agencies and

US Department of Agriculture

- Farm Service Agency
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Southwest Badger RC&D

US Department of the Interior

- Fish and Wildlife Service

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

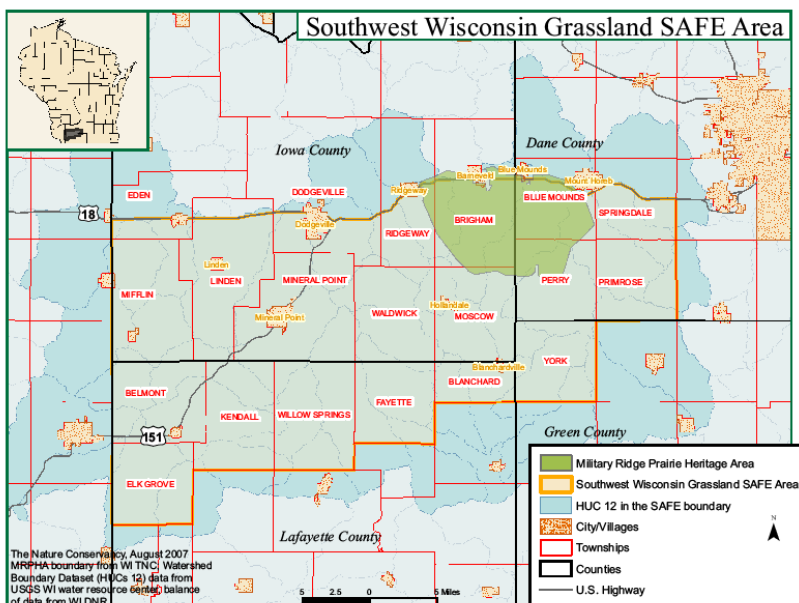
Land Conservation Departments

The Nature Conservancy

Pheasants Forever

The Prairie Enthusiasts

Driftless Area Land Conservancy



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