

South Dakota Western Grassland Wildlife Habitat SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and Pheasants Forever, Inc. are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in the western half of the state. The purpose of the South Dakota Western Grassland Wildlife Habitat SAFE is to provide breeding, nesting, brood rearing, winter, and foraging habitat for sharp-tailed grouse, short-eared owls, and grasshopper sparrows.

Background

SAFE is part of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP is a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with landowners and agricultural producers to establish and manage vegetative covers that control soil erosion, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat.

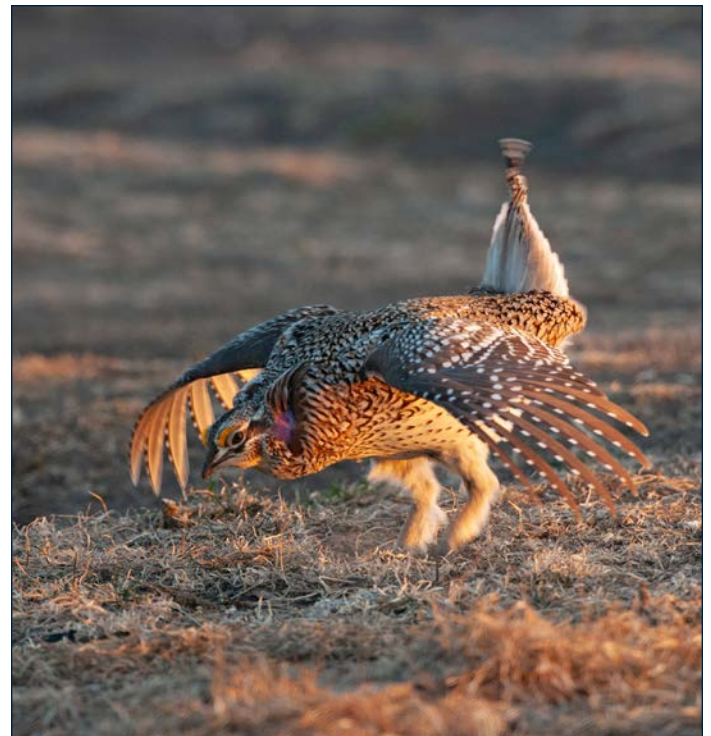
SAFE is a unique type of CRP that offers organizations the opportunity to partner with the USDA to establish habitat for high-priority wildlife species on agricultural land. SAFE sponsors work with the USDA to identify the wildlife species, the vegetative cover that provides habitat for the target species, and the location in the state where the habitat is needed. A partnership is formed between the SAFE sponsor and the USDA, and federal funds are made available to allow for CRP enrollment on eligible land within the SAFE project location.

Target Wildlife Species

The goal of the South Dakota Western Grassland Wildlife Habitat SAFE project is to provide habitat for sharp-tailed grouse, short-eared owls, and grasshopper sparrows. These birds are important to South Dakota because their populations are declining primarily due to grassland loss and fragmentation. They prefer to nest in tall, dense cover such as is typically provided by CRP and are of high or moderate conservation priority in South Dakota.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in South Dakota Western Grassland Wildlife Habitat SAFE are required to develop a conservation plan with assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or a technical service provider. The conservation plan will provide details on how to plant, establish, and manage habitat for sharp-tailed grouse, short-eared owls, and grasshopper sparrows. The habitat being established is grassland and wetland vegetation. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed according to a plan which may include Mechanical Disturbance, Prescribed Burning, Non-emergency Grazing, Non-emergency Haying, Inter-seeding, or a combination of more than one of these activities. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for sharp-tailed grouse, short-eared owls, and grasshopper sparrows.



Project Location

The South Dakota Western Grassland Wildlife Habitat SAFE project is located in Bennett, Butte, Corson, Custer, Dewey, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Lawrence, Meade, Mellette, Oglala Lakota, Pennington, Perkins, Todd, and Ziebach counties.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38B-23 Wetland Restoration
- ◆ CP38B-23A Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain
- ◆ CP38B-27 Farmable Wetlands
- ◆ CP38B-28 Farmable Wetland Buffer
- ◆ CP38B-37 Duck Nesting Habitat
- ◆ CP38E-1 Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes
- ◆ CP38E-2 Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- ◆ CP38E-4D Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- ◆ CP38E-12 Wildlife Food Plot
- ◆ CP38E-18B Establishment of Permanent Vegetation to Reduce Salinity
- ◆ CP38E-18C Establishment of Permanent Salt Tolerant Vegetative Cover
- ◆ CP38E-25 Rare and Declining Habitat
- ◆ CP38E-42 Pollinator Habitat

Haying and Grazing

Haying and grazing is allowed according to CRP emergency and non-emergency policies and as defined in an approved conservation plan, with emergency haying always restricted to 50% of the acreage.

Eligibility Requirements

Because SAFE is part of CRP, certain land and participant eligibility rules apply. To begin with, land must be in the project area and meet cropping history. CRP participant eligibility rules also apply to SAFE.

Payments and Incentives

In exchange for participation in CRP SAFE, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with annual per acre rental payments, cost-share to assist with habitat establishment expenses, and in some cases additional monetary incentives.

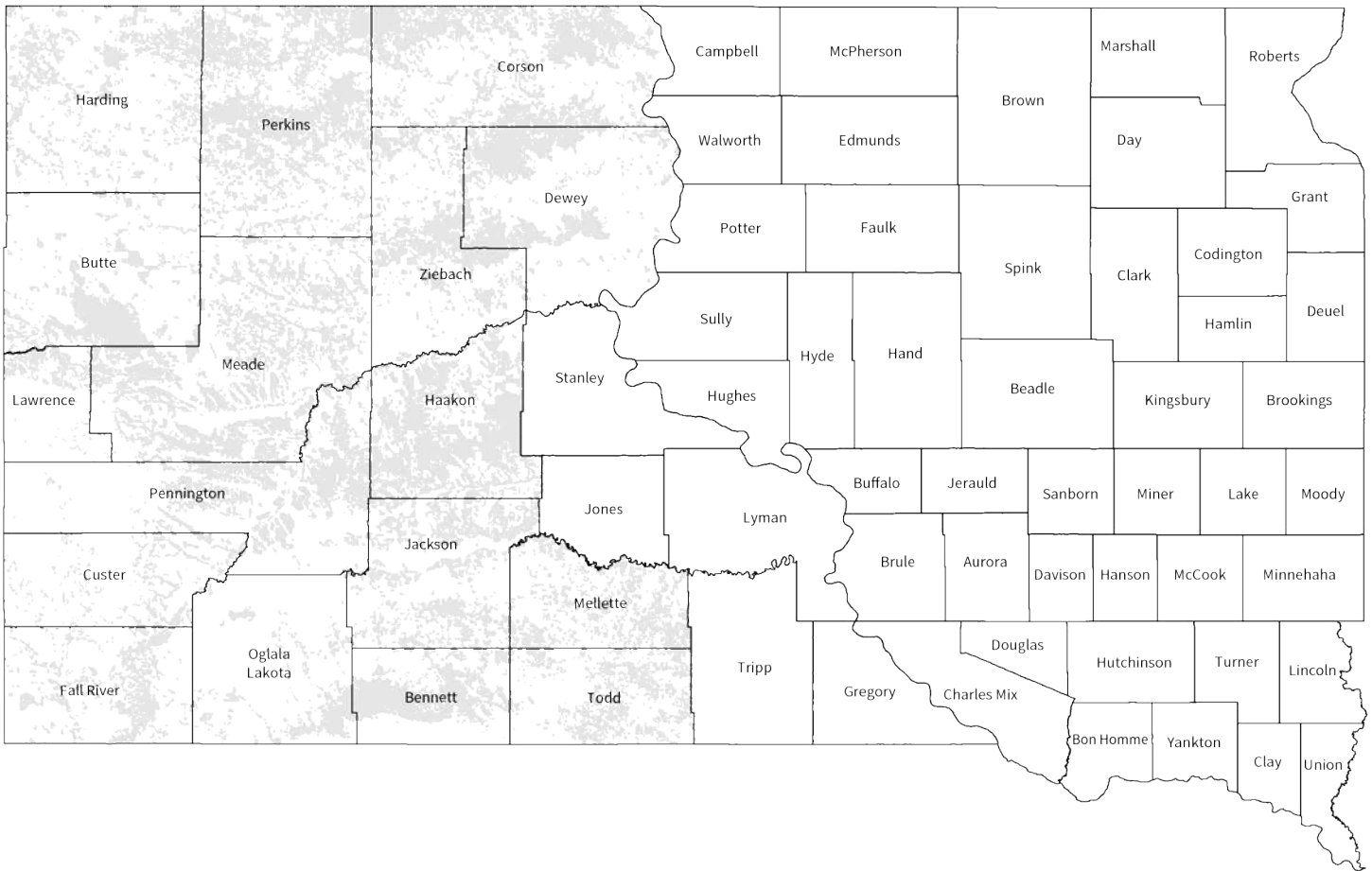
For More Information

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. Consult your local FSA office for details. For more information, contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: farmers.gov/service-locator.




Photo by Mark Norton, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

South Dakota Habitat for Pheasants SAFE Project Map



Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  South Dakota Western Grassland Wildlife Habitat SAFE Project Area