

South Carolina Northern Bobwhite and Other Land Birds Habitat SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in thirty one Counties covering all the Pee Dee Region, some counties along the Coast, Low Country, and Mid-lands areas of South Carolina. The purpose of the South Carolina Northern Bobwhite and Other Land Birds Habitat SAFE is designed to incentivize the restoration of habitat for bobwhite quail and associated grassland birds on cropland.

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 Carolina Northern Bobwhite and Other Land Birds Habitat SAFE project is to provide habitat for Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), Bachman's Sparrow (*Aimophila aestivalis*), Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*), and Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*). The Northern Bobwhite, Bachman's Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Field Sparrow, and Prairie Warbler are important to South Carolina because all of these species have experienced long-term population declines documented by the North American Breeding Bird Survey.

They are also listed as "Highest" or "High" Conservation Priority in the South Carolina State Wildlife Action Plan. Additionally, restoration of the Northern Bobwhite is prioritized by the National Bobwhite and Grasslands Initiative (NBGI), the 25 state "unified strategy for the restoration of wild quail," and the underlying South Carolina Bobwhite Initiative.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in South Carolina Northern Bobwhite and Other Land Birds 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 Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), Bachman's Sparrow (*Aimophila aestivalis*), Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*), and Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*). The habitat being established is early successional native grassland/shrub-scrub that is required for all life stages of the target species. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by Prescribed Burning, Interseeding/Overseeding, Tree Thinning/Pruning, and/or Strip Spray Herbicide. Management activities must be completed outside the primary nesting season, which is April 1 to September 1. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for Northern Bobwhite, Bachman's Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Field Sparrow, and Prairie Warbler.



Photo by South Carolina Bobwhite Initiative — South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)

Project Location

The South Carolina Northern Bobwhite and Other Land Birds Habitat SAFE project location is Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Edgefield, Florence, Greenwood, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Kershaw, Laurens, Lee, Lexington, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Newberry, Orangeburg, Saluda, Sumter, Union, and Williamsburg counties.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38A – Buffers
- ◆ CP38C – Trees
- ◆ CP38D – Longleaf Pine
- ◆ CP38E – Grass

Haying and Grazing

Haying and Grazing are not permitted on any of the CRP SAFE Practices in South Carolina.

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.

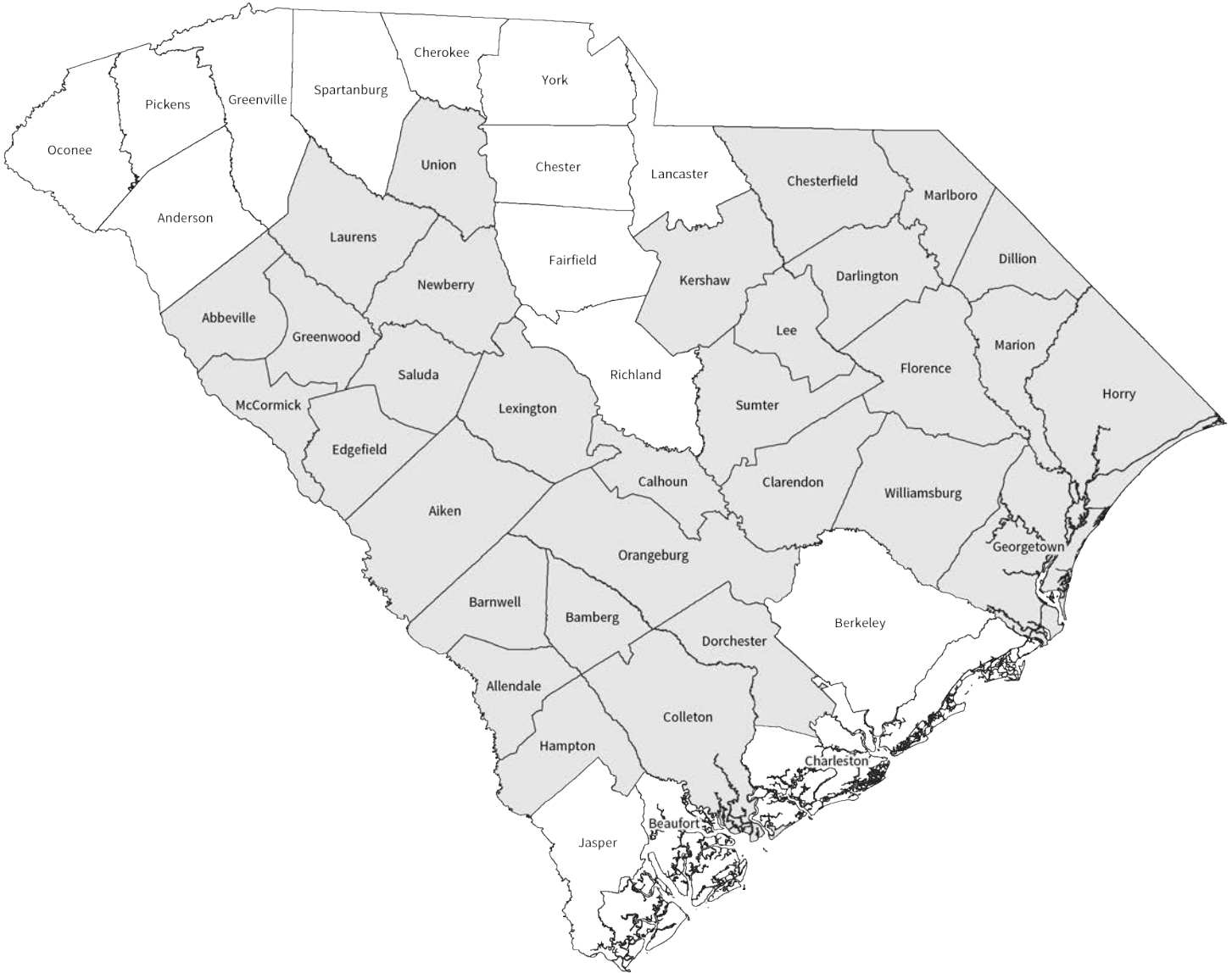
For More Information

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 South Carolina Quail Forever, Inc.

South Carolina Northern Bobwhite and Other Land Birds Habitat SAFE Project Map



Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  South Carolina Northern Bobwhite and Other Land Birds Habitat SAFE Project Area