

Washington Ferruginous Hawk SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife are partnering on a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in portions of Adams, Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties in Washington, focusing on recently active ferruginous hawk nesting territories. The project's purpose is to conserve shrubsteppe habitat at a landscape scale and increase connectivity between patches of native shrubsteppe habitat to benefit ferruginous hawk, burrowing owl, white-tailed and black-tailed jackrabbits, and Washington ground squirrel.

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 Washington Ferruginous Hawk SAFE project is to establish shrubsteppe habitat and increase jackrabbit and ground squirrel populations to provide prey for ferruginous hawks and burrowing owls. This work is vital to conserving, connecting, and enhancing the remaining shrubsteppe habitat in the region to benefit the Ferruginous hawk, a state endangered species.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in Washington Ferruginous Hawk SAFE are required to develop a conservation plan with assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service or a technical service provider. The conservation plan will provide details on how to plant, establish, and manage habitat for ferruginous hawk and other shrubsteppe dependent species. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by activities such as herbicide and mechanical weed treatments, light disking, rotary clipping, prescribed burning, harrowing, and inter-seeding to create plant diversity for the benefit of wildlife and enhancement of the permanent cover. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for ferruginous hawk and other shrubsteppe dependent species.



Photos by Larry Umthun

Project Location

Project locations include portions of Adams, Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties, and focuses on recently active ferruginous hawk nesting territories. These counties were designated as the general project region because they encompass most of Washington's critical existing ferruginous hawk habitat.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38A-22, SAFE Riparian Forest Buffer (MPL not eligible for this SAFE project)
- ◆ CP38E-4D, SAFE Permanent Wildlife Habitat, non-easement

Haying and Grazing

Although the 2018 Farm Bill allows haying and grazing on all CRP practices, haying, and grazing are not allowed on any Washington State SAFE practices.

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 Larry Umthun

Washington Ferruginous Hawk SAFE Project Map



Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  Washington Ferruginous Hawk SAFE Project Area