

Idaho Upland Game Bird SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Idaho Department of Fish and Game are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in 11 counties in North and Western Idaho. The purpose of the Idaho Upland Game Bird SAFE is to increase quality grassland, shrub steppe, mountain brush, and riparian habitat for upland game birds.

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 Idaho Upland Game Bird SAFE project is to provide habitat for California Quail, Ring-necked Pheasant, Hungarian Partridge, native Sage Grouse, and native Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse. These target wildlife species are important to Idaho because they are species of significant social and economic value to the community as well as the grouse species are species of greatest conservation need according to Idaho's State Wildlife Action Plan.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in Idaho Upland Game Bird 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 California Quail, Ring-necked Pheasant, Hungarian Partridge, native Sage Grouse, and native Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse. The habitat being established is a mixture of predominantly bunch grasses (native and /or introduced) with interspersed forbs, best suited for wildlife, as well as the opportunity to include shrubs. The required seeding mixes will provide quality nesting, brood rearing, and wintering habitat for the target species. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by conducting approved management activities such as grazing, mechanical and chemical disturbance and seeding to increase diversity of the stand. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for California Quail, Ring-necked Pheasant, Hungarian Partridge, native Sage Grouse, and native Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse.



Photo by Kourtney Stonehouse with Idaho Fish and Game

Project Location

The Idaho Upland Game Bird SAFE project location is in two distinct units separated by mountainous areas unsuitable for upland game bird habitat work on private lands. The north unit will be comprised of counties that support pheasant, Gray Partridge, and California Quail in Benewah, Clearwater, Idaho, Kootenai, Latah, Lewis, and Nez Perce counties. The south unit will lie in Adams, Gem, Payette, and Washington counties that support upland game birds with an emphasis on native Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse and Sage-Grouse.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38E-2, SAFE Native Grasses
- ◆ CP38E-4D, SAFE Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- ◆ CP38E-25, SAFE Rare and Declining Habitat
- ◆ CP38E-42, SAFE Pollinator Habitat

Haying and Grazing

- ◆ Grazing is allowed under all non-emergency provisions of CRP policy.
- ◆ Grazing is prohibited under emergency provisions according to CRP policy.
- ◆ Grazing as a gleaning activity may be conducted once in the fall of the first contract year before the cover is established.
- ◆ Haying of SAFE acres is not allowed.

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 Idaho Fish and Game

Idaho Upland Game Bird SAFE Project Map



Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  Idaho Upland Game Bird SAFE Project Area