

Oklahoma Habitat Restoration for Northern Bobwhite and Monarch Butterfly SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in 44 central and western Oklahoma counties. The purpose of the Oklahoma Habitat Restoration for Northern Bobwhite and Monarch Butterfly SAFE is to restore mixed-and tall-grass prairie type associations in western and central Oklahoma to benefit northern bobwhite, monarch butterfly, and other grassland obligate wildlife populations.

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 Oklahoma Habitat Restoration for Northern Bobwhite and Monarch Butterfly SAFE project is to provide habitat for grassland dependent wildlife, including northern bobwhite quail and monarch butterflies. These species are important to Oklahoma because each has suffered significant population declines and both play important economic and ecological roles.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in Oklahoma Habitat Restoration for Northern Bobwhite and Monarch Butterfly 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 and monarch butterflies. The habitats being established are diverse, native grass-forb habitats including mixed- and tallgrass prairie, sand sage/bluestem shrubland, and sand plum shrubland that provide important cover and critical foods for bobwhites and monarchs. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by controlling noxious weeds and either grazing, prescribed burning, strip disking, strip spraying, interseeding, or mowing to maintain plant diversity. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for northern bobwhite, monarch butterflies, and other grassland dependent species.



Project Location

The Oklahoma Habitat Restoration for Northern Bobwhite and Monarch Butterfly SAFE project is located in part or all of Alfalfa, Beaver, Beckham, Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Carter, Cleveland, Comanche, Cotton, Creek, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Garfield, Garvin, Grant, Greer, Harmon, Harper, Jackson, Jefferson, Kay, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Logan, Love, Major, McClain, Murray, Noble, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Osage, Pawnee, Payne, Roger Mills, Stephens, Texas, Tillman, Washita, Woods, Woodward counties.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

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

Haying and Grazing

Non-emergency grazing is eligible for mid-contract management. Furthermore, grazing may be used every other year under the guidance of the NRCS Conservation Plan and 2-CRP (Rev.6) to increase stand diversity and bare ground while abiding by NRCS' minimum grass height recommendation, except that an average minimum residual

grazing height of 6 inches will be maintained. Emergency grazing is allowable but must comply with the managed grazing standards outlined within the contract. Emergency grazing will count in the frequency at which grazing can occur. Haying will not be 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 Steven Hunter, Regional Plant Central

Oklahoma Habitat Restoration for Northern Bobwhite and Monarch Butterfly SAFE Project Map



Legend

 FSA County Boundary

 Oklahoma Habitat Restoration for Northern Bobwhite and Monarch Butterfly SAFE Project Area