

Virginia Longleaf Pine SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Virginia Department of Forestry are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in 25 counties in southeast Virginia. The purpose of the Virginia Longleaf Pine SAFE is to re-establish longleaf pine stands at densities that will provide critical habitat for wildlife species that have experienced sharp declines in population.

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 Virginia Longleaf Pine SAFE project is to provide habitat for Red-cockaded woodpeckers, Bachman's sparrows, and Northern bobwhite quail. Red-cockaded woodpeckers and Bachman's sparrows are important for Virginia as the northernmost location of the declining species' populations. The Northern bobwhite, once abundant across Virginia and still treasured by landowners, has vanished in many locations.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in the Virginia Longleaf Pine 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 Red-cockaded woodpeckers, Bachman's sparrows, and Northern Bobwhite quail. The habitat to be established consists of longleaf pine savannas characterized by large mature trees, open canopies, and abundant grass/forb ground covers. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by periodic prescribed burning. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for the targeted avian species.



Project Location

The Virginia Longleaf Pine SAFE project location includes the counties/cities of Accomack, Amelia, Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie/Petersburg City, Gloucester, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico/Richmond City, James City/Williamsburg City, King and Queen, King William, Lunenburg, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, New Kent, Northampton, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince George, Surry, Sussex, Virginia Beach and York/Poquoson City.

Note: The National CRP Longleaf Conservation Priority Area also includes the counties/cities of Brunswick, City of Chesapeake, Greenville, Isle of Wight, Southampton, and Suffolk which offers a comparable CP36 – Longleaf Pine Establishment practice.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38D-36, SAFE Longleaf Pine – Establishment

Haying and Grazing

Emergency and non-emergency haying and grazing are not authorized.

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.

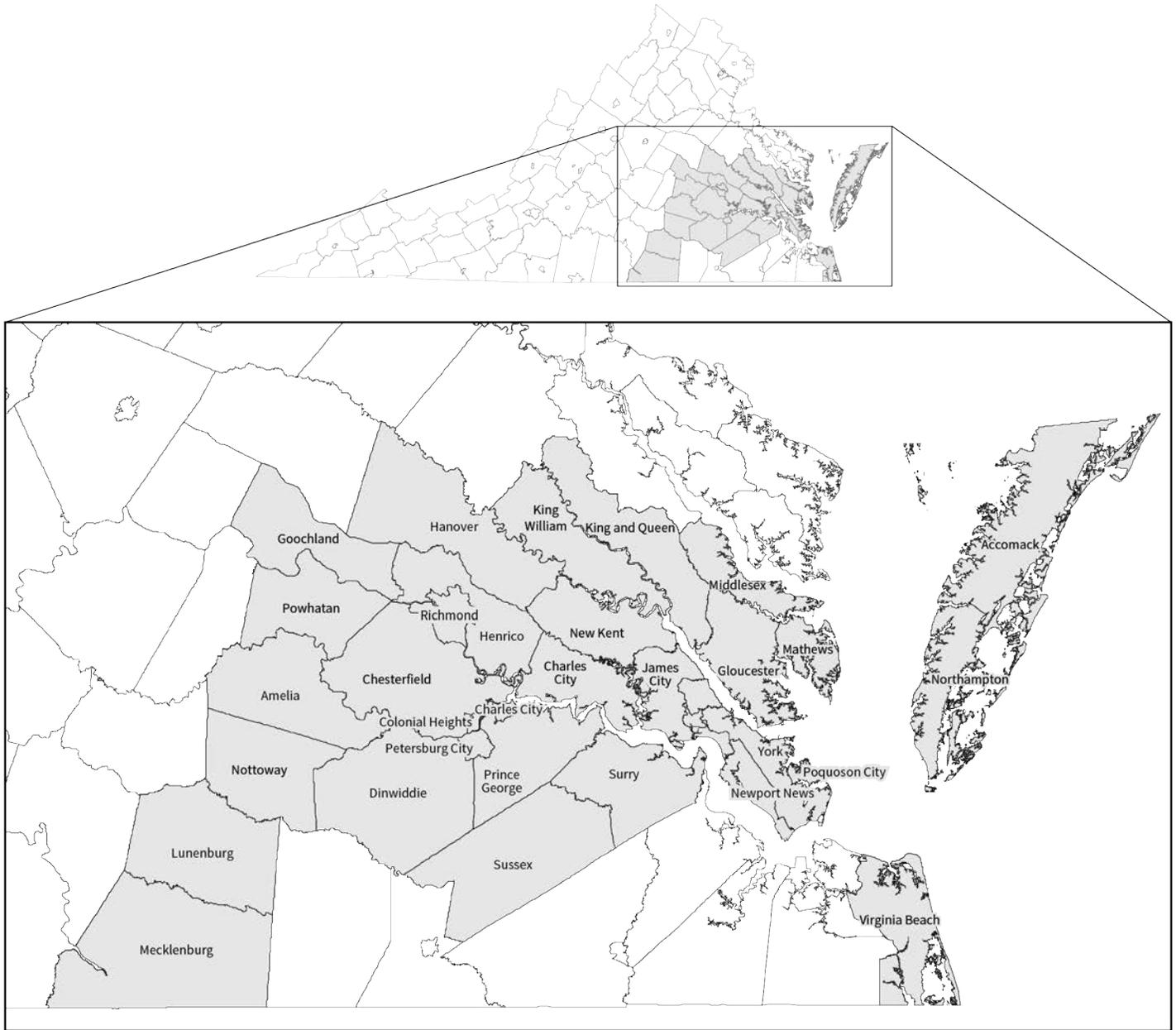
For More Information

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 Virginia NRCS

Virginia Longleaf Pine SAFE Project Map



Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  Virginia Longleaf Pine SAFE Project Area