

Mississippi Black Bear Habitat Restoration in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), The Nature Conservancy, and the Bear Education and Restoration Group of Mississippi are partners in implementing the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project. Our partner's goal is to encourage enrollment of agricultural land within the Black Bear Habitat Conservation Priority Areas as specified by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in Mississippi. The purpose of the Mississippi Black Bear Habitat Restoration in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley SAFE is to establish bottomland hardwood forests to support stable black bear populations by providing forage, den, and escape habitat needed by the black bear. These areas would also provide larger landscape-level habitat needs of black bear by establishing corridors between existing forest block and protected areas.

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 Mississippi Black Bear Habitat Restoration in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley SAFE project is to provide habitat for the Louisiana Black Bear and Eastern Black Bear. The Louisiana Black Bear and Eastern Black Bear are an integral part of Mississippi history. Native Americans used

the black bear as a source of food, clothing, and goods for trade with European traveler. Bear hunting became a popular sport in Mississippi, which is known for the Teddy Roosevelt's Hunt. Due to extensive deforestation and forest fragmentation in the 20th century led to significant population declines in the black bear population.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in the Mississippi Black Bear Habitation Restoration in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley 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 the Louisiana Black Bear and Eastern Black Bear. The habitat being established is Bottomland hardwood forests and semi-permanent wetlands. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by chemical or mechanical treatment to increase native bear forage openings, if desired, and to control undesirable species in planted areas. Areas can also be managed with prescribe burning or light disking to control woody vegetative and improve habitat conditions. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for Louisiana Black Bear and Eastern Black Bear.



Project Location

The Mississippi Black Bear Habitation Restoration in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley SAFE project location is located within the Black Bear Habitat Conservation Priority Areas in Adams, Bolivar, Carroll, Claiborne, Coahoma, Desoto, Grenada, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica, Warren, Washington, Wilkinson, and Yazoo counties.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38B-23, Wetland Restoration on Floodplain
- ◆ CP38B-23A, Wetland Restoration on Non-floodplain
- ◆ CP38C-3A, Bottomland Hardwood Trees
- ◆ CP38C-31, Bottomland Timber on Wetlands

Haying and Grazing

No haying or grazing 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

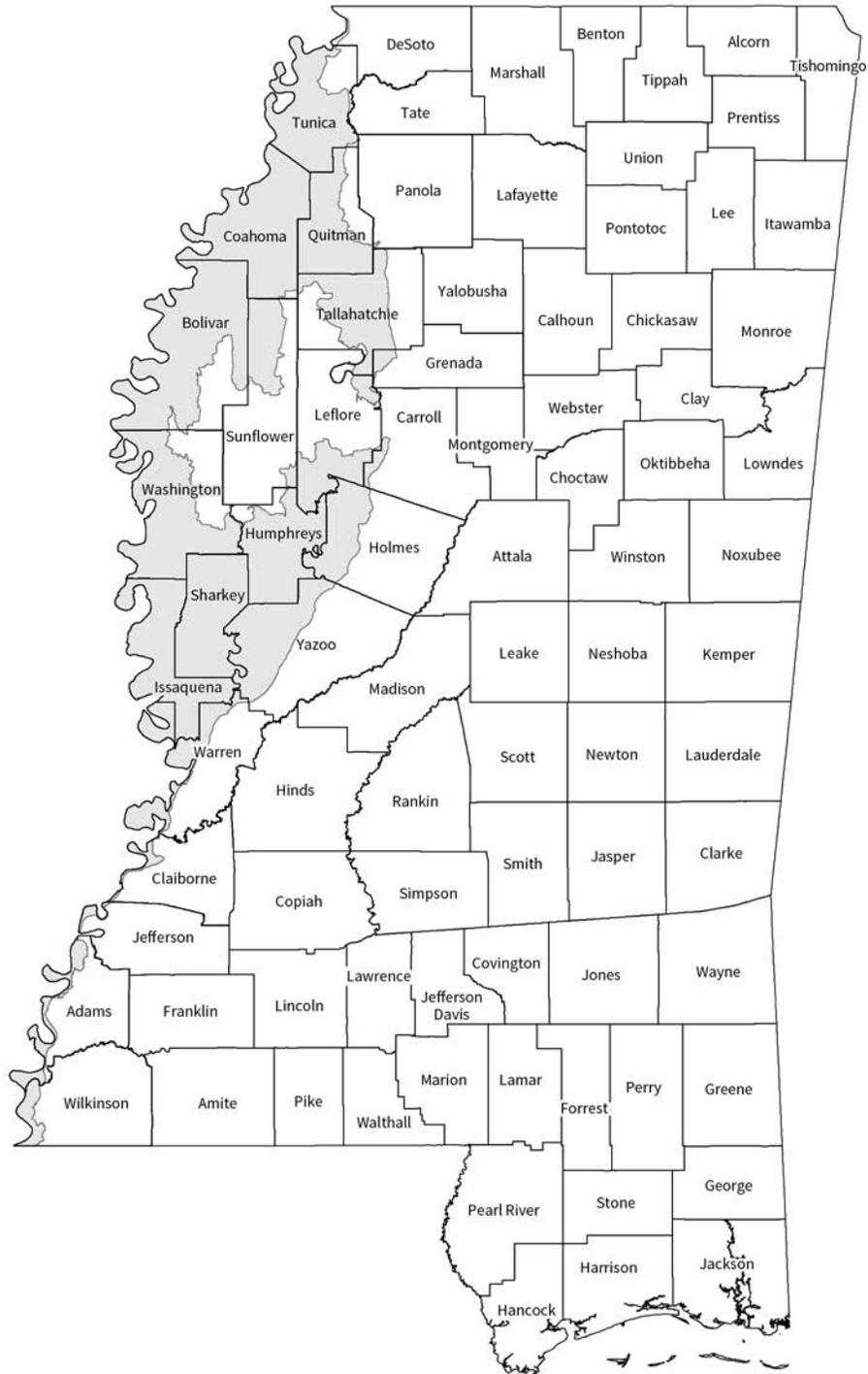
In exchange for participation in CRP SAFE, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with annual per acre rental payments, cost-share to assist with habitat establishment expenses, and in some cases additional monetary incentives.

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.



Mississippi Black Bear Habitat Restoration in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley SAFE Project Map



Legend

 FSA County Boundary

 Mississippi Black Bear Habitat Restoration in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley SAFE Project Area