



Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Program

Montana Pheasant Winter Cover Enhancement and Prairie Pothole State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

Fact Sheet
December 2020

Why Choose CRP State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement?

SAFE allows producers to establish native grasses, forbs and shrubs through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that benefit high priority State wildlife conservation objectives. The practices must be used to address wildlife habitat that can be enhanced through the restoration of eligible cropland through CRP.

MT Pheasant and Prairie Pothole SAFE Practices:

- CP38E - CP1 – Introduced Grasses and Legumes
- CP38E - CP2 – Native Grasses and Forbs
- CP38E - CP4D – Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- CP38E - CP12 – Wildlife Food Plot
- CP38A - CP22 – Riparian Buffers
- CP38B - CP23 – Wetland Restoration
- CP38B - CP23A – Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain
- CP38B - CP27 – Farmable Wetland
- CP38B - CP28 – Farmable Wetland Buffer
- CP38B - CP37 – Duck Nesting Habitat
- CP38E - CP42 – Pollinator Habitat
- CP38A - CP43 – Prairie Strips

Overview

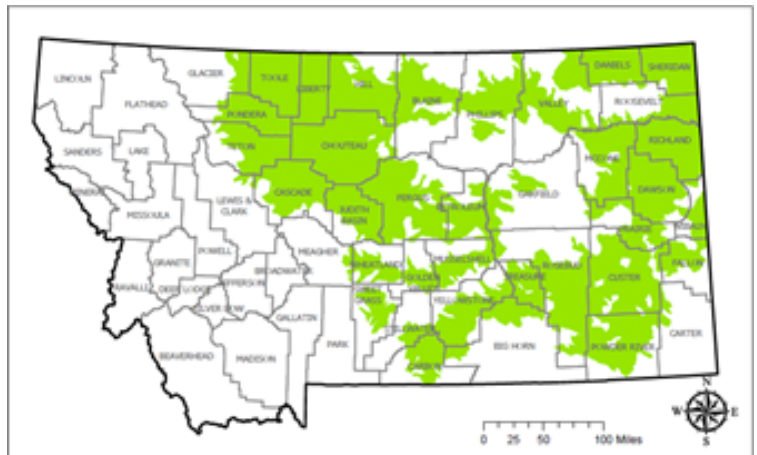
The purpose of the MT Pheasant Winter Cover and Prairie Pothole SAFE project is to:

- Provide blocks of grass and/or shrub cover for Ring-necked Pheasants and other upland birds near existing permanent winter cover;
- Expand habitats for waterfowl and shorebirds in areas of high wetland densities or adjacent to semi-permanent wetlands;
- Expand habitat for upland birds by converting eligible cropland to grassy cover;
- Improve water quality and reduce soil erosion;

- SAFE CRP acres will be designed with wildlife habitat as the first priority, which will provide, or be associated with all habitat needs (nesting, brood rearing, winter roosting, and escape cover) for upland game birds.

Project Area

Portions of the following counties are in the Montana Pheasant Winter Cover Enhancement and Prairie Pothole Project Area: Big Horn, Blaine, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Meagher, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux and Yellowstone.



Partnership

The MT Pheasant Winter Cover and Prairie Pothole SAFE project is a cooperative effort between the following agencies and organizations in Montana: USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, landowners, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever.

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Eligible Land

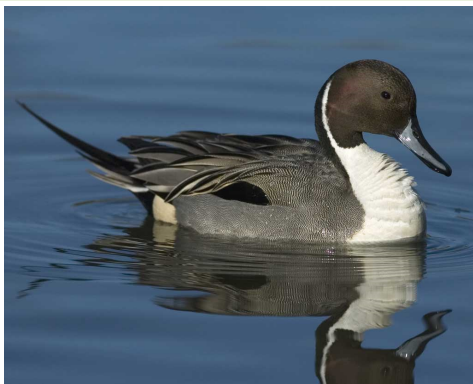
Agricultural land that was cropped or considered cropped four out of six years from 2012 to 2017. Breeding season habitat requirements of the targeted species must be met. Acres enrolled must:

- Be at least 40 acres in size;
- Winter cover is to be located within 1.5 miles of nesting cover and within 1,000 feet of food sources; at least 1 percent must be winter cover;
- Not be hayed for the life of the contract;
- Follow NRCS seedbed preparation and planting procedures and be seeded within the first year of the contract;
- Crested wheatgrass and brome grasses are not permitted in new seeding. For existing stands crested wheatgrass and brome cannot exceed 50 percent of the stand, or must be renovated;
- No more than 25 percent of the enrollment can be CP38E-CP1 Introduced Grasses and Legumes.

Definition of Terms

Nest cover - undisturbed grass-legume mixtures, hay fields (undisturbed during the primary nesting season), winter wheat, vegetated roadsides, ditch banks and rangeland.

Winter cover - cattail marshes, tall, stiff-stemmed grasses (i.e., basin wild rye, tall wheatgrass), shelterbelts, woody riparian cover, and areas of tall, rank weeds.



Male Northern Pintail - USFWS Image Library



Male Ring-necked Pheasant - National Audubon Society Photo

Financial Benefits

- 10-15 years or annual rental payments
- Payments of up to 50% cost share for practice establishment
- Additional cost share assistance for grass seed and/or shrub seedling costs may be available from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- Practices enrolled through CRP Continuous Signup will also receive:
 - Practice Incentive Payment
 - Sign-up Incentive Payment

Management Requirements

A management activity is required for each contract. Recommended management activities include management activity grazing and will be permitted without a rental rate penalty; prescribed burning; and light ground-disturbing practices. Other options for management are inter-seeding legumes or forbs. No cost share payments are available for management.

More Information

For more information, contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office through the Montana FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>.