



USDA's Farm Service Agency Accepting Offers for State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Initiatives

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Landowners may receive annual payments to assist with meeting high priority state wildlife conservation goals

COLLEGE STATION, Texas, November 16, 2022- The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting offers for the Conservation Reserve Program's (CRP) [State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement](#) (SAFE) Initiatives. In Texas, producers may be eligible to participate in the Prairie SAFE Project or the Lower Rio Grande Valley Thornscrub SAFE Project. These SAFE projects are available through CRP's Continuous Signup.

"I highly encourage farmers and landowners to consider these CRP SAFE opportunities to protect endangered species through implementing conservation practices," said Kelly Adkins, State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency in Texas. "CRP SAFE projects allow us to work alongside producers to address certain wildlife conservation concerns to help mitigate habitat loss, while providing annual rental payments to farmers and landowners who agree to execute actions according to approved conservation plans."

Prairie SAFE Project

The goal of the Prairie SAFE Project is to reconnect geographically and reproductively isolated populations of Lesser Prairie Chickens, Northern Bobwhite and other grassland species by creating, restoring, and maintain 250,000 acres of native prairie habitat patches and corridors.

Potential benefits of Prairie SAFE include habitat restoration for grassland wildlife, improving water and air quality, improving plant health, erosion and runoff prevention, and water quality and aquifer recharge improvement.

Farmers and landowners in these 71 counties may offer eligible land for enrollment:

Andrews	Crosby	Hansford	Lynn	Stonewall
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Archer	Dallam	Hardeman	Martin	Swisher
Armstrong	Dawson	Hartley	Mitchell	Taylor
Bailey	Deaf Smith	Haskell	Moore	Terry
Baylor	Dickens	Hemphill	Motley	Throckmorton
Borden	Donley	Hockley	Nolan	Tom Green
Briscoe	Fisher	Howard	Ochiltree	Wheeler
Carson	Floyd	Hutchinson	Oldham	Wichita
Castro	Foard	Jones	Parmer	Wilbarger
Childress	Gaines	Kent	Potter	Yoakum
Clay	Garza	King	Randall	Young
Cochran	Glasscock	Knox	Roberts	
Collingsworth	Gray	Lamb	Runnels	
Concho	Hale	Lipscomb	Scurry	
Cottle	Hall	Lubbock	Sherman	

For accepted offers, a wildlife conservation plan must be developed.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Thornscrub SAFE Project

Participation in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Thornscrub SAFE project allows landowners to restore Tamaulipan thornscrub habitat for the endangered ocelot and other wildlife species by creating and maintaining 5,000 acres of native woody shrub and grassland habitat.

Potential benefits of this SAFE project include increasing in ocelot use of established acreage, increasing bird guild use of established acreage, increasing corridors and connectivity between habitat patches, improving air quality and soil health by preventing wind erosion, and reducing irrigation needs for enrolled cropland.

Farmers and landowners in these five counties may offer eligible land for enrollment: Cameron, Hidalgo, Kenedy, Starr and Willacy counties.

Eligibility

CRP enrolls existing cropland into conservation cover. Land offered for enrollment must satisfy basic CRP eligibility and cropping history requirements. Farmers and landowners should check with their local FSA office to determine individual eligibility.

Financial Assistance

The CRP program pays a yearly rental payment in exchange for farmers and landowners removing environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and planting species that will improve environmental quality.

Financial assistance through the SAFE projects may include:

- 10-15 years of annual rental payments
- Payments of up to 50% cost-share for practice establishment
- Practices enrolled through CRP Continuous Sign-up will also receive:
 - A 50% Practice Incentive Payment
 - Sign-up Incentive Payment equal to 32.5% of first full year's annual rental payment
 - A Climate Smart Annual Practice Incentive of 3, 5, or 10 based on the practice cover
- Payments up to 90% of established Soil Rental Rate may be possible for:
 - Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds
 - Permanent Wildlife Habitat
 - Rare and Declining Habitat (Primarily Grasses and Trees)

More Information

Farmers and landowners interested in learning more about these CRP SAFE Initiative projects can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) for more information. [Prairie SAFE Project](#) and [Lower Rio Grande Valley Thornscurb SAFE Project](#) fact sheets can also be found online at fsa.usda.gov/tx.

Offers are accepted year-round for CRP Continuous.

These CRP SAFE Initiative projects were developed in coordination with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, American Forests, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever, Playa Lakes Joint Venture, and Rio Grande Joint Venture.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.

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