

Wisconsin Southwest Grassland Conservation SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in parts of Iowa, Dane, Lafayette, and Green counties. The purpose of the Wisconsin Southwest Grassland Conservation SAFE is to restore and maintain grassland and prairie habitat for fourteen bird species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) in Wisconsin.

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.

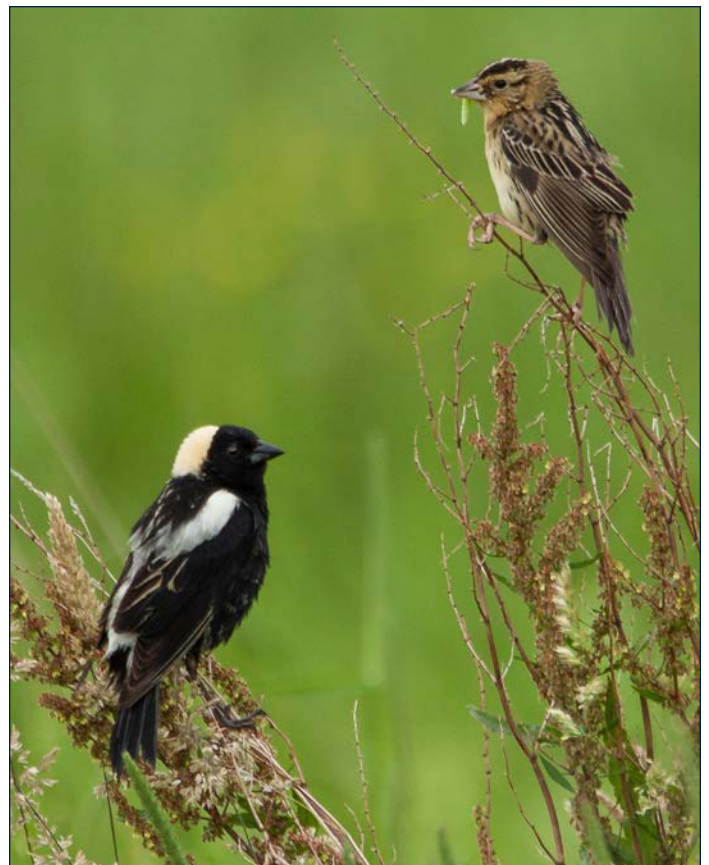
SAFE is a unique type of CRP that offers organizations the opportunity to partner with the USDA to establish habitat for high-priority wildlife species on agricultural land. SAFE sponsors work with the USDA to identify the wildlife species, the vegetative cover that provides habitat for the target species, 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 Wisconsin Southwest Grassland Conservation SAFE project is to provide habitat for Upland Sandpiper, Bobolink, Henslow's Sparrow, Eastern and Western Meadowlark, Dickcissel, and Grasshopper Sparrow. These obligate grassland birds are important to Wisconsin because all target species listed are documented as Species of Greatest Conservation Need within the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan and they occur in the Wisconsin Southwest Grassland Conservation SAFE in high relative abundance compared to the rest of the state.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in Wisconsin Southwest Grassland Conservation 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 target grassland bird species. The habitat being established is diverse, native prairie and surrogate, introduced cool season grassland habitat. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by prescribed burning, mowing, or interseeding into cool season grass dominated areas to enhance forb diversity. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for the grassland birds.



Project Location

The Wisconsin Southwest Grassland Conservation SAFE project is located within portions of Dane, Green, Iowa, and Lafayette counties.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38E-1, SAFE Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes
- ◆ CP38E-2, SAFE Establishment of Permanent Native Grass
- ◆ CP38E-25, SAFE Rare and Declining Habitat – Tallgrass Prairie
- ◆ CP38E-25, SAFE Rare and Declining Habitat – Oak Savanna Prairie

Haying and Grazing

Haying and Grazing activities are not allowed on Wisconsin Southwest Grassland Conservation SAFE.

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.



Wisconsin Southwest Grassland Conservation SAFE Project Map



Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  Wisconsin Southwest Grassland Conservation SAFE Project Area