



Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Program

KANSAS LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN STATE ACRES FOR WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT (SAFE) INITIATIVE

HABITAT RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION

Fact Sheet
December 2020

Why Choose State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)?

The State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative restores vital habitat to meet high priority state wildlife conservation goals. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides farmers and landowners several opportunities to achieve multiple conservation goals. Species targeted by SAFE include those designated as rare and declining species, species of significant social importance, and species of greatest conservation need. Through the Kansas Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE Initiative, landowners develop mixed grass habitat to maintain and enhance Lesser Prairie-Chicken populations.

Kansas Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE Practices:

- CP38E-2 – Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- CP38E-4D - Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- CP38E-12 - Wildlife Food Plot Establishment (conjunctive)
- CP38E-25 - Rare and Declining Habitat

Practice is available through CRP general sign up. Please check with your local FSA county office for sign up periods for SAFE practices in your area.

SAFE Benefits

Lesser Prairie-Chickens were historically distributed throughout western Kansas and are a vital part of the prairie ecosystem. However, their range has been greatly reduced due to conversion of native rangeland to cropland, improper grazing management, tree encroachment, and energy development.

Many other species will benefit from this initiative. The restored native grass will provide habitat for other priority grassland birds including the lark bunting, Cassin’s sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, lark sparrow, western meadowlark, ferruginous hawk, Swainson’s hawk and short-eared owls. Northern Bobwhite populations will also benefit from increased habitat, in addition to ring-necked pheasant and deer.

SAFE Initiative Impacts

This initiative seeks to restore short and mixed-grass grasslands meeting the habitat needs of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken and other grassland dependent species.

Native-mix CRP stands have been shown to provide excellent habitat for Lesser Prairie-Chicken when closely juxtaposed to well-managed native rangeland in Kansas. Interseeding CRP with forbs and legumes has been successful in providing increased brood rearing and nesting habitat for Lesser Prairie-Chicken within its occupied range. We seek to continue this success by requiring mid-contract management of CRP to maintain diversity of vegetation and structure throughout the life of the contracts.

Additional Benefits Include:

- Provide flexible options for landowners to enhance their lands for wildlife
- Improve water quality
- Soil erosion prevention
- Improve soil health



Photo: Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism

Kansas Lesser Prairie-Chicken CRP SAFE – December 2020

Eligible Land

Eligible land must be within the designated targeted areas.

Expired CRP may be enrolled, but existing cover must contain suitable wildlife cover. Eligible cropland includes cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity during 4 of the 6 crop years from 2012 through 2017 and is physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

There is no acreage limitation for Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE enrollment, except:

- CP12 (food plots) are eligible in CP38E. Individual food plots must not exceed 5 acres in size and must not be immediately adjacent. Food plots may include annual or perennial seed-producing forbs or legumes such as alfalfa.

Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE Initiative is available in parts of the following 27 counties: Clark, Ellis, Finney, Ford, Gove, Graham, Grant, Gray, Greeley, Hamilton, Haskell, Hodgeman, Kearny, Lane, Logan, Meade, Morton, Ness, Scott, Seward, Sherman, Stanton, Stevens, Thomas, Trego, Wallace, and Wichita.

Mid-contract management requirements will apply to SAFE enrollments, with activities designed in the conservation plan to maximize the benefits for wildlife throughout the CRP contract period. Management activities may include non-emergency and emergency haying and grazing.



Photo: Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism



USDA Photo

Cover Requirements

Conservation plans and planting specifications will be designed to maximize wildlife benefits. All seed mixes must contain a minimum of five species of grasses, forbs, legumes, and/or shrubs. Native shrubs may be added (maximum 10% cover) on SAFE enrollments to provide an additional habitat component. Trees are not eligible.

Landowners may select from a variety of native grass, forb, legume, and shrub species. Recommended mixtures are designed to meet site specific soil conditions.

Financial Benefits

- 10-15 years of annual rental payments
- Payments of up to 50% Cost-Share for practice establishment

More Information

For more information, contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: farmers.gov/service-locator.