

Texas Praire SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever, Playa Lakes Joint Venture are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in 71 counties in the High Plains and Rolling Plains of Texas. The purpose of the Texas Praire SAFE is to create, restore, and manage blocks and corridors of native prairie habitat to support and reconnect populations of Lesser Prairie-Chickens, Northern bobwhite quail, and other grassland wildlife species.

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 Texas Praire SAFE project is to provide habitat for Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Northern Bobwhite quail, and other grassland wildlife species. Lesser Prairie-Chickens, Northern Bobwhite quail and the short and mixed grass prairies that they are dependent upon are important to Texas because they provide significant cultural value to the regional community. They contribute to the regional economy through legal hunting and bird watching. Conservation of this habitat is analogous with

habitat required by populations of huntable game species such as deer, turkey, ring-necked pheasant, northern bobwhite, and scaled quail, as well as providing forage for livestock when managed appropriately.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in Texas Praire 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 short and mixed grass prairie wildlife species. The habitat being established is diverse native grassland appropriate for the site. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by prescribed fire. Inter-seeding and managed grazing when appropriate. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Northern Bobwhite quail, and other grassland wildlife species.



Project Location

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

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38E-4D SAFE Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- ◆ CP38A-33 SAFE Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds

Haying and Grazing

Non-Emergency Haying or Grazing is only permitted on CP38E-4D, CP38E-33 acres when conducted as a maintenance or mid-contract management activity prescribed and under guidance by NRCS or a qualified TSP.

Emergency Haying or Grazing is permitted on enrolled Herbaceous Cover according to 2-CRP Manual, Paragraph 681.

Haying and grazing, regardless of whether it is under emergency or non-emergency authorization on the same acres is limited to no more than once every three years.

Acres impacted by emergency and non-emergency haying are limited to not more than 50 percent of contract acres in a calendar year.

Prescriptions for haying or grazing under any circumstance are required to leave a minimum stubble height of the primary forage species present in the field according to NRCS Practice Specifications. All haying shall use flush bars or haying from center of field to outer edge. All haying and grazing activities must take place outside of the primary nesting season (1 March–1 July).

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

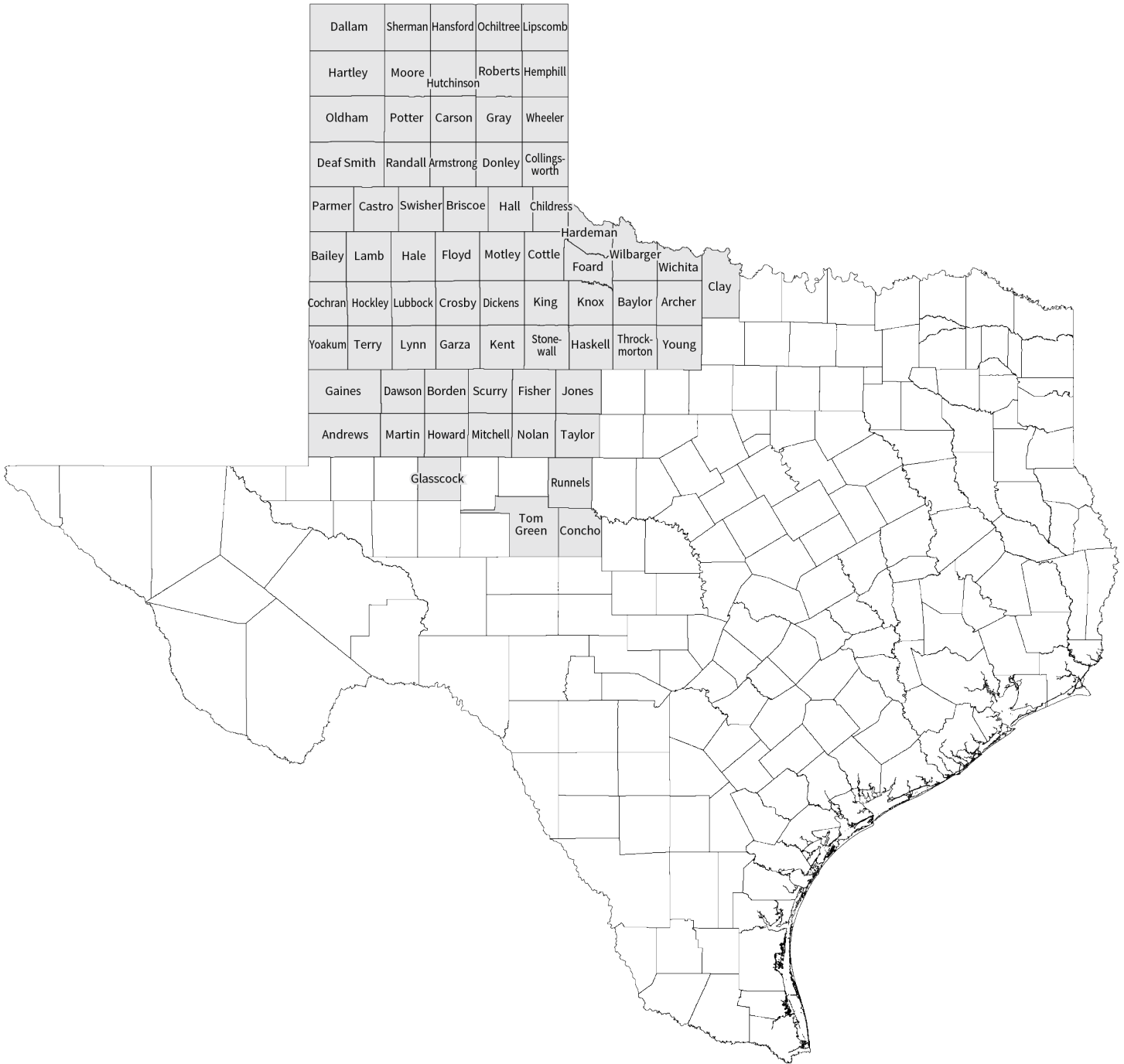
In exchange for participation in CRP SAFE, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with annual per acre rental payments, cost-share to assist with habitat establishment expenses, and in some cases additional monetary incentives.

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.



Texas Prairie SAFE Project Map



Legend

 FSA County Boundary

 Texas Prairie SAFE Project Area