

# Georgia's Native Pine Savanna Habitat Restoration SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



## Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Georgia Department of Natural Resources Division are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in Georgia. The purpose of the Georgia's Native Pine Savanna Habitat Restoration is to target expiring acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program's CP3 Tree Planting or CP3A Hardwood Tree Planting to help establish and maintain pine savanna habitat for northern bobwhite and other grassland-forb-shrub species that are in decline.

## 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 Georgia's Native Pine Savanna Habitat Restoration SAFE project is to provide habitat for Northern Bobwhite, Bachman's Sparrow, Gopher Tortoise, and Pine Snake. These target wildlife species are important to Georgia because their populations are declining and are high priorities in Georgia's State Wildlife Action Plan (<https://georgiawildlife.com/WildlifeActionPlan>). These species are representative pine savanna habitat that is critical to populations of many other game and non-game species in the state.

## Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in Georgia's Native Pine Savanna Habitat Restoration 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 Northern Bobwhite, Bachman's Sparrow, Gopher Tortoise, and Pine Snakes. The habitat being established is pine savanna habitat with diverse native understory vegetation. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by prescribed fire and occasional herbicide and thinning practices. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for Northern Bobwhite, Bachman's Sparrow, Gopher Tortoise, and Pine Snake.



## Project Location

Georgia's Native Pine Savanna Habitat Restoration SAFE project location is statewide. Eligible acres must be expiring CRP CP3 Tree Planting or CP3A Hardwood Tree Planting acres.

## Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38C-3 Tree Planting or CP38C-3A Hardwood Tree Planting to establish pine savanna. Eligible acres must be expiring CRP CP3 Tree Planting or CP3A Hardwood Tree Planting acres

## Haying and Grazing

No grazing or haying will be allowed on contracted acres.

## 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](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).



# Georgia's Native Pine Savanna Habitat Restoration SAFE Project Map



## Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  Georgia's Native Pine Savanna Habitat Restoration SAFE Project Area