

Colorado Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in portions of 6 counties in south-east Colorado. The purpose of the Colorado Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE is to improve nesting and brood rearing cover for the state endangered and federally threatened lesser prairie-chicken (LPC) in southeastern (SE) Colorado.

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 Colorado Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE project is to provide habitat for lesser prairie-chickens. Lesser prairie-chickens are important to Colorado because of the social and economic benefits to local communities in the area as well as their historic presence and role in the ecology of the region.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE are required to develop a conservation plan with assistance from 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 lesser prairie-chickens. The habitat being established is diverse grasslands including grasses, forbs, and legumes. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by discing, interseeding as needed and authorized. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for lesser prairie-chickens.

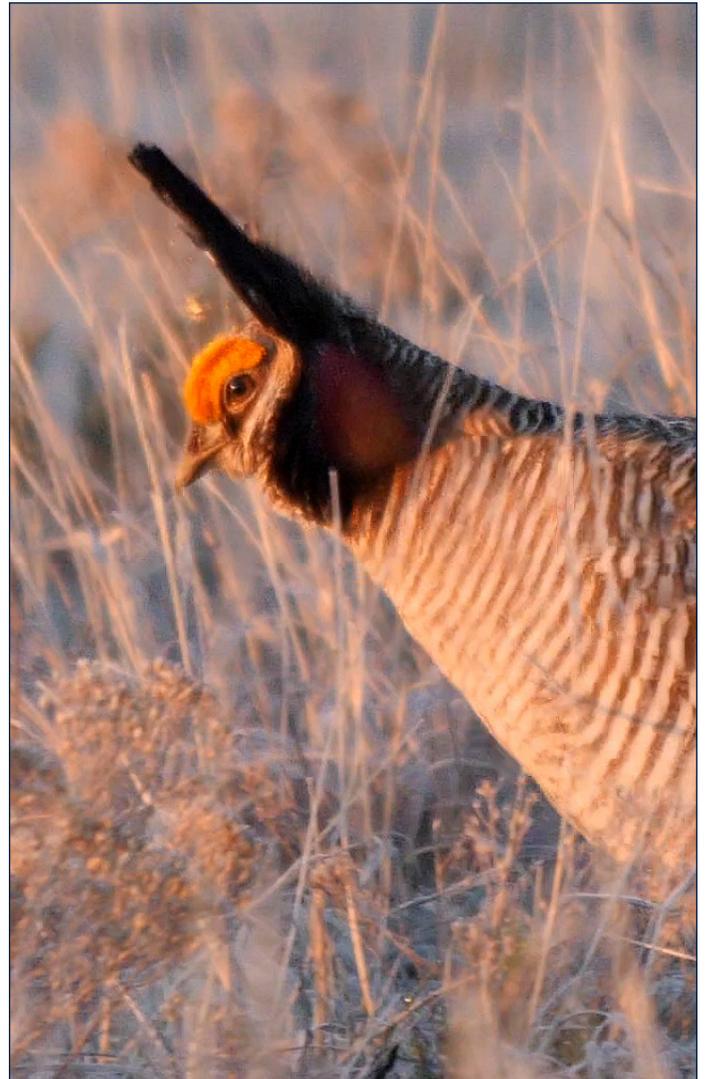


Photo Courtesy: Jerry Neal, Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Project Location

The Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE project location is portions or entirety of Baca, Prowers, Kiowa, Cheyenne, Lincoln, and Kit Carson counties in the areas of the Arkansas River and Two Butte and Big Sandy Creeks.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38E-4D, SAFE Permanent Wildlife Habitat

Haying and Grazing

Haying is not permitted. Grazing can only be used when the existing cover is exemplary, well established, meets seed matrix specifications, and during specific timeframes. Emergency haying and/or grazing is not permitted.

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, USDA 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.



Photo Courtesy: Trent Verquer, Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Colorado Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE Project Map



Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  Colorado Lesser Prairie-Chicken SAFE Project Area