

Iowa Northeast Forest Bird SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Iowa Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Bureau are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in six counties in north-east Iowa. The purpose of the Iowa Northeast Forest Bird SAFE is to develop high-density, hardwood tree plantings to provide early successional forest habitat, create corridors between larger blocks of forest, and minimize forest fragmentation for early successional forest birds.

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 Iowa Northeast Forest Bird SAFE project is to provide habitat for Ruffed Grouse, American Woodcock, Yellow-billed, and Black-billed Cuckoo. These species are important to Iowa because all four species are in long term decline and CRP provides valuable habitat to recover these species. The Iowa Wildlife Action Plan lists all four birds as species of greatest conservation need, whose populations can benefit from additional early successional forest and grassland habitats.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in Iowa Northeast Forest Bird 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 Ruffed Grouse, American Woodcock, Yellow-billed, and Black-billed Cuckoo. Offers must be a minimum of 5 acres unless immediately adjacent to an existing woodland. Offers must be established to at least 90% trees and/or shrubs at a minimum of 1,000 trees/shrubs per acre. Plantings should consist of at least 5 hardwood species (predominately oak). Plantings may also include aspen and conifers if appropriate. Native grass and forb plantings may be developed in areas adjacent to cropland. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by activities included in the forest conservation management plan. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for Ruffed Grouse, American Woodcock, Yellow-billed, and Black-billed Cuckoo.



Photo by Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Project Location

The Iowa Northeast Forest Bird SAFE project location is Allamakee, Clayton, Dubuque, Fayette, Jackson, and Winneshiek counties.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38C-3A SAFE Tree Planting
- ◆ CP38E-4D SAFE Permanent Wildlife Habitat

Haying and Grazing

Emergency and non-emergency haying and grazing are not authorized.

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.

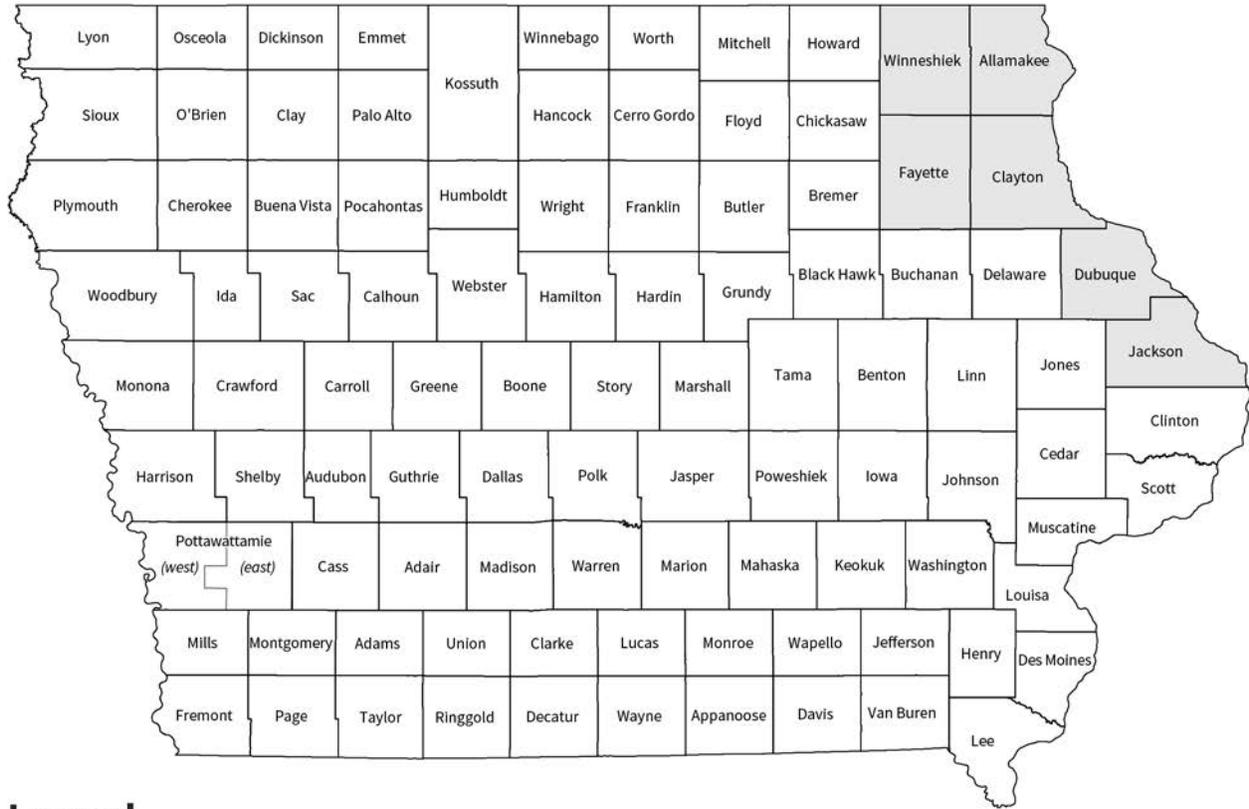
For More Information

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 or nearest DNR office: iowadnr.gov/crp.



Photo by Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Iowa Northeast Forest Bird SAFE Project Map



Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  Iowa Northeast Forest Bird SAFE Project Area