

# Idaho Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



## Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Idaho Department of Fish and Game are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in 15 counties in eastern Idaho. The purpose of the Idaho Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse SAFE is to increase quality grassland, shrub steppe, mountain brush, and riparian habitat for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse.

## 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 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 Idaho Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse SAFE project is to provide habitat for Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse. Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse are important to Idaho because they are a species of significant social and economic value to the community as well as a species of greatest conservation need according to Idaho's State Wildlife Action Plan.

## Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in the Idaho Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse 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 Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse. The habitat being established is to best resemble native Columbian sharp-tailed grouse habitat, which is characterized by bunchgrass prairie and shrub/bunchgrass rangelands in good to excellent ecological condition with a small percentage of the landscape in tall, deciduous shrub thickets provided by shrubby riparian zones, mountain shrub patches, and aspen stands. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by conducting approved management activities such as grazing, mechanical and chemical disturbance and seeding to increase diversity of the stand. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse.

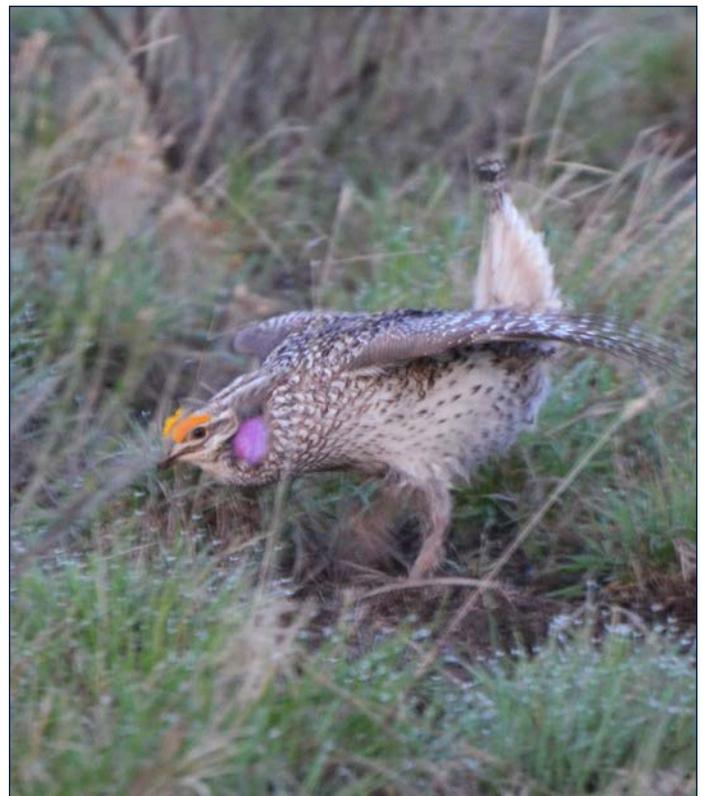


Photo by Kourtney Stonehouse with Idaho Fish and Game

## Project Location

The Idaho Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse project location is the following Idaho counties: Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Bonneville, Caribou, Cassia, Clark, Franklin, Fremont, Jefferson, Madison, Power, Oneida, Teton, and Twin Falls county.

## Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38E-2, SAFE Native Grasses
- ◆ CP38E-4D, SAFE Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- ◆ CP38E-25, SAFE Rare and Declining Habitat
- ◆ CP38C-3, SAFE Softwood Tree Planting
- ◆ CP38C-3A, SAFE Hardwood Tree Planting

## Haying and Grazing

- ◆ Grazing is allowed under all non-emergency provisions of CRP policy.
- ◆ Grazing is prohibited under emergency provisions according to CRP policy.
- ◆ Grazing as a gleaning activity may be conducted once in the fall of the first contract year before the cover is established.
- ◆ Haying of SAFE acres is not allowed.

## 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).



Photo by Idaho Fish and Game

# Idaho Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse SAFE Project Map



## Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  Idaho Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse SAFE Project Area