

Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Indiana Department of Natural Resources—Division of Fish and Wildlife are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in 51 counties in the northern, central, and southwestern parts of Indiana. The purpose of the Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat SAFE is to provide quality forestland habitat for the Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat as well as increasing forest connectivity to reduce habitat fragmentation for these bats and other forest dependent 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 Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat SAFE project is to provide habitat for the Indiana Bat (*Myotis Sodalis*) and Northern Long-eared Bat (*M. septentrionalis*) are important to Indiana not only for biological significance but are also particularly important for economic and social reasons.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat 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 Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat. The habitat being established is ideal for foraging and roosting locations frequently selected by Indiana Bats and Northern Long-eared Bats. This includes establishment of deciduous forestlands with native tree species including oaks, hickories and other preferred roosting location species of the target bat species. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by vegetative release (spraying) or inter-seeding legumes in accordance with an approved conservation plan. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for The Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat.



Photo by Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

Project Location

The Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat SAFE project location can be found in 3 eco-regions: Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 22-Tallgrass Prairie, BCR 23-Prairie Hardwood Transition, and BCR 24-Central Hardwoods.

This Indiana Bat/Northern Long-eared Bat SAFE project exists exclusively within the boundaries of Indiana. The counties targeted in the proposal include: Posey, Vanderburgh, Gibson, Knox, Johnson, Shelby, Rush, Decatur, Bartholomew, Lake, Porter, LaPorte, St. Joseph, Marshall, Starke, Elkhart, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Steuben, Noble, DeKalb, Whitley, Allen, Warren, Fountain, Montgomery, Tippecanoe, Hendricks, Marion, Hancock, Henry, Wayne, Randolph, Delaware, Madison, Hamilton, Boone, Clinton, Carroll, Cass, Fulton, Miami, Wabash, Huntington, Wells, Adams, Jay, Blackford, Grant, Howard, and Tipton.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38C-3A, Hardwood Tree Planting

Haying and Grazing

The seeded/established area of any accepted offer in this proposal shall not be harvested or grazed by domestic livestock for the life of CRP-1.

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.



Photo by Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat SAFE Project Map



Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  Indiana Northern Long-eared Bat and Indiana Bat SAFE Project Area