

Fact Sheet

Parts of Adams, Clark, Marathon, Portage, and Wood Counties

March 2008



Central Wisconsin Grassland SAFE

Overview

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR), Fish and Wildlife Service, and Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development, is offering a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice tailored to provide enhanced habitat for the Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, Eastern Meadowlark, and Bobolink. This practice, established through FSA's State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) initiative, is available to eligible participants in parts of Adams, Clark, Marathon, Portage, and Wood Counties.

Goals

The goal of this project is to benefit grassland dependent species of greatest conservation need by restoring and maintaining grassland habitat on land retired from agricultural production. This project will help achieve the goals of the Central Wisconsin Grasslands Conservation Area, an initiative developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



▲ Bobolink (Source: WI DNR)

Practice Specifications

SAFE practice CP-38E (Grass) will apply and provide for establishment of introduced grasses, native grasses, and existing grass. Contract length is between 10 and 15 years, depending on the type of grass cover.

The purpose of this practice is to restore and maintain habitat for uncommon grassland birds on land retired from agricultural production.

Land Eligibility

To be eligible for placement in a SAFE CRP practice, land must be:

- Cropland (including field margins) that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity 4 of the previous 6 crop years from 1996 to 2001. Some existing hay land may qualify
- Physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity
- Located within the designated SAFE area.
- A maximum of 3,000 acres, for the entire safe project are authorized.

Participant Eligibility

CRP participants must have:

- Owned or operated the land for the previous 12 months (some exceptions may apply)
- An average adjusted gross income of less than \$2.5 million unless 75% or more of income is from farming, ranching, or forestry operations



▲ Eastern Meadowlark

CRP Payments

Participants are eligible for four types of USDA payments:

- Signing Incentive Payment– A one-time payment of \$100 per acre. USDA makes this payment within 30 days after the contract has been approved
- Annual rental payments based on the relative productivity of the soils within the offered area and the average dryland cash-rent or cash-rent equivalent, including a maintenance payment
- Cost share assistance of 50 percent for installing the practice on contracted land
- Practice Incentive Payment– Approximately 40 percent of the total cost for establishing the practice

Management

Participants are required to perform mid-contract management activities. This could include disking, herbicide application, prescribed burning, mowing, and interseeding. A 50% cost-share payment is paid in the year the management is performed.

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement

Monitoring and Compliance

Monitoring of this project and its success will be completed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. These reviews will determine the success of the project in accomplishing the stated goals. Annual reports will be submitted to the National FSA Office. Monitoring for goal success is separate and distinct from participant compliance obligations.

SAFE practices are implemented through the Farm Service Agency's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and are therefore subject to all CRP regulations, including but not limited to:

- Control of noxious weeds
- Control of any vegetation not prescribed by the conservation plan
- Establishment and maintenance of the cover as stipulated by the contract and conservation plan
- Adherence to primary nesting season policies (May 15—August 1)
- Annual submission of crop report

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For More Information

For more information about this program, contact your USDA Service Center:

Adams County FSA
Phone 608-296-2815

Clark County FSA
Phone 715-743-3164

Marathon County FSA
Phone 715-848-2330

Portage County FSA
Phone 715-346-1313

Wood County FSA
Phone 715-423-3610

Partnering Agencies and Organizations

US Department of Agriculture

- Farm Service Agency
- Natural Resources Conservation Service

US Department of the Interior

- Fish and Wildlife Service

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

▼ Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area

