

Conservation Reserve Program State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Sage Grouse Habitat

Overview

SAFE is a new CRP concept that allows States to develop a Continuous Signup Practice which will permit producers to install practices that benefit high priority State wildlife conservation objectives through the use of targeted restoration of vital habitat.

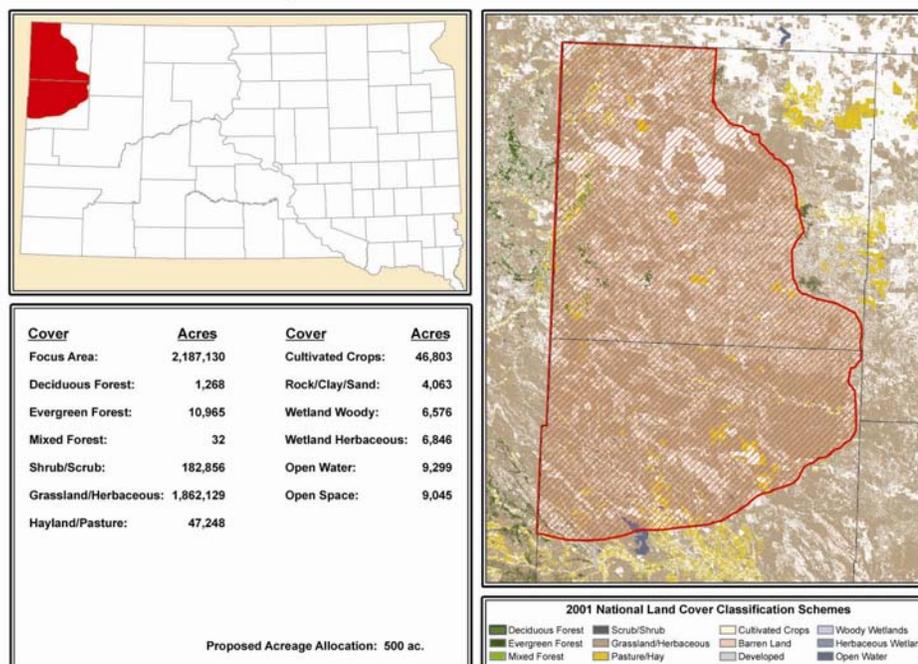
A proposal developed by the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture addresses habitat critical to the sage grouse population in the project area by restoring cropland to sagebrush habitat suitable for sage-grouse, other sagebrush obligate birds such as sage sparrows and sage thrashers and other sagebrush associated wildlife such as sharp-tailed grouse, grey partridge, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sagebrush vole and other small mammals.

This proposal was accepted by the State Technical Committee, State FSA Committee and received final approval from the National FSA Office.

Targeted Area

Areas targeted for this practice include parts of Butte and Harding Counties. Producers in the area that meet regular CRP eligibility requirements will be eligible to offer cropland under this practice. A total of 500 acres in the targeted area has been reserved for this practice.

Sage Grouse Focus Area



Land Eligibility

Eligible cropland includes cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agriculture commodity during 4 of 6 crop years from 1996 through 2001 and is physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

Program Requirements

A minimum of a 40-acre block of eligible cropland will be required unless adjacent to suitable sage grouse habitat.

Annual Payments, Cost Shares and Incentives

In addition to an annual payment which is based on the counties average dryland rental rate and soil productivity cost shares and incentive payments will be provided as follows:

- Cost shares of up to 50% for the establishment of the practice.
- Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) equal to \$10 per acre for each full year of the contract not to exceed 10 years. This payment is made upfront at the time the contract is approved.
- Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) equal to 40% of the total eligible cost to establish the practice. This payment is issued once the practice has been completed.

Grass Cover Requirements

To be eligible for C/S, this practice shall improve wildlife habitat critical to the sage grouse and other wildlife population in the project area by restoring cropland to sagebrush habitat. Wyoming big sagebrush will be planted in a native mixture along with other forbs and shrubs.

Where to Apply

Offers for this practice will be accepted at the local county FSA Office where a producer's land is administered for FSA purposes and NRCS will provide technical service in developing a conservation plan of operation.