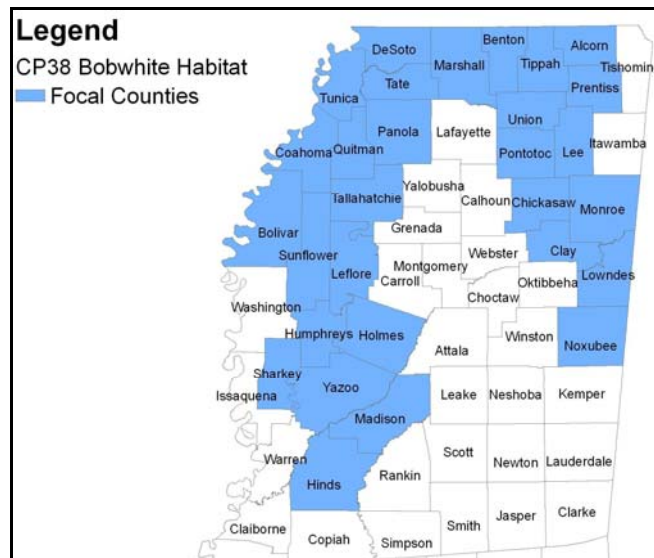


Conservation Reserve Program Mississippi State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Bobwhite Quail Habitat

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is offering a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) initiative to improve bobwhite quail habitat through restoration of native grassland communities within focal counties of Mississippi. This SAFE initiative will assist to design, install, and maintain up to 2,950 acres of native grassland habitat.

Bobwhite Quail Habitat Focal Area



Sign-up

Sign-up begins June 23, 2008, at local FSA offices for the CRP SAFE Habitat Initiative and runs continuously until the 2,950 acre goal is met, or farm bill authority for CRP expires, whichever comes first.

Eligible Land and Practices

To be eligible for this practice, land must be located in counties within the Bobwhite Quail Habitat Focal Area. In addition, land must meet the basic CRP eligibility requirements.

Acceptable land is cropland that was planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity in four out of six years between 1996 and 2001 and which is also physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

Rental Rates

Rental rates are based on three predominant soils on land offered for enrollment. FSA bases rental rates on the average value of dry-land cash rent and adjusts rates to reflect the relative productivity of soils within each county.

SIP and PIP Payments

A one-time up front signing incentive payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre for CRP contracts for 10 or more years will be paid by FSA after eligibility criteria are met and the CRP contract is approved.

A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of the eligible installation costs will be paid after the CRP practice is installed, eligible costs are verified, and other payment eligibility criteria are met.

Cost-share Payments

In addition to the payments described, FSA will pay up to 50 percent of the eligible cost of establishing a permanent native grassland cover.

Contracts

The effective date of the CRP contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval. In certain circumstances, producers may defer the effective date for up to six months.

Contracts are for not less than 10, nor more than 15 years.

Cooperating Agencies

CRP is administered by USDA's FSA with assistance from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Technical Requirements for CRP CP38E, SAFE Habitat

CP2 and CP10: A mixed stand (minimum 5 species) of at least two native grass species, two native legume species or other native forbs, and one native shrub species will be required. Total grass seeding density will not be less than 3 lbs. pure live seed (PLS) per acre and not more than 6 lbs. PLS per acre. Total forb seeding density will be at least 1 lb PLS per acre (not to exceed 3 lbs. PLS per acre) with no species comprising >50% of the mixture. Little Bluestem or broomsedge should comprise 75 to 85% of the grass mixture to provide bobwhite nesting cover; sideoats grama is also appropriate in drier prairie soils. Other grasses that may be used in the mixture (depending on soil adaptation) include big bluestem, indiagrass, switchgrass, and eastern gamagrass. Acceptable legume and other forb species include, but are not limited to, partridge pea, roundhead, kobe, or Korean lespedeza, black-eyed Susan, butterfly milkweed, false sunflower, native coneflowers, and native blazing stars. Shrub seeds or seedlings will be planted in patches or clumps approximately 30'x30' with seedlings planted on 5'x5' spacing within the clumps. Acceptable shrub species include, but are not limited to, native plums, dogwoods, sumacs, and blackberry. Shrubs should comprise no more than 10% of the stand.

CP4D: A mixed stand (minimum 6 species) of at least two native grass species, two native legume species or other native forbs, and one native shrub species will be required. One or more species of native trees planted in mixes, blocks (patches), or strips may be included to meet the 6 species minimum requirement. Total grass seeding density will not be less than 3 lbs. pure live seed (PLS) per acre and not more than 6 lbs. PLS per acre. Total forb seeding density will be at least 1 lb. PLS per acre (not to exceed 3 lbs. PLS per acre) with no species comprising >50% of the mixture. Little bluestem or broomsedge should comprise 75 to 85% of the grass mixture to provide bobwhite nesting cover; sideoats grama is also appropriate in drier prairie soils. Other grasses that may be used in the mixture (depending on soil adaptation) include big bluestem, indiagrass, switchgrass, and eastern gamagrass. Acceptable legume and other forb species include, but are not limited to, partridge pea, roundhead, kobe, or Korean lespedeza, black-eyed Susan, butterfly milkweed, false sunflower, native coneflowers, and native blazing stars. Shrubs seeds or seedlings will be planted in patches or clumps approximately 30'x30' with seedlings planted on 5'x5' spacing within the clumps. Tree seeds or seedlings will be planted in strips or patches at spacing appropriate to achieve no more than 300 trees per acre. If trees are planted, shrubs may be planted on outer edges of areas planted to trees. Acceptable shrub species include, but are not limited to, native plums, dogwoods, sumacs, and blackberry. Acceptable tree species appropriate for the site include, but are not limited to, native pines, post oak, southern red oak, persimmon, black cherry, and black tupelo. Shrubs and trees in combination should comprise no more than 20% of the stand.

Other Considerations: Competition control during cover establishment is essential. Appropriate site preparation and pre-emergent (and sometimes post-emergent) weed control are required to successfully establish native warm-season grasses. All native warm-season grasses should be planted at a depth of no more than ¼ inch with a specialized native warm-season grass drill, with the exception of eastern gamagrass, which should be planted 1 inch deep with a corn planter. Native forbs may be planted at a depth of no more than ¼ inch along with grasses using a native warm-season grass drill, or the forbs may be broadcast seeded during the fall after grasses are planted. Refer to Mississippi State University Extension Publication 2435, "Native Warm-Season Grass Restoration in Mississippi" (available online at www.msucares.com) for more information on native grass establishment.

Mid Contract management is required on CP-38E Enrolled Acres. Mowing of any fields enrolled in CP38E will not be allowed as a management practice. Exceptions will be made to allow mowing during vegetation establishment to control undesirable weed competition if necessary. Mowing may also be allowed as needed to prepare sites for necessary herbicide applications, strip-disking, or prescribed fire (disking fire breaks). Strip-disking and prescribed fire treatments should be limited to one-third of CP38E acreage each year.

Prescribed Burning: Conduct prescribed burns on CP38E enrolled acreage on the following schedule:
1st burn: Feb-March (years 2-5) 2nd burn: Feb.-March (years 5-8) 3rd burn: Feb.-March (years 8-11)

Light Strip Disking: Conduct strip diskling on CP38E enrolled acreage on the following schedule:
1st burn: Oct.-Feb. (years 2-5) 2nd burn: Oct.-Feb. (years 5-8) 3rd burn: Oct.-Feb. (years 8-11)

**Cooperating Agencies
for the Conservation Reserve Program,
State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE),
CP38E Bobwhite Quail Habitat Initiative**

