



*Washington State Fact Sheet*

# State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Palouse Prairie Project

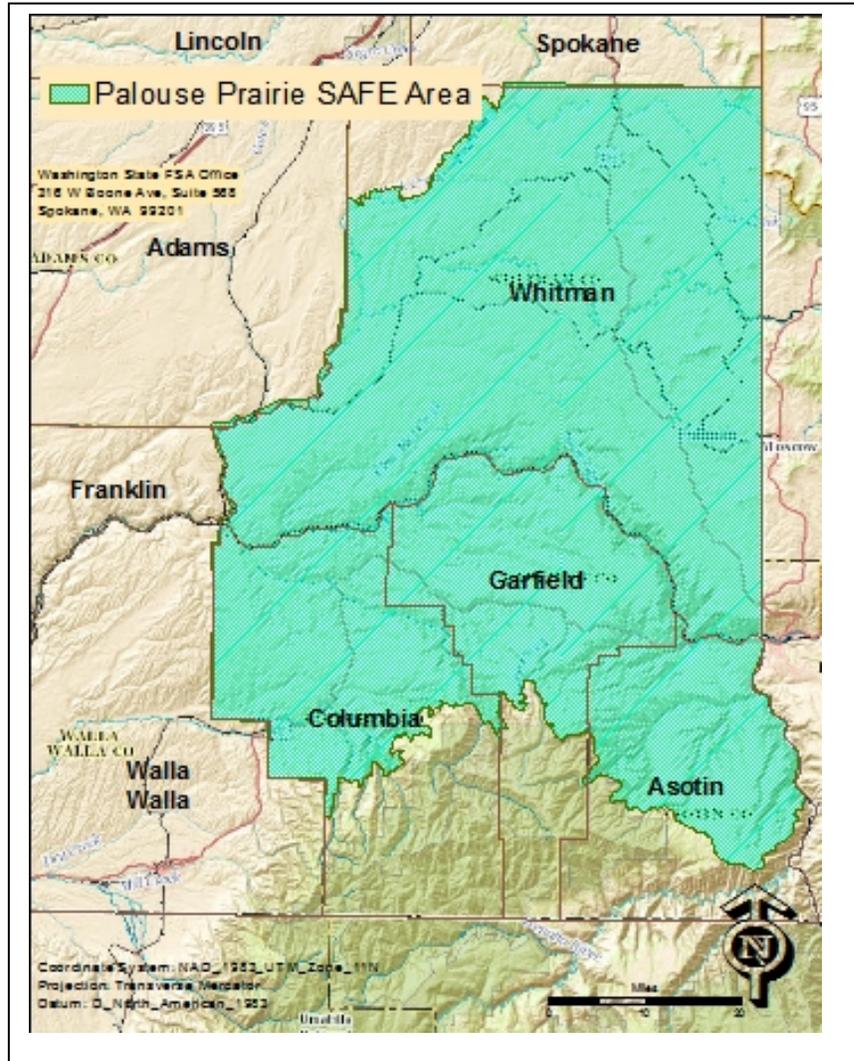
Updated – May 2017

## Overview

The Palouse Prairie Project State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) is a special initiative of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Like traditional CRP, SAFE is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible land owners and operators to address priority natural resource concerns. SAFE, however, gives special consideration to wildlife. The initiative is a state and federal partnership between the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

The goal of the Washington Palouse Prairie SAFE is to enroll 5,700 acres to improve and increase Palouse Prairie habitat for a variety of wildlife species by re-establishing diverse stands of grasses, forbs and shrubs.

Cooperating landowners receive rental payments, establishment and maintenance cost-share and incentive payments in return for entering a contract to provide specific wildlife habitat.



**Palouse Prairie Project SAFE Area**

## Land Eligibility

The Palouse Prairie SAFE is one of five projects approved for Washington state. Land with a cropping history and within the project areas is eligible for SAFE enrollment. Land must have been cropped at least four years between 2008 - 2013 to

have a cropping history. Summer fallow, CRP and crops in rotation are considered cropped.

The SAFE project area encompasses portions of Asotin, Columbia, Garfield and

Whitman counties.

## Payments

Landowners who voluntarily agree to 10-15 year contracts will receive the following payments:

- Signing Incentive Payment – a one-time payment of \$75 per acre for land not previously enrolled in CRP
- Practice Incentive - 90 percent cost-share to install conservation practices
- Annual rental payment - based on the weighted average soil rental rate for the soils in the offered acreage.

SAFE contracts begin the first of the month following FSA approval of the contract. For example, if a contract is approved June 15, it will become effective and annual rental payments will begin to accrue on July 1.

### Payment Limitation

Annual rental payments, including the incentives, are subject to a payment limitation of \$50,000 per person, per year. The limit applies collectively to all CRP contracts the producer has throughout the U.S. There is no limit on the cost-share payments.

### Contract Requirements

Landowners entering into a SAFE contract are required to plant specific wildlife seed mixes for food and cover. Weed control is required on SAFE acreage.

Approved conservation practices include:

- Establishment of permanent native grasses with a minimum 8 total species: 3 grasses, 4 forbs and 1

shrub from approved species list; select those best suited to the site and for area wildlife.

- Permanent wildlife habitat with a planting of a minimum 8 total species: 3 grasses, 4 forbs, and 1 shrub and/or trees.
- Filter strips with a planting of a minimum 7 species: 3 grasses; 4 forbs, shrubs or trees.
- Riparian forest buffer - a planting of woody vegetation from an approved species list; select those best suited to the site and for area wildlife.
- Wildlife food plot - native forb strips only.
- Certain other practices may apply.

Technical assistance to develop a conservation plan will be provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The SAFE contract will be approved after all required documents are completed and signed, including:

- SAFE worksheet
- SAFE contract
- Conservation plan
- Landlord/tenant certification
- Payment limitation forms
- Conservation compliance form
- FSA acreage measurement (a small fee applies).

### Access

Hunting and other public access to land enrolled in the SAFE program will be at the landowner's discretion.

### Sign-Up Process

Landowners wishing to participate in the SAFE program may apply at their local Farm Service Agency office. Applications are accepted year-round. It is a non-competitive sign-up process, unlike regular CRP. After an application is submitted, a no-obligation eligibility review will be conducted and landowners are provided a final opportunity to decide whether to enroll land in the program.

### Additional Information

For more information about SAFE, contact your local USDA Service Center or Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) biologist. Also, visit the FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa> or the WDFW website at <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/>.

Or contact WDFW:  
Brian Gaston 509 648-3632.

This fact sheet is a summary of the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program and is not intended to cover all situations or program provisions.