

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Farm Service Agency  
Washington, DC 20250

<b>Agricultural Resource Conservation Program 2-CRP (Revision 5)</b>	<b>Amendment 18</b>
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**Approved by:** Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



**Amendment Transmittal**

**A Reason for Amendment**

Part 22 has been added to incorporate policy and procedure for State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE).

<b>Page Control Chart</b>		
<b>TC</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Exhibit</b>
11, 12	21-23 22-1 through 22-8 (add) 22-9 (add)	1, pages 5, 6 63, pages 1-6 (add)



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**812 Managing CRP-1R TIP Contracts and Spot Check Policy (Continued)****C Waiving TIP Liquidated Damages**

Determinations to waive liquidated damages shall be made on a case-by-case basis. CRP-1R termination does not automatically warrant waiving liquidated damages. When considering granting waivers, COC and STC shall consider:

- the circumstances in which the contract was terminated
- the agreement by the participants at time of enrollment to transition the acreage for the full term of CRP-1R
- whether the acreage will be restored to production using sustainable methods
- the effect the termination has on the participants.

COC may waive up to 50 percent of the assessed liquidated damages or recommend waiver of 100 percent to STC.

STC may approve requests to waive all liquidated damages.

**Liquidated damages shall not be waived when COC or STC determines there was not a good faith effort to comply with the terms and conditions of CRP-1R.**

**D Submitting Waiver Requests**

COC shall submit fully documented requests to STC. Include the following when preparing requests:

- producer's written request
- COC findings
- specific COC recommendations and basis for recommendation, including determination on whether liquidated damages shall be assessed
- copies of all program documents and other County Office records.

**E Request for Waivers**

For waiver of refunds for TIP, see paragraph 576.

**813-830 (Reserved)**



**\*--Part 22 SAFE****831 General SAFE Information****A Background**

On March 22, 2007, FSA announced the SAFE initiative, which allows:

- State Offices to address local wildlife conservation needs
- producers to install practices that benefit high priority State wildlife conservation objectives through the use of targeted restoration of vital habitats.

This cooperative conservation effort is based on locally developed conservation proposals that address the highest priority wildlife objectives in the State. The proposals will be considered by FSA STC after a review by the State Technical Committee. CEPD will review all STC recommendations.

**B General Information**

SAFE provides an opportunity to develop grassroots cooperative conservation projects to address high priority wildlife needs through habitat restoration. The practices must be used to address wildlife habitat that can be enhanced through the restoration of eligible cropland through CRP. Enrollment is available under continuous signup criteria.

SAFE practices can be used to restore the following habitats:

- rare, threatened, and endangered species
- species that have suffered a significant population decline
- species that provide significant social or economic value to the community.

**Note:** This includes restoration of habitat for game species, such as pheasant or quail, salmon or steelhead streams, or other socially or economically significant species.

SAFE project proposals must afford measureable and tangible benefits to the desired species.

Failure to adhere to SAFE provisions and guidelines may result in reduction of SAFE acres.--\*

**\*--832 Policy**

**A Cropland Eligibility**

Eligible cropland is:

- acreage determined to be eligible according to the land criteria provided in paragraph 151
- located within the State-designated SAFE project area.

**Note:** Marginal pastureland is **not** eligible.

**B Signup Type**

SAFE is authorized under continuous signup enrollment.

**C Contract Duration and Effective Date**

The CRP-1 period for CRP contracts is 10 to 15 years.

The effective date of CRP-1 is the first day of the month following the month COC approves the contract.

**D Incentives**

PIP's and SIP's are authorized.

**Note:** Land that is currently under contract or has expired and the cover has be maintained, is **not** eligible.

**E Management Activity**

Approved SAFE proposals shall have periodic management activities performed, according to the conservation plan, during the life of CRP-1, as determined by COC. This activity may be based on the management activity approved for the CRP practice used as a basis for the SAFE practices. If new or modified management activities are necessary, these activities must be established according to paragraph 428.

**F Cost Share**

CCC will pay up to 50 percent of the eligible cost of establishing a permanent cover. State Offices must develop a C/S table similar to Exhibit 11, after practices are selected.

**Note:** See Exhibit 11, page 6 for an example.--\*

**\*--832 Policy (Continued)**

**G Review and Approval Cycle**

Proposals for SAFE projects may be submitted at any time.

Subject to the availability of acres, proposals will be reviewed and approved on a fiscal year cycle according to the following table.

Date	Action
June 30	Final date for States to submit SAFE proposals.
September 30	Final date to review and approve SAFE proposals.
October 1	CEPD will begin notifying States of SAFE proposal determinations and allocating acres to approved projects.
	Prior year register will be deleted.

CEPD will maintain a register of SAFE proposals received for tracking purposes. Proposals for SAFE projects received after June 30 will be placed on the following year’s register and reviewed in the next fiscal year cycle. Submitted proposals on the register will **not** carry over to following years. The register for the previous year will be deleted each October 1.

Proposals not approved may be resubmitted for consideration in the following year’s approval cycle. Because available acres will have been allocated to approved SAFE proposals, requests for reconsideration of SAFE proposals not approved will **not** be accepted.

For existing SAFE projects, CEPD will periodically notify States to submit requests for additional acres, as authorized by the Secretary. States shall submit requests for additional acres by the deadline established in the applicable notice. Acreage allocation determinations will be made within 90 calendar days of the acceptance deadline. States will be notified of acreage allocations between 90 and 120 calendar days after the acceptance deadline.

**Example:** On May 1, the Secretary announces additional SAFE acres. On May 15, CEPD issues a notice authorizing States to submit requests for additional SAFE acres by June 30. Between July 1 and September 30 additional acreage allocation determinations are made. On October 15, CEPD will notify States of additional acreage allocations.--\*

**\*--832 Policy (Continued)****H Acreage Allocation**

Total enrollment shall not exceed the total acres announced by the Secretary. CEPD will maintain a master allocation tracking system to ensure that total SAFE acres are not exceeded. Acreage is allocated to States based on a number of factors including:

- new versus existing projects
- project performance
- project targeted species
- project enhancement of threatened and endangered plant and animal species survival.

State projects will be limited to the State's allocation.

**833 SAFE Proposals****A Proposal Development**

A SAFE proposal may be developed and put forth by a Federal, State, or local agency or by a private organization. Ideally, all partners will develop proposals under a cooperative and collaborative environment. The proposal shall be developed consistent with the process set forth in this paragraph and shall comply with the format provided in Exhibit 63.

Proposals shall include documentation of support from TSP, cooperating partners, or stakeholders.

States shall **not** submit proposals for SAFE projects that overlap existing CREP agreements.

**Example:** State A has A CREP agreement that targets Lesser Prairie Chickens in counties, A, B, and C. State shall **not** develop a SAFE proposal for Lesser Prairie Chickens that includes counties A, B, and C.--\*

**\*--833 SAFE Proposals (Continued)**

**A Proposal Development (Continued)**

Proposals shall be based on the existing CRP framework and CRP practices. All proposals must be limited to the following SAFE practices and the applicable CRP practices.

<b>SAFE Practice</b>	<b>Practice Type</b>	<b>Applicable CRP Practices</b>
CP38A	Buffers	CP8A, CP21, CP22
CP38B	Wetlands	CP9, CP23, CP23A, CP27, CP28, CP37
CP38C	Trees	CP3, CP3A, CP16, CP17, CP25, CP32, CP31, CP35
CP38D	Longleaf Pine	CP3A, CP36
CP38E	Grass	CP1, CP2, CP4D, CP8, CP12, CP15's, CP18's, CP24 CP25, CP33

A SAFE proposal may select 1 or more CRP practices for use as SAFE practices. CRP practices may be used without modification, or 1 or more practices may be modified. See subparagraph B.

**Example:** SAFE practices intended to restore habitat for the benefit of Sharp-Tailed Grouse in Idaho may incorporate CP2 (Native Grass Restoration) and CP4D (Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Noneasement) as best suited for the project and these practices may be used under CP38E (Grass) without changes.

**B Practice Modifications**

CRP practices provided in this handbook may be modified by imposing additional requirements within 2-CRP practice standard guidelines. Rationale for CRP practice modifications shall be:

- part of the SAFE proposal
- supported by scientifically-defensible information or expert judgment.

These changes apply only within the approved SAFE practice geographic area.

**Note:** Practice requirements may not be relaxed.

**Example:** The Sharp-Tailed Grouse Restoration SAFE practice, CP38E, could require all plantings (based on CP4D) to have 5 native species of grasses plus a requirement that Silver Sage Brush be a part of the planting.

The Sharp-Tailed Grouse Restoration SAFE practice, CP38E, could alter CP2 (Native Grass Restoration) by the seeding rates or frequency of disturbance.--\*

**\*--833 SAFE Proposals (Continued)****C State Proposal Review**

All SAFE proposals shall be submitted to the FSA State Office. After a review for completeness, the FSA State Office will request the State Technical Committee to review and report recommendations to FSA STC. FSA STC shall review all proposals and, then forward their recommendations to CEPD.

**D CEPD Approval**

CEPD will review all new SAFE proposals for completeness and conformity to the format provided in Exhibit 63. SAFE proposals that are incomplete will be rejected and returned to the State Office for resubmission.

Complete SAFE proposals will be sorted into 2 groups as follows:

- proposals providing benefits to rare, threatened, endangered, and species of special concern
- proposals providing significant social or economic value to the community, such as game birds.

Proposals within each group will be prioritized and ranked by CEPD based on factors including:

- targeted species
- quality of habitat enhancement for targeted species
- size and scope of project area
- available acres
- cost
- effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation plan.--\*

**\*--834 Existing SAFE Projects****A Modifications to Existing SAFE Projects**

Proposed modifications to existing SAFE projects must be coordinated with all State SAFE partners and:

- submitted to CEPD and include:
  - a cover memo summarizing the project changes and requesting approval
  - amended pages to the approved SAFE project proposal following the format provided in Exhibit 63
- include sufficient analysis and documentation justifying the changes and any new GIS data and appropriate maps, new practice provisions, payment provisions, etc.

**Note:** For amendments to existing SAFE projects where the project area will change, follow shapefile requirements in Exhibit 63.

**B Requesting Additional Acres**

State Offices that can demonstrate that their proposal targets high priority State wildlife conservation objectives may request an additional acreage allocation for the project. State requests for additional acres shall include sufficient documentation justifying the additional acres including:

- cover memo providing targeted species
- acres requested
- any reports of outstanding requests
- support from cooperating agencies or partners (Cooperating Federal agencies such as US Fish and Wildlife Service, State Department of Agriculture, State wildlife agencies, and other wildlife NGO's).

States may request additional acres at any time.--\*

**\*--834 Existing SAFE Projects (Continued)****B Requesting Additional Acres (Continued)**

Requests for additional acres will be prioritized and ranked by CEPD based on factors including:

- targeted species (rare, threatened, endangered, species of special concern, species that provide significant social or economic value)
- quality of habitat enhancement for targeted species
- size and scope of project area
- project performance
- available acres.

**Notes:** Because past requests for additional acres significantly outweighed available acres when announced by the Secretary, requests may be factored based on the above criteria versus total acres available.

Underperforming projects may have their allocation reduced.

**C Requests to Transfer Acres Between Existing Projects**

State Offices that can demonstrate that their project targets high priority State wildlife conservation objectives may request to transfer available acres between existing projects. States requesting to transfer acres between projects shall submit requests to CEPD for review and approval.

Requests to transfer acres shall include:

- project providing acres and project to receive acres
- targeted species receiving acres
- size and scope of project area
- project performance report from the previous year
- available acres
- documentation of support from TSP, cooperating partners, and stakeholders.--\*

**\*--834 Existing SAFE Projects (Continued)****D CEPD Review**

CEPD shall:

- review existing projects for conformity with these provisions and project performance
- approve requests and notify State by memorandum.

Projects which do not meet the objectives of the original proposal or are underperforming may have their acres reduced.

**835 Performance Reporting****A Performance Reporting**

Each existing SAFE project shall provide an annual performance report. The annual report shall be sent before December 31st of each year and shall include the following:

- overview of project accomplishments
- description of each modified practice and list of all practices
- enrollment by practice
- State/private resource commitment
- monitoring/evaluation methods and results
- outreach efforts.

**Note:** The report shall be sent to CEPD electronically as a Microsoft Word document with data in Excel. Failure to provide the annual report by the deadline can result in an acreage adjustment.

**B Performance Monitoring and Evaluation**

To determine whether the practices selected create the desired habitat, the FSA State Office shall collaborate with qualified professionals in the wildlife community to design and implement an appropriate habitat and wildlife population monitoring and evaluation plan. Wildlife population response to the habitat must be conducted in a scientifically defensible manner, use generally accepted techniques, and make the resulting data, papers, and reports available to FSA and the scientific community.

**Note:** Exhibit 63 provides the elements for a monitoring worksheet.--\*



## Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority (Continued)

## Abbreviations Not Listed in 1-CM

The following lists approved abbreviations not listed in 1-CM.

<b>Approved Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Reference</b>
CAB	crop acreage base	240
COLS	Conservation Online System	81, 286, 332, 339, Ex. 21
CP	conservation practice	Text, Ex. 11, 26
CPO	Conservation Plan of Operation	669
CPA	conservation priority area	Text, Ex. 11, 18, 26
C/S	cost share	Text and Exhibits
CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program	Text
CRP-SIP	CRP-Signing Incentive Payment	Text, Ex. 11
CSP	Conservation Stewardship Program	151, 804, 806
EA	environmental assessment	Text
EBI	environmental benefits index	Text, Ex. 26
EI	erodibility index	81, 151, 774, Ex. 2, 11, 26
EFCRP	Emergency Forestry Conservation Reserve Program	66, Part 9, 546, Ex. 2, 11, 60
ESA	Endangered Species Act	366, 367
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program	Text
EWP	Emergency Watershed Protection Program	554, 571, 575, 630
EWRP	Emergency Wetlands Reserve Program	81, 571
FID	Feature ID field	181
FRPP	Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	554, 575, 630,
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact	665, 772
FOTG	Field Office Technical Guide	Text, Ex. 11, 26
FWP	Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program	Text, Ex. 11
GIS	Geographic Information System	550, 772, 773
HFRP	Healthy Forest Restoration Program	554, 575, 630
HUC	hydrologic unit code	Ex. 26
MPL	marginal pastureland	212, 312
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act	366, 367, 716, 772
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act	366, 367
NIFA	National Institute of Food and Agriculture	18, 82, 83, 522, 523, 775
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	367
NGO	Non-Government Organization	771, 772, 775

Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority (Continued)

Abbreviations Not Listed in 1-CM (Continued)

Approved Abbreviation	Term	Reference
PAS	Public Affairs Staff, FSA	772
PIP	practice incentive payment	Text, Ex. 11
PLS	pure live seed	426, 491
PNIF	private nonindustrial forestland	261, 262, Ex. 2, 11
PV	present value	264
RA	regional attorney	Text
REX	re-enrollments and extensions	335, 546, 571, Ex. 20, 60
RKLS	Gross Potential Erosion or Potential Erosion	Ex. 26
RUSLE	Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation	52, 151, Ex. 26
SAFE	State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement	Text, Ex. 60, 63
SEC	State Environmental Coordinator	367, 639, 692
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer	367, 772, 776
SIP	signup incentive payment	Text
SRC	State Resource Conservationist	Ex. 11
SRR	soil rental rate	Text, Ex. 11
TERRA	Tool for Environmental Resource Results Assessment	171, 181, 286
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	367
TIP	Transition Incentive Program	401, 576, 577, Part 21, Ex. 60-62
TIPA	Transition Incentive Program Agreement	126, 401, 463, 577
TSP	Technical Service Provider	Text, Ex. 2, 11, 26
USLE	Universal Soil Loss Equation	151
WBP	Water Bank Program	101, 401
WEQ	Wind Erosion Equation	52, 151
WESL	Wind Erosion Soils List	Ex. 26
WHIP	Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program	151, 181
WRI	wetland restoration incentive	Text, Ex. 11

Redelegations of Authority

The following table lists redelegations of authority in this handbook.

Redelegation	Reference
STC may delegate an official representative to sign documents.	31
COC may delegate to CED the responsibility to approve requests for haying and grazing.	664, 680, 693, 716, 720, 721, 741

**\*--SAFE Proposal Example**

**A SAFE Proposal Format**

SAFE proposals shall be prepared according to the following criteria:

- use bulleted lists, tables, or short narratives
- submit an electronic copy in Microsoft Word
- no more than 5 to 10 pages in length
- format and separate required information into sections, according to the following.

Include the following information in each section.

**1.0 Project Overview**

**1.1** Project Name

**1.2** Contact Organization, Name, Address, Telephone Number, FAX Number, E-mail Address

**1.3** Stakeholders

**1.4** State or States

**1.5** County or Counties

**1.6** Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) (11- to 14-digit code)

**2.0 Project Goals**

**2.1** Describe the desired goal of the project.

**2.2** Provide measurable program outcomes and timeframes for when the outcomes would be achieved.

**2.3** List no more than 5 species with supporting documentation such as technical, peer reviewed publications, reports, or studies by State DNR, State wildlife agencies, USFWS, etc.--\*

**\*--SAFE Proposal Example (Continued)**

**A SAFE Proposal Format (Continued)**

**3.0 Project Description**

- 3.1** Defined project boundaries (State, county, HUC code (11- to 14-digit code).
- 3.2** GIS file of the project boundaries in Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) shapefile format:
  - 3.2.1** Shapefile for project area
  - 3.2.2** Shapefile for each target species within the project area.
- 3.3** CRP acreage request for SAFE.
- 3.4** List of SAFE practices and applied CRP practices in the following format; CP38A-8A, CP38C-3, CP38D-3A, CP38E-1, etc.
- 3.5** With each applicable CRP practice, list the proposed additional requirements.
- 3.6** Technical practice requirements (number of species, species selection, planting requirements, etc.) for each SAFE practice.
- 3.7** Habitat type to be restored.
- 3.8** Map of land use and existing habitat types in project area (proposed CRP land in relationship to existing habitats) as an attachment in ESRI shape file format:
  - 3.8.1** Map of project area
  - 3.8.2** Map for each target species within the project area
  - 3.8.3** Map of project area with existing CREP agreement overlay.
- 3.9** Brief description of existing conditions (human and environmental within the project area).
- 3.10** Description of other Federal, State, and private efforts to achieve project goals and objectives.

**4.0 Project Benefits**

- 4.1** Describe benefits (including societal, recreational, economic, and environmental) of the proposed project
- 4.2** Describe relationship to existing Federal and State Wildlife plans or strategies, such as the State Wildlife Comprehensive Strategies.--\*

**\*--SAFE Proposal Example (Continued)**

**A SAFE Proposal Format (Continued)**

**5.0 Project Cost**

- 5.1** Estimate FSA CRP payments.
- 5.2** Provide any additional State and private resources that will assist in the project.
- 5.3** Provide estimated CCC life of project costs.
- 5.4** Provide estimated State and private partners out-of-pocket costs.

**6.0 Project Monitoring and/or Evaluation Plan**

A habitat and wildlife population monitoring and evaluation plan is required and shall use generally accepted techniques appropriate to the geographic area and habitat type.

**7.0 Project Public Outreach Program**

- 7.1** Provide a discussion of the public support and outreach efforts to support the program.
- 7.2** Describe any communication plan for the proposed project.
- 7.3** Develop and provide a fact sheet about the SAFE practice for use with producers.--\*

**\*--SAFE Proposal Example (Continued)**

**B Consideration for SAFE Monitoring and Evaluation**

**General**

Number of Contracts and Acres by SAFE Project

Featured Species (Primary and Secondary) by SAFE Project

Other Species Benefitting by SAFE Project

Paired Plots of General versus Continuous CRP (SAFE) within SAFE Project Area

Run Sampling Twice During the Year (June and October)

Conduct a Representative, Random Sample of CRP Fields, Select SAFE Field First (then Closest General CRP Field for Paired Sample)

SAFE Project Being Monitored Should Have a Minimum of 50 Contracts

Sample 10 Percent of the SAFE Contracts (One Field per Contract) not to Exceed 50 Fields per SAFE Project

Maximum Total of 50 SAFE Fields and 50 General CRP Fields Surveyed per SAFE Project Area

Sampling Scheme Consists of Point Transect Lines (Minimum of 2 per CRP Field- One along Field Border; the other more or less centered along the Longest Axis of the Field)

Record Vegetative and Wildlife Observations by Field and/or Transect

**Vegetative Cover**

Composition

New, Native Grass, Forbs, Legumes, and Shrubs

Existing Native Grass, Forbs, Legumes, and Shrubs

New Introduced Grass, Forbs, Legumes, and Shrubs

Existing Introduced Grass, Forbs, Legumes, and Shrubs

New Trees

Existing Trees--\*

**\*--SAFE Proposal Example (Continued)**

**B Consideration for SAFE Monitoring and Evaluation (Continued)**

Is the prescribed vegetative cover adequately established across the field? Y/N

Does the current vegetative cover consist of a diverse mix of preferred species? Y/N

Or does the vegetative cover consist of a monoculture of one or just a few dominant species?  
Y/N

Is the prescribed vegetative cover being adequately maintained and/or managed? Y/N

Which maintenance and/or management activities are being applied:

Mowing/Haying

Grazing

Herbicide

Disking

Prescribed Burning

Brush Removal

Tree Thinning

Other (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_.

Identify the Dominant Species Present:

Grass/Forbs/Legumes

Shrubs

Trees.

Are Invasive/Noxious Species Present? Y/N

Ocular estimate of Vegetative Cover Distribution by Percent

Grass \_\_\_\_\_%

Forbs/Legumes \_\_\_\_\_%

Shrubs \_\_\_\_\_%

Trees \_\_\_\_\_%

Invasives \_\_\_\_\_%

Bare ground \_\_\_\_\_% --\*

**\*--SAFE Proposal Example (Continued)**

**B Consideration for SAFE Monitoring and Evaluation (Continued)**

**Structure**

Average Height of Dominant:

Grass \_\_\_\_\_

Shrubs \_\_\_\_\_

Trees \_\_\_\_\_.

Does vegetation present provide adequate cover to meet the life history needs of the featured species throughout the year? Y/N

**Wildlife Observations**

By Transect or Field

Species Identified

Visual Count by Featured and/or Other Species

Audible Count by Featured and/or Other Species

Other Count by Featured and/or Other Species--\*