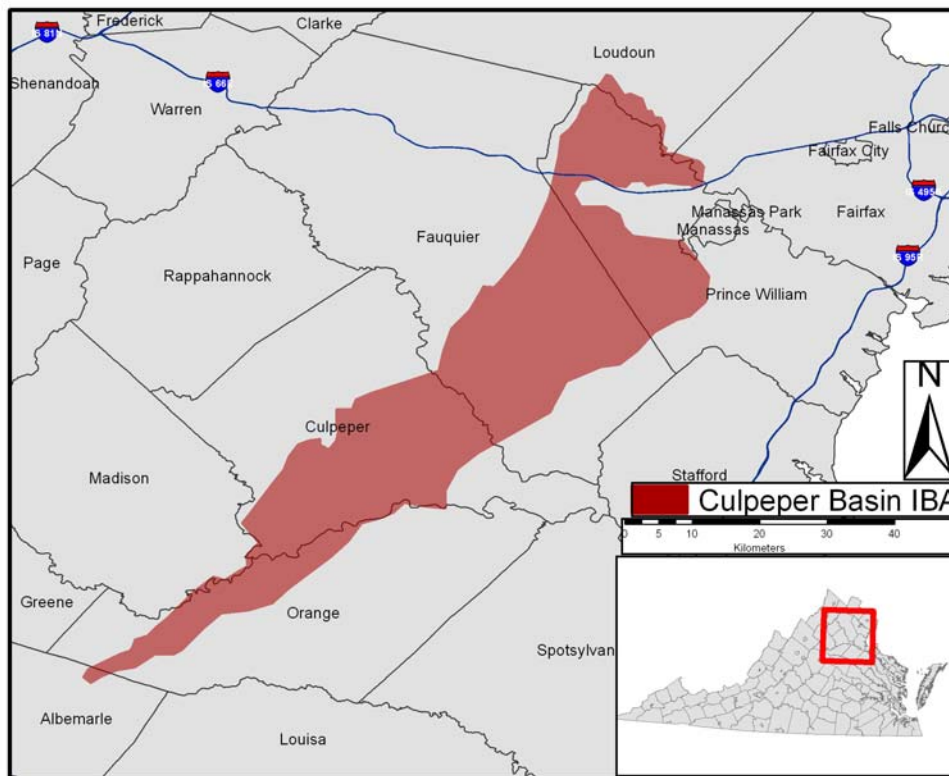


Culpeper Basin Important Bird Area Habitat Restoration Project State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Important Bird Area and where is the Culpeper Basin IBA located?

Important Bird Areas (IBA) are sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds. IBAs include sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. They may be a few acres or thousands of acres in size and are defined primarily by habitat boundaries. Consequently, IBAs may include public or private lands, or both, and they may be protected or unprotected. There are no regulatory restrictions on lands that fall within IBAs.



The Culpeper Basin IBA covers several counties, but the SAFE Program covers parts of Orange, Culpeper and Fauquier Counties.

What is this project's mission?

The Culpeper Basin's IBA mission seeks to restore 1,000 acres of land to grass, shrub land and riparian habitat for sensitive bird species along the Rappahannock and Rapidan rivers. The IBA will use native trees, shrubs and grasses to restore riparian buffers and uplands that will collectively create a corridor of diverse wildlife habitats. The mix of proposed habitats will provide nesting sites, food, and cover

needs for a number of different birds and other wildlife species. In addition riparian restoration will improve water quality benefiting not only aquatic species, but also the communities within the watershed.

What is SAFE and how does it Work?

State Acres For wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) is a practice within the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a voluntary program that encourages agricultural landowners to restore highly erodible land to vegetative cover. Through SAFE, eligible landowners will receive all the benefits of CRP, including annual rental payments and cost-share assistance for restoring land. SAFE participants will also receive additional incentive payments and cost share assistance that, along with the regular CRP benefits, can total more than 100% of the cost of restoration.

What are the benefits of enrolling in SAFE?

There are many benefits to enrolling in SAFE. Not only will you be helping to create wildlife habitat for numerous species of concern in Virginia, but you will also be improving the quality of your land for agriculture by reducing erosion, controlling invasive species and weeds, and creating habitat for native pollinators. SAFE is good for your pocketbook too. Participating landowners will receive significant financial compensation for restoring their land and removing it from production (See ‘What are the Financial Incentives of SAFE?’). SAFE can also improve your land for hunting and increase water quality in your local area and beyond.

Who administers the SAFE Program?

- The Farm Service Agency administers the Conservation Reserve Program and SAFE while technical support functions are provided by state and federal agencies.

Am I eligible for SAFE?

- To be eligible for SAFE, landowners must be within the Culpeper Basin IBA and meet all eligibility requirements for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Your local Farm Service Agency or Soil and Water Conservation District can help you decide if this program is right for you. Please see Contacts at the bottom of the page for an agent near you.

What are the financial incentives of SAFE?

There are many financial incentives for SAFE. Not only are individual soil rentals available at your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center, but you may receive up to 50% of the eligible cost of establishing a permanent cover.

SAFE participants may receive the following benefits:

- An up-front, one-time CRP Signing Incentive Payment (CRP-SIP) of \$100 per acre which is made after the contract is approved.
- Rental Payments
- Maintenance Incentive Payments
- Cost-share Assistance
- And more!

Offers for CRP contracts are ranked according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). FSA uses several EBI factors to assess the environmental benefit of land being offered to the program. Please contact your local FSA or Soil and Water Conservation District for more information.

Is hunting and fishing allowed on SAFE enrolled land?

Yes, fishing and hunting are allowed on SAFE/CRP-enrolled land. As with other conservation practices, certain restrictions apply. Please contact your Farm Service Agency representative for more information.

How do I Sign Up?

The USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will conduct sign-up for SAFE on a continuous, ongoing, basis. Landowners within the priority areas will be accepted until the cap of 1000 acres has been met. Although all landowners in the priority region are eligible to apply, priority will be given to those landowners with larger parcels and who have properties that adjoin the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers or their tributaries.

Where can I get more information about the Culpeper Basin IBA SAFE project?

Mary Elfner
National Audubon
Virginia Important Bird Area Program
(804) 788-7660
melfner@audubon.org
www.audubon.org

Maggi MacQuilliam
Piedmont Environmental Council
Land Conservation
(540) 347-2334 x29
mmacquilliam@pecva.org
www.pecva.org

How can I contact my local Farm Service Agency or Soil and Water Conservation District?

Fauquier County

John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District
Conservation Specialists: Tom Turner, Larry Dunn, Melissa Allen, & Brent Barriteau
(540) 347-3120 x3

Farm Service Agency – Service Center Office
Farm Loan Manager: Kimberly Depasquale, (540) 899-9492 x105
County Executive Director: Robert Williamson, (540) 347-4402

Orange & Culpeper County

Orange & Culpeper County Soil & Water Conservation District

Conservation Specialists: Richards Jacobs III, W. Spencer Yager, David Massie, & Evan Blumenstein

(540) 825-8591

Farm Service Agency – Service Center Office

Farm Loan Manager: Kimberly Depasquale, (540) 899-9492 x105

County Executive Director: Cynthia Bowman, (540) 672-1639



Audubon IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

