CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM – STATE ACRES FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT ENHANCEMENT (CRP – SAFE)

Dale Allen – July 2011

USDA FSA FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Notice CRP-560, State Acres for Wildlife Habitat Enhancement (SAFE), was issued March 22, 2007 and solicited proposals towards this conservation cooperative effort

Michigan received two CRP SAFE proposals:

- The Southern Michigan Diverse Grasslands and
- The Native Pollinator Plantings

Both were approved by the Michigan Technical Committee and Michigan FSA State Committee in April of 2008

Sign-up began October 1, 2008.

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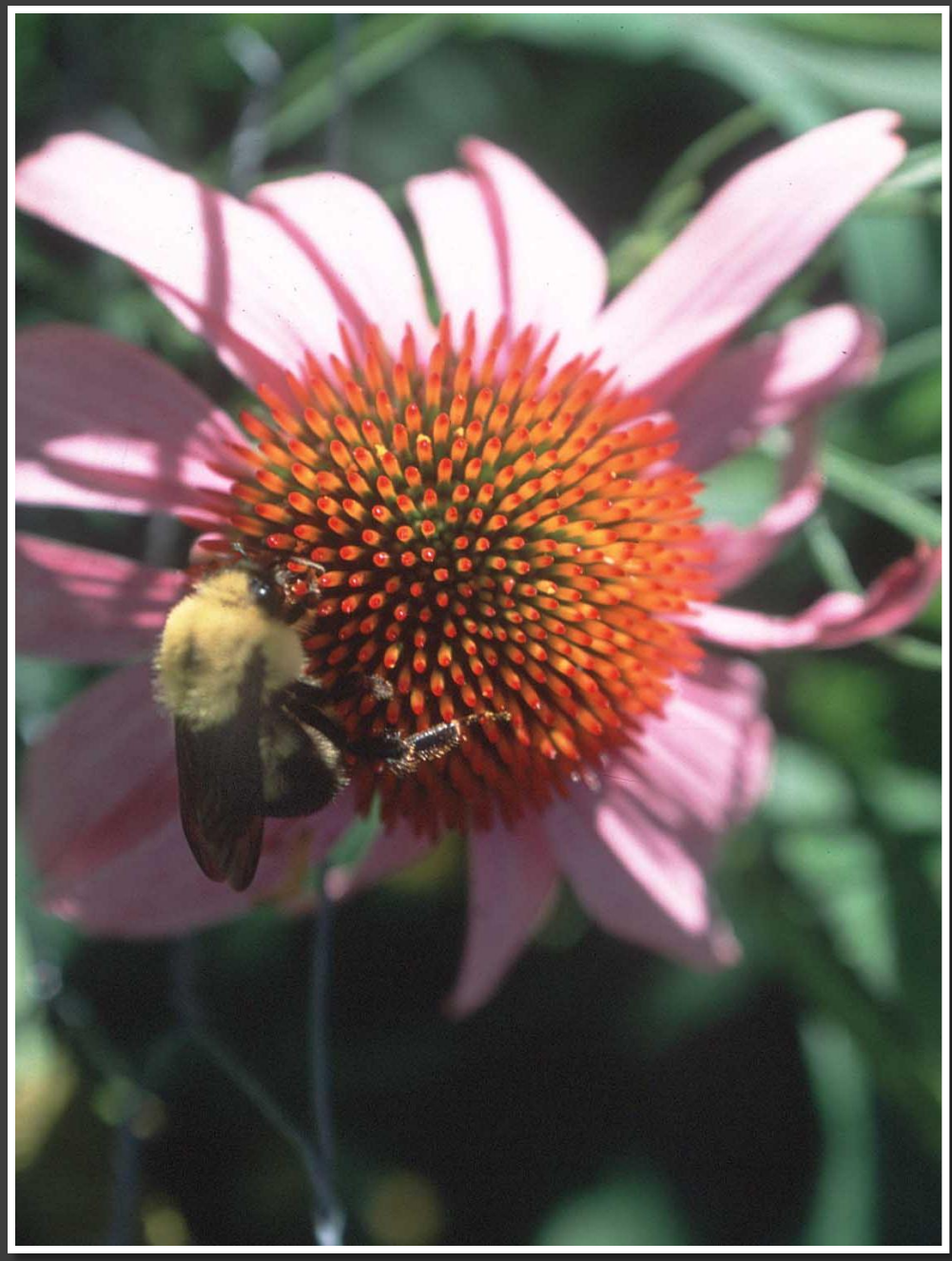

CRP SAFE

The goal of the CRP SAFE Pollinator Habitat Planting Proposal is to enroll and establish 2,500 acres to diverse native grasses and wildflowers for pollinator habitat in 22 Michigan Counties along Lake Michigan within 5 years.

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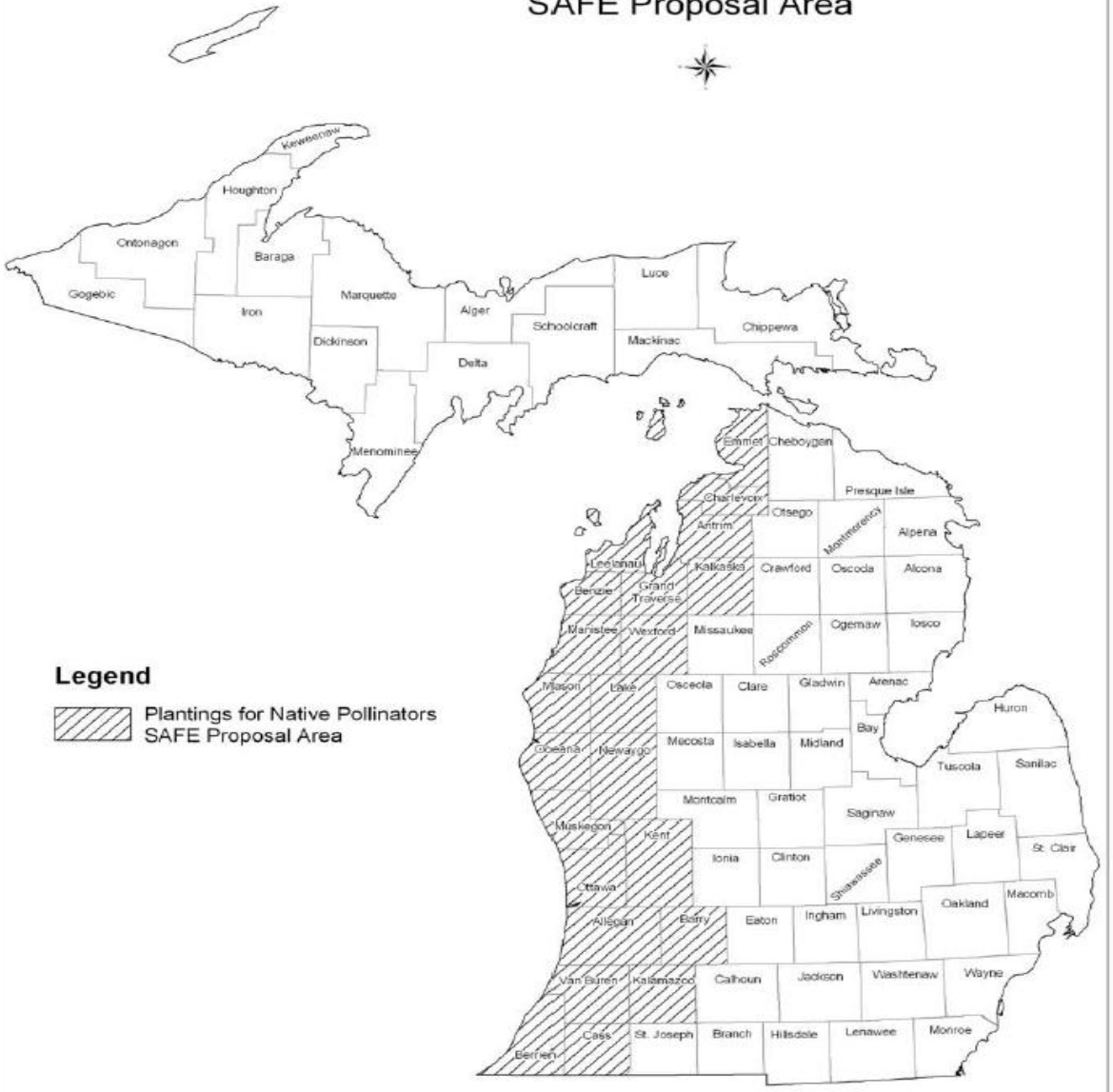
NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service
MICHIGAN

Plantings for Native Pollinators
SAFE Proposal Area



Legend

Plantings for Native Pollinators
SAFE Proposal Area

6/26/08
Map produced at the Michigan State Office
/mimisc_projects/FY08/thomas/SAFE_pollinators.mxd

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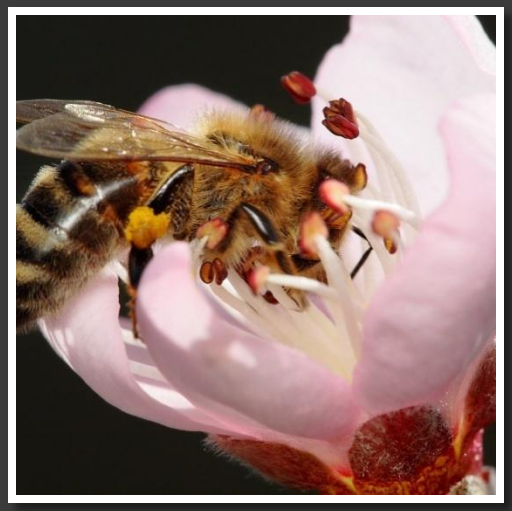

Eligibility for CRP SAFE Pollinator Habitat Plantings

- Acreage must be located within the 22 county focus area
- Acreage must have a cropping history (4 out of 6 years from 2002 – -2007) and/or be part of an FSA Tract which includes working orchard, vineyard or perennial fruit producing area
- Acreage must be physically capable of being planted to an annual agricultural commodity

These pollinator habitat plantings may consist of a block, a border planting or a whole field, but must be a minimum of 2.0 acres in size with a minimum width of 100 feet (see exception).

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CRP SAFE POLLINATOR HABITAT PLANTING POLICY

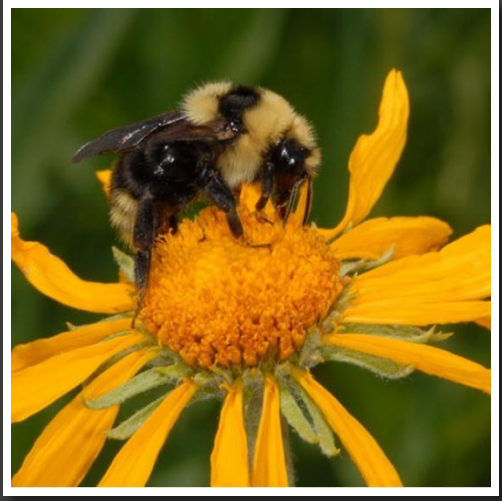
- For optimum pollinator habitat, the planting will be a diverse mix of grasses and wildflowers that provide a nectar and pollen source throughout the growing season
- In addition to benefiting pollinators, these mixtures will provide winter and nesting cover and food for a variety of wildlife, including grassland birds
- The mixture will consist of a maximum of 2 pounds Pure Live Seed (PLS) per acre of native grasses and 2 pounds PLS per acre of native wildflowers.

CRP SAFE POLLINATOR HABITAT PLANTING POLICY, CONT.

- The wildflower mix must include at least 12 native species from the Michigan CRP SAFE Eligible Wildflower List and must include the following:
  - Coreopsis
  - Yellow Coneflower
  - Purple Coneflower
  - Wild Bergamot
  - New England Aster
  - And a Goldenrod species
  - No one species may exceed 15%, by weight or 6 seeds per sq. ft.

CRP SAFE POLLINATOR HABITAT PLANTING POLICY, CONT.

- Native shrub species may also be included in the pollinator habitat planting
- Eligible native shrub species include the following:
  - Serviceberry
  - Grey, Silky or Red-Osier Dogwood
  - Highbush Cranberry
  - Nannyberry
  - Ninebark
  - Common Elderberry and/or
  - Meadowsweet



CRP SAFE Pollinator Habitat Planting Policy, cont.

Native shrub species, if desired, will be planted in 2 rows, spaced 8 feet apart and 8 feet between the rows.

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CRP SAFE POLLINATOR HABITAT PLANTING POLICY, CONT.

Thorough site preparation and weed control are critical to any successful habitat planting. There are three recommended ways to plant native grasses and wildflowers:

1. Grasses and wildflowers planted in the spring with herbicide treatment
2. Grasses and wildflowers planted in the spring with mowing treatment
3. Plant grasses and control broadleaves with separate planting of wildflowers.

CRP SAFE POLLINATOR HABITAT PLANTING POLICY, CONT.

- If the field is currently in sod, weed control should begin the previous fall using a broad-spectrum herbicide
- Herbicide should again be applied after the spring green-up prior to planting (if possible, a prescribed burn prior to spring green-up to remove the dead litter from the fall treatment will provide best results).

CRP SAFE POLLINATOR HABITAT PLANTING POLICY, CONT.

- First year post planting weed control is imperative, and required, for success!
- Noxious weeds and other undesirable plants, insects, and pests shall be controlled, including such maintenance as necessary to avoid detrimental effects to the surrounding land
- All CRP SAFE Pollinator Habitat Planting contracts must contain mid-contract management every 4 years and will be done after October 1st to protect pollinators and to promote the wildflowers.

- **CP38E NATIVE POLLINATOR:** Grass, Wildflowers and Shrubs

Photo Courtesy of MDA

• CP38E NATIVE POLLINATOR: Grass, Wildflowers and Shrubs

NATIVE GRASSES:
2 ac. Min
100 ft. Min width

Photo Courtesy of MDA

• CP38E NATIVE POLLINATOR: Grass, Wildflowers and Shrubs

POSSIBLE LOCATION?
If part of a working FSA tract that contains an orchard, vineyard or other perennial fruit producing crop, the 2.0 acre minimum can be realized through multiple plantings of not less than .25 acres with a minimum width of 20 feet.

NATIVE WILDFLOWERS AND GRASSES:
2 ac. Min
100 ft. Min width

SHRUBS

Photo Courtesy of MDA

CRP SAFE POLLINATOR HABITAT PLANTING POLICY, CONT.

- CRP SAFE contracts will be a minimum of 10 years not to exceed 15 years, at the landowners discretion
- CRP SAFE contract holders will receive the following financial benefits:
  - **Annual rental payment per acre dependant on the three predominant soils**
  - **$100.00 per acre Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) upon contract approval**
  - **50% flat-rate cost-share to establish the required pollinator habitat**
  - **40% Practice Incentive Payment (PIP), NTE 100% of a producers out of pocket expenses**
  - **Cost-share to complete required mid-contract management.**

CRP SAFE POLLINATOR HABITAT PLANTING POLICY, CONT.

As with the Michigan CREP Agreement, CRP SAFE practices require monitoring to demonstrate environmental benefits. CRP SAFE Pollinator Habitat Plantings monitoring will be conducted

by Michigan State University.

2008 FARM BILL:

"The Secretary of Agriculture may, as appropriate, encourage the development of habitat for native and managed pollinators and the use of conservation practices that benefit native or managed pollinators."

Gaining Ground For Native Pollinators!

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- Further research will be incorporated into the CRP SAFE and other USDA conservation efforts:
  - Habitat placement
  - Quantify environmental benefits
  - Best management and maintenance techniques
  - Economic alternatives to current mix

QUESTIONS?

" The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value."

Theodore Roosevelt