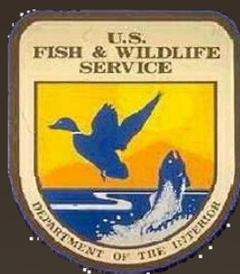


# LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN

Conservation Priority





## PRIMARY POINTS

- Species with large-scale, specific habitat requirements
- Scope is broad geographically and administratively
- Existing threats
- Population Status – need comprehensive range-wide information
- More threats are on the horizon
- Change in Listing Priority Number
- Limited time to implement conservation actions before a final listing decision is due (September 2013)



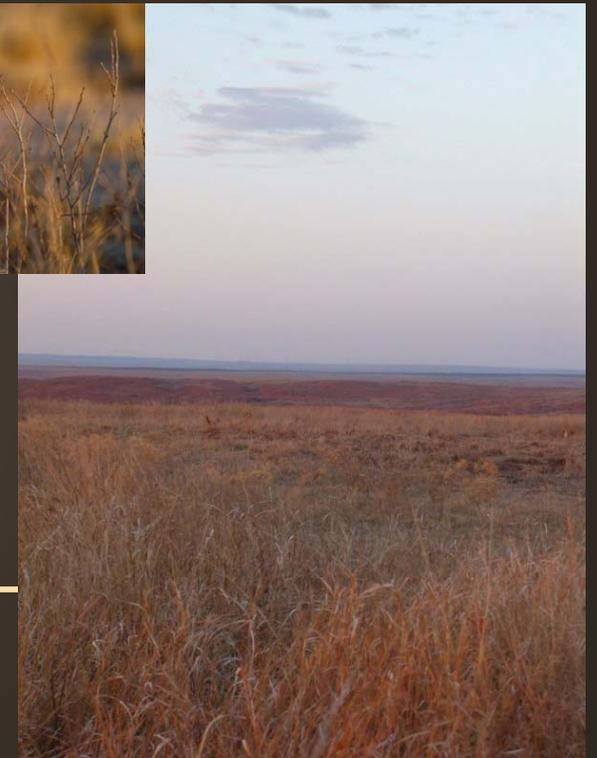


## EXISTING THREATS

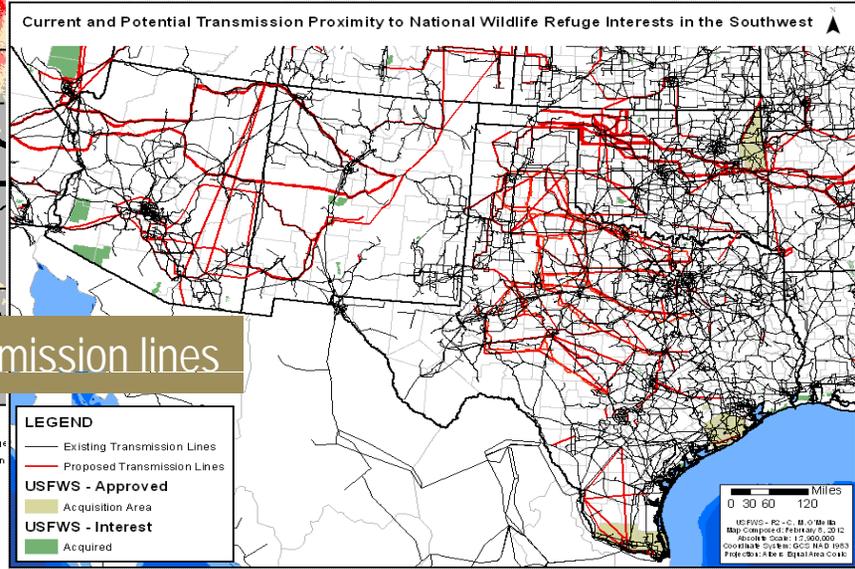
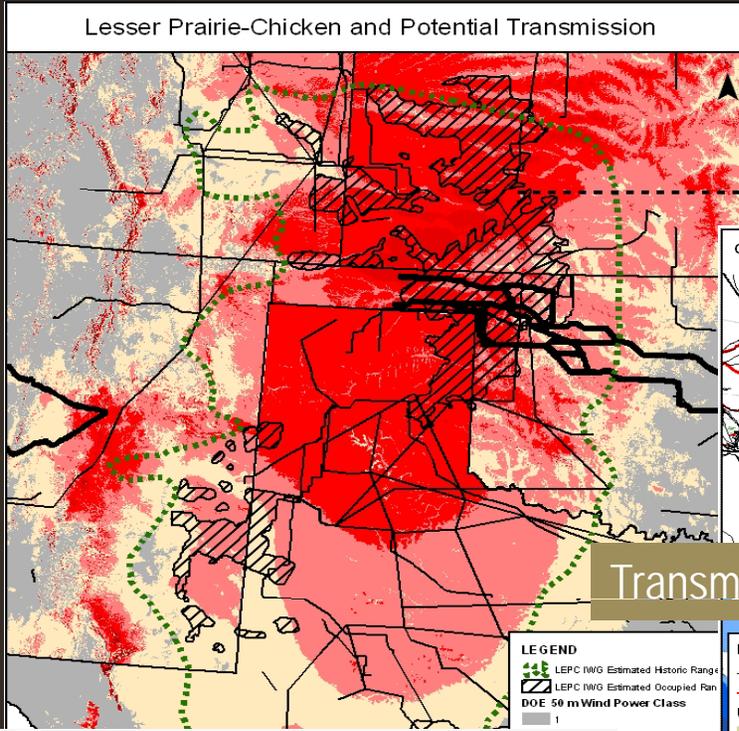
- Habitat loss and degradation
- Habitat fragmentation
- Changing land use



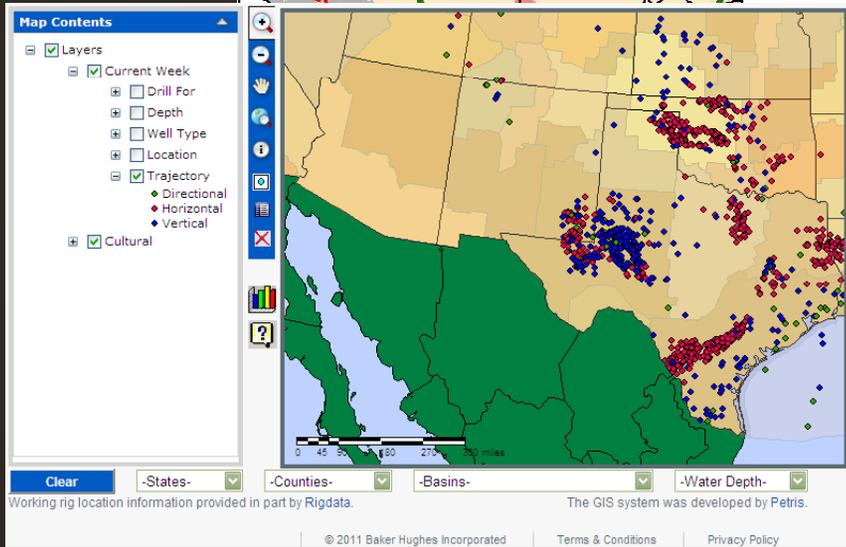
The lesser prairie-chicken needs large tracts of relatively intact native grasslands and prairies to thrive. Habitat loss, modification, degradation, and fragmentation within the species range are the major threats to the species.



# STRESSORS



Transmission lines

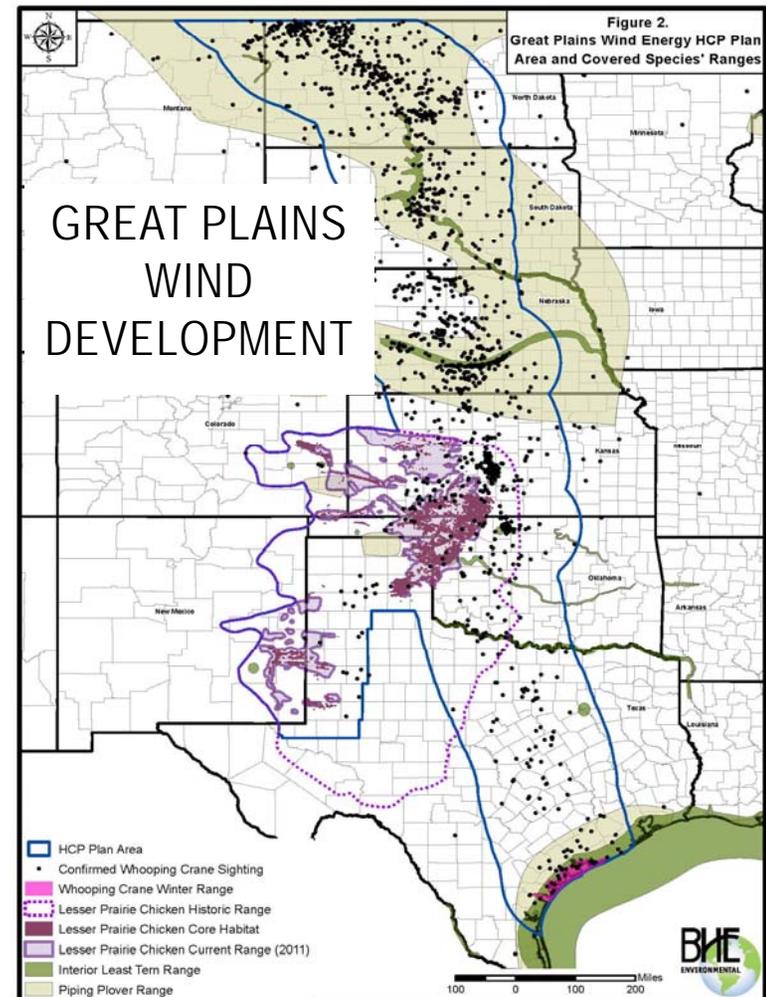
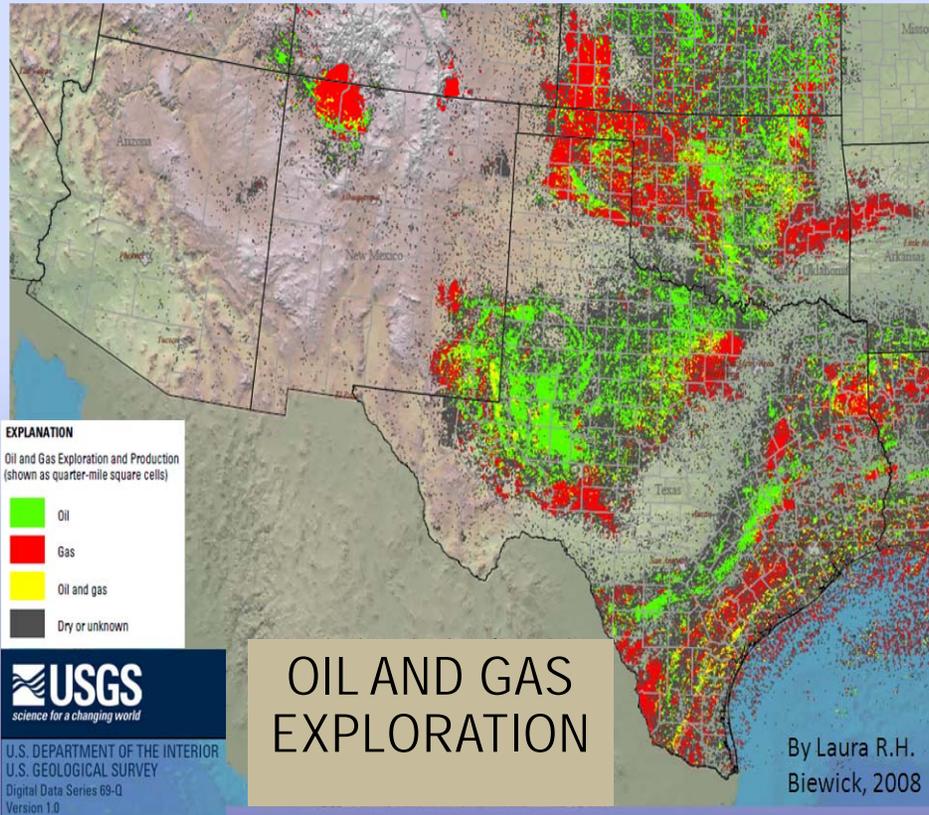


Potential impacts of climate change remain unknown, but of concern.

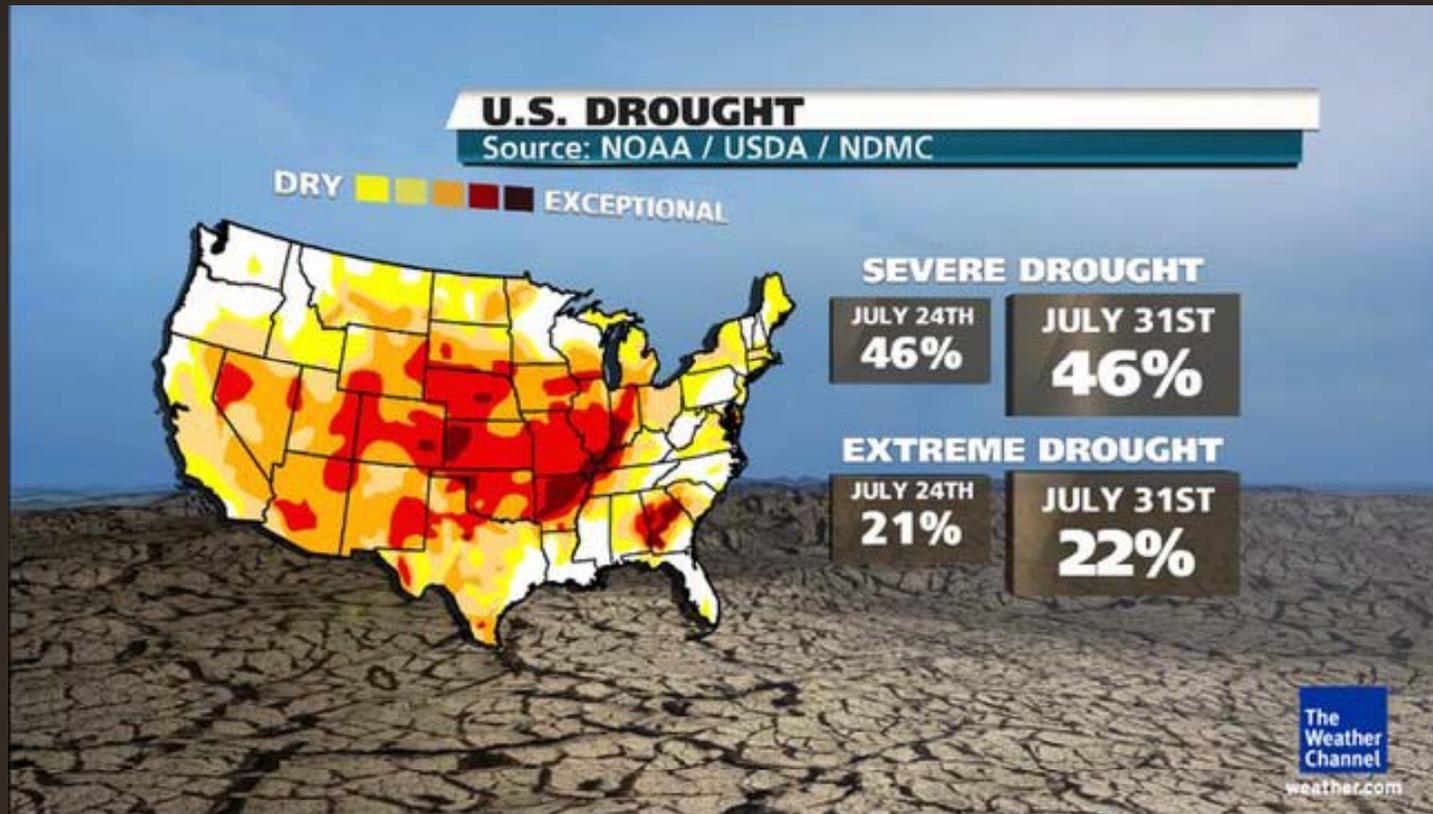


Baker Hughes – Active Drilling Rigs by Trajectory

## Areas of Historical Oil and Gas Exploration and Production in the United States



STRESSORS



## FUNDING CUTS

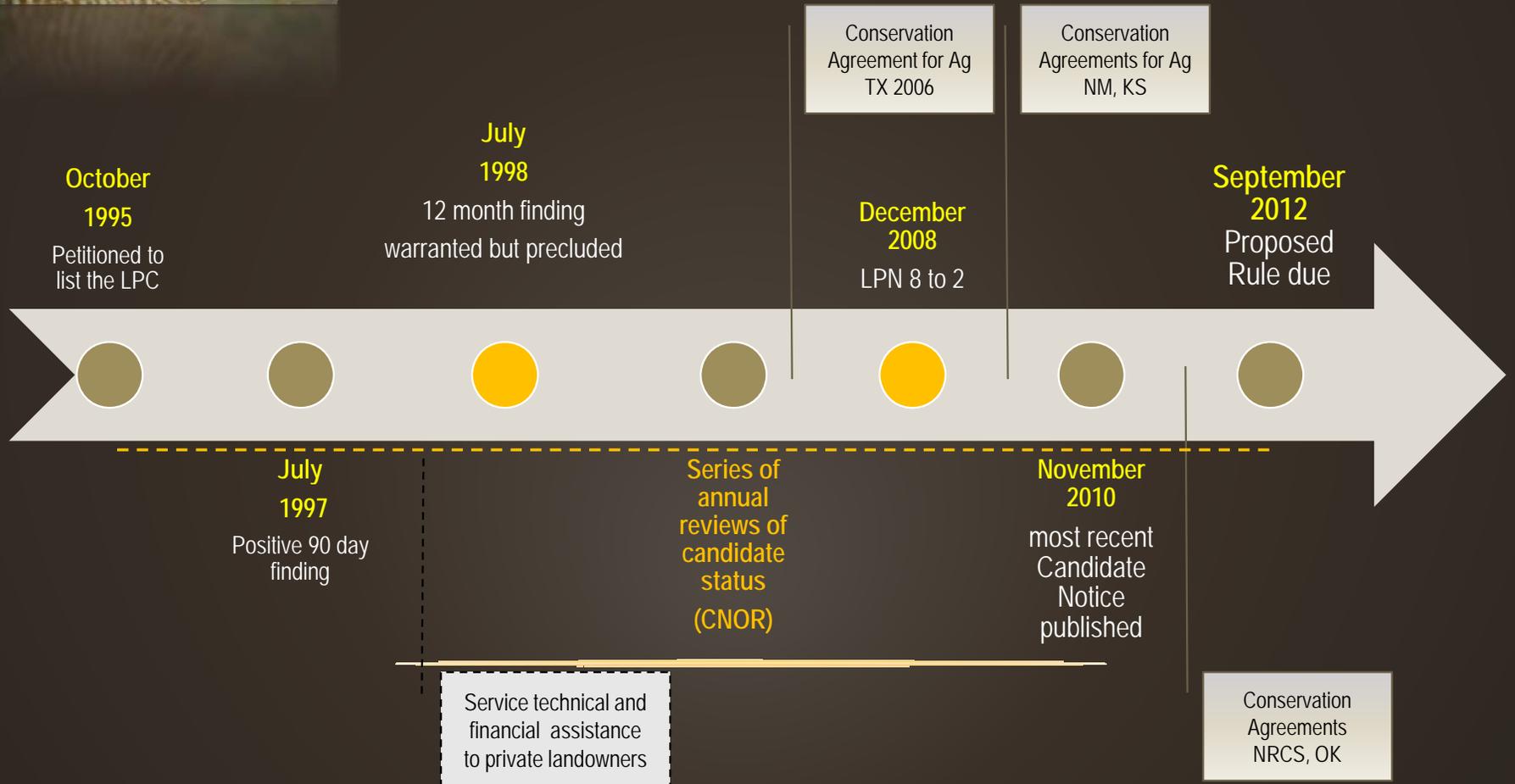
... .. the House leadership pulled the [Farm] bill, and earlier today replaced it with a stand-alone livestock disaster relief bill that is paid for by cutting FY2013 funds from EQIP by \$350m ... ..

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Resiliency ?

# HOW DID WE GET HERE ?

## Candidate Review History



# FIVE FACTOR THREATS ANALYSIS

## ESA LISTING DECISIONS

- A. Present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the species range or habitat
- B. Over-use for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes
- C. Disease or predation
- D. Inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms
- E. Other natural or man-made factors affecting the continued existence of the species

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Listing considerations are about existing and future threats



# ESA LISTING PROCESS

- January 2011- March 2012: information gathering and status assessment
- April – September 2012: draft Proposed Rule for Service review process
- **September 2012:** Publish proposed rule to list species as endangered or threatened in *Federal Register* (per MDL/Service settlement terms)
- Public comment period (minimum 60 days); public meetings, if requested
- Respond to public comment, make final determination and publish a final rule within one year (**September 2013**):
  - List as Endangered/Threatened, **OR**
  - Withdraw proposed rule, **OR**
  - Grant 6-month extension “significant scientific disagreement”
- Will Conservation Agreements be enough to preclude listing at the final listing decision point (2013) ?



# POLICY FOR THE EVALUATION OF CONSERVATION EFFORTS (PECE)

The Policy for the Evaluation of Conservation Efforts When Making Listing Decisions (PECE) was published in the Federal Register by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (Services) on March 28, 2003 (68 FR 15100)

## Origin of the Policy

Under the ESA, a determination of whether a species is threatened or endangered must be made solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available after conducting a review of the status of the species *and "after taking into account those efforts, if any, being made...to protect such species, whether by predator control, protection of habitat and food supply, or other conservation practices"* (applies also to efforts being made by other federal agencies, tribal governments, or private entities)

Courts have upheld consideration of *existing* conservation efforts where the administrative record clearly showed an effort had *reduced or removed a threat* to the species.



# PECE PURPOSE

PECE may also guide the development of conservation efforts that sufficiently improve a species' status so as to make listing the species as threatened or endangered unnecessary."

PECE **does not establish standards** for how much conservation is needed to make listing unnecessary; rather, it is a process for identifying whether a conservation effort that has not been implemented or has not yet demonstrated effectiveness can be considered as part of a basis for a listing determination ( 68 FR 15112, Policy, *Policy Purpose*)

## Evaluation Criteria

### A. Certainty that the Conservation Effort Will Be Implemented

9 evaluation criteria (e.g. funding, legal authorizations, qualifications, parties agree?)

### B. Certainty that the Conservation Effort Will Be Effective

6 evaluation criteria (e.g. steps, goals and objectives, scientifically quantifiable?, monitoring, adaptive management)



What are the conservation action priorities ?

How are we going to achieve them together ?



# CONSERVATION PRIORITY CRITERIA

- Severity of the threats warrants prioritization of conservation actions that focus on recovery, restoration, and re-connection. Avoidance is likely not enough.
- In order to understand the effects of conservation actions, scientifically defensible range-wide metrics must be established (e.g. persistent annual range-wide surveys, spatial population viability assessment)
- Range-wide metrics can be used to develop a rigorous targeting program to define areas for conservation as well as areas for development



# CONSERVATION PRIORITY CRITERIA

- The overall conservation strategy should render benefits to representative species, such as bob-white quail, to achieve a robust conservation strategy at the ecosystem level
- Need alignment among Partners to effectively conserve the species with a five-state comprehensive range-wide strategy
- To achieve these things in the near future, State representatives on the LPC Interstate Working Group need to continue to move forward with the authority of State Agency leadership to benefit the LPC
- Identify an LPC point-of-contact and make it a workload priority



# CONSERVATION PLANS

## CCA/CCAA/HCP

Service has limited resources and will invest those resources if there is :

- Majority Stakeholder representation
- Range-wide scope
- High conservation value to LPC range-wide

## Process

- Stakeholders work with the States, LPCIWG Science Committee, and Service to develop range-wide CCA/A
- Service develops NEPA evaluation for public review (Federal Register)
- Address comments and finalize the CCA/A
- If the CCA/A meets issuance criteria, Service issues a permit pursuant to the CCA/A
- The Regional Office is responsible for processing the CCA/A and issuing the permit, if appropriate

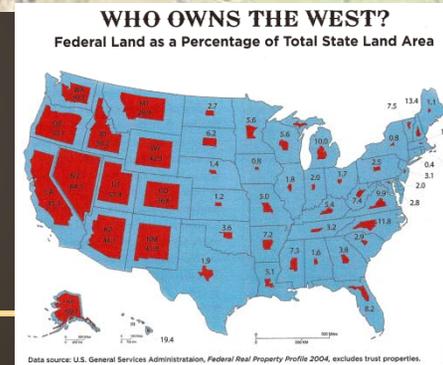
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Timeline depends on when a complete draft is ready for review



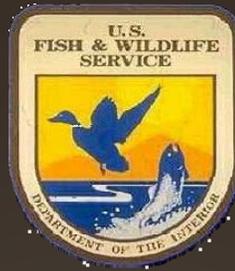
# PARTNERSHIPS

- State wildlife agencies – TPWD, NMGF, ODWC, KWPT, CDOW, WAFWA, AFWA, LPCIWG
- Other state agencies – WGA, TX Comptroller, OK Comptroller, OK Secretary of Environment, state land offices, TDA
- Federal agencies – NRCS (state and DC offices), FSA (state and DC offices), USFS/National Grasslands, USGS, SC/NC CFCs, BLM
- NGO's and other partnerships – TNC, Audubon, Wood Foundation, PLJV, Pheasants Forever, NWTF, TWA, GPLCC
- Universities – TTU, TAMU-K, Sutton Center, OSU, KSU, Co-op Units
- Industry – WEWAG (19 wind companies in HCP), PPROA, OG&E, NMOGA, TXOGA, APLIC



# LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN

## Conservation Priority



QUESTIONS ?