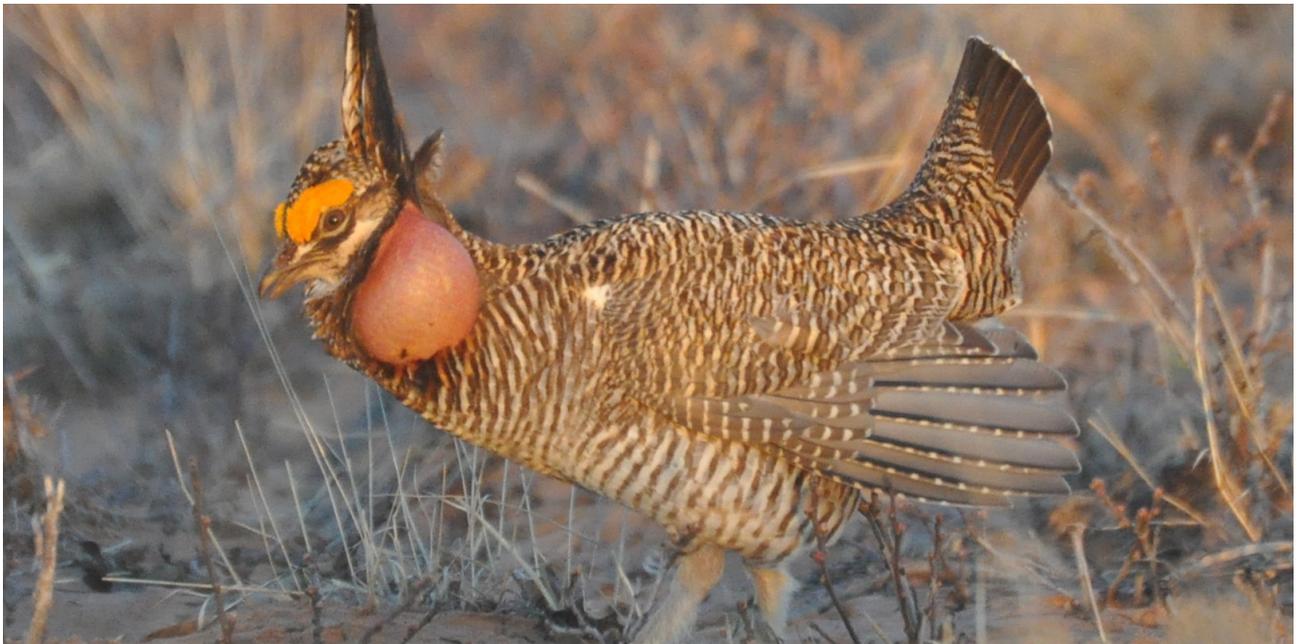




First Year Accomplishments of the WAFWA Range-Wide Lesser Prairie Chicken Conservation Plan



Lesser Prairie
Chicken
Listed as
Threatened

On May 12, 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed the Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC) as threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA). In addition, USFWS published a final special rule under §4(d) of the ESA that provides for incidental take of a LPC if it is conducted by a participant enrolled in and operating in compliance with the WAFWA LPC Interstate Working Group's Range-wide Plan (RWP).

WAFWA, in accordance with the 4(d) rule, established a RWP to develop a conservation strategy for the LPC that identifies, coordinates, and commits to the restoration of habitat for the species throughout its current or expanded range.

Participation in the RWP is through voluntary enrollment via a WAFWA Certificate of Participation (WCP) or the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA).

Enrollment and Impact Fees

To date, there have been 181 companies (energy, electric, oil & gas) enrolled in the WAFWA RWP. During the first year, WAFWA has collected \$42,049,416 in enrollment and impact fees for unavoidable impacts on off-site mitigation actions.

In accordance with the RWP, fee revenues are split 87.5 percent to a conservation trust for conservation offsets and 12.5 percent for administrative expenses of the plan.

WAFWA authorized 1,169 project agreements designed to avoid and minimize impacts to the LPC from various development activities where avoidance was not possible, 70% of which were in lower-quality LPC habitat.

Ten, 10-year landowner contracts, encompassing approximately 96,000 acres, have been finalized. Of the 96,000 acres, 8,349 acres are scheduled to be restored to LPC habitat this reporting period.

The anticipated total payout to landowners for these contracts is \$14,741,200 over the 10-year duration.

By June 30, 2015, 1,604 acres of permanent conservation in the shinnery oak ecoregion were secured under a perpetual conservation easement and management plan.

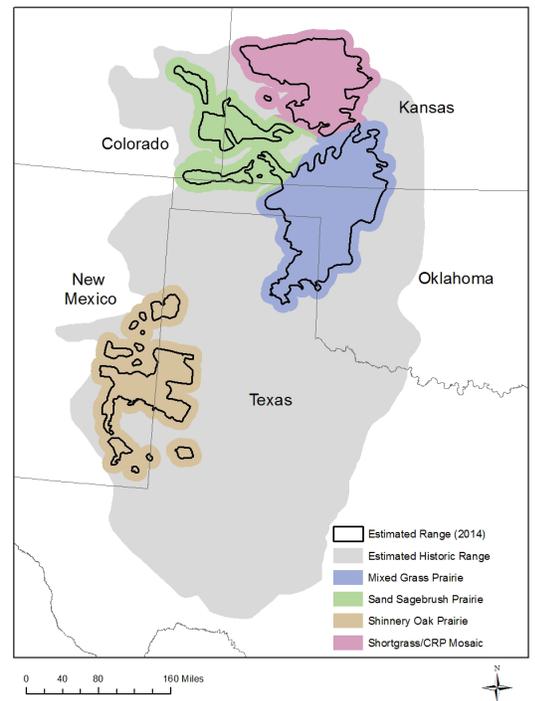
- » Endowments have been established specifically for management of this property.
- » This property offsets more than 10 percent of the industry projects that have been mitigated through the plan.

The Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative Council has utilized an adaptive management framework to incorporate monitoring and new information to maximize conservation benefits to the LPC.

- » Examples that have contributed to the success of the program and benefit to the LPC include adjusting the timing of surveys, the burial of power lines and impact buffers

Overall, the WAFWA RWP allowed for economic development to thrive in a seamless manner by providing an efficient mechanism to voluntarily conserve the LPC in compliance with the ESA.

Recent aerial survey results indicate that the range-wide LPC population increased approximately 25% to 29,162 birds from 2014 to 2015. Population increases were noted in three of the four ecoregions.



25% Population Increase