

Project Charter

Pilot Title: Spatial modeling tool for identifying and prioritizing Lesser Prairie Chicken habitat

The intent of this project charter is to bring together the Wildlife Department Directors from Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas, to agree upon the means for development and the products of a Western Governor's Association pilot study entitled above.

This project will occur over a two-year period. In year one, a range wide lesser prairie chicken (LEPC) geospatial planning tool will be developed. In year two, the states will decide upon a suite of shared species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) and using the LEPC geospatial planning tool as a template develop a decision support system (DSS) to include these species in a final product.

Throughout the process Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) will serve as facilitator for meetings, workshops, training sessions, technical project development meetings and project completion.

VERSION: 1.1

REVISION DATE: 2 June 2010

Approval of the Project Charter indicates an understanding of the purpose and content described in this deliverable. By signing this deliverable, each individual agrees work should be initiated on this project and necessary resources should be committed as described herein.

Approver Name	Title	Signature	Date
Tom Remington	Director, Colorado Division of Wildlife		
Keith Sexson	Assistant Secretary of Operations, Kansas Dept of Wildlife and Parks		
Tod Stevenson	Director, New Mexico Dept of Game and Fish		
Richard Hatcher	Director, Oklahoma Dept of Wildlife Conservation		
Ross Melinchuk	Deputy Exec Director for Natural Resources, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept		

Project Overview

Problem Statement

The LEPC is a candidate species for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and in 2008 its listing priority number was increased from an 8 to the current 2. Lesser Prairie-chicken numbers are declining and a unified approach must be taken across state lines in order to effectively manage the population. One way of understanding the current status of LEPC habitat is to develop a geospatial planning tool that will inform decision-makers how their actions will impact LEPC, SGCN, and their habitat.

Project Description

Initially the Wildlife Department Directors from each of the states will come to agreement on the products and deliverables that will be built from a geospatial planning tool. The products and deliverables will be used to develop a rangewide decision support system to inform wildlife managers, industry, agriculture, urban development, etc, how their actions impact LEPC habitat and ultimately the fate of the species.

Once the Directors agree upon the products that will be developed, they will appoint biologists and GIS personnel from each state agency to discuss data gaps and needs, software requirements, and other capacity necessary for the development of the geospatial planning tool and the DSS. Additional personnel representing other state and federal agencies, NGO's, and other identified stakeholders, will be encouraged to partner with the states.

Project Goals and Objectives

- State Directors will agree to work together and obligate resources (people, time, etc.) to the development of a geospatial planning tool for LEPC and other SGCN. Kansas and Oklahoma will agree to coordinate this effort.
- State Directors will develop a list of products, outcomes, and uses for the geospatial planning tool and the DSS.
 - Crucial habitat as defined in the Western Governors White Paper
 - Identifies category 1, 2, and 3 of crucial habitat.
 - These categories will help to inform the following:
 - Habitat evaluation tool
 - Identifies where best habitat is now, priority areas for on-the-ground work
 - Native and unfragmented habitat
 - Where industry, development, etc can go with little or no impact
 - Cost of recovery (i.e. cost of on-the-ground habitat restoration work)
 - Mitigation strategy if habitat cannot be avoided by development or industry (will likely be different for each state)
 - Connectivity or linkage assessment for movement among metapopulations of LEPC.

Project Scope

Project Includes:

- Agreement among state wildlife agencies and several other state, federal and NGO partners to develop a DSS for LEPC and other SGCN.
- State Directors' providing guidance as to where and by whom the products and DSS will be housed and maintained.
- Identifying intended audience and/or potential users of this DSS and tailoring its interface to fit user needs.
- Agreement among the state wildlife agencies as to how the DSS will be maintained and updated over time and how that will be funded.
- Project updates to grantors, partners and stakeholders.

Project Excludes:

- The analysis of how climate change may alter LEPC and SGCN range, habitat, or persistence will not be conducted in this project, per se. The expectation is that this product will facilitate that analysis in the future.
- A population viability analysis, while warranted, will not be done using this grant. The expectation is that this product will facilitate that analysis in the future.

Critical Success Factors

- Commitment and buy-in from the states and listed partners as to the goals, objectives and deliverables from this project.
- States and partners must provide data as needed to develop the tool and subsequent DSS, with the understanding that each state's confidentiality statutes, regulations, policies, and contractual agreements with third parties must be abided by.
- Commitments from all involved to review and provide useful feedback on all drafts in a timely manner.
- Establishment of a communication avenue for input from identified users, which may or may not influence the final product. (i.e. industry and other end-users being involved from beginning)
- A clear communication plan among the state agencies and their partners.

Assumptions

- States and partners will have equal buy-in and adequate time to review products as they are developed.

- Following the Director's meeting, the states and partners will develop a full project charter using the Western Governor's Wildlife Council White Paper as a template for defining crucial habitat and identifying tier 1 and tier 2 data.

Constraints

- Time – work needs to be completed during the next 24 months.
- Data availability for LEPC and SGCN.
- Data quality (GAP, NLCD, Lek, etc.)
- Budget: can we get a full DSS for LEPC and SGCN

Project Authority and Milestones

Funding Authority

Western Governor's Association has committed \$200,000 for Year 1 of this project. These funds will be equally dispersed to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (\$100,000 each). Year 2 funds will be disbursed if the project shows progress and deliverables as stated in this and subsequent project charters.

Year 1	Kansas	Oklahoma	Total
Meeting Facilitation			
PLJV	\$37,500	\$37,500	\$75,000
State Time			
Biologist	\$7,200	\$7,200	\$14,400
Travel Funds			
States and Partners	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
Equipment			
Server	\$550	\$550	\$1,100
Other			
Custom Programming	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$50,000
Software			
GIS Software (states)	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$12,500
Software (other)	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$7,000
Total	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000

Project Oversight Authority

State Directors will provide guidance to individual states for deliverables and PLJV for meeting facilitation. Richard Hatcher ODWC and Keith Sexson KDWP will provide project oversight authority and contracted with Western Governor's Association. Erik Bartholomew ODWC and Murray Laubhan KDWP will serve as technical support for the projects. It is anticipated that other technical support will be added to the team following concurrence at administrative workshops (See Roles and Responsibilities below). Under state

partners' oversight, Mike Carter PJLV will facilitate the coordination of the partners and development of deliverables.

Major Project Milestones

Milestone/Deliverable	Planned Completion Date
State Directors meet and determine project deliverables	July 2010
State biologists, GIS personnel, and partners meet to develop full charter	July/August 2010
Remaining deliverables will be identified/developed at second meeting	August/Sept. 2010
In year one, a range wide lesser prairie chicken (LEPC) geospatial planning tool will be developed	August 2011

Project Organization

Team members will be determined at a later date (likely will be members of the Lesser Prairie Chicken Interstate Working Group).

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility/Roles/Time Commitment
State Directors	Agree on project and deliverables; provide direction through project completion.
Playa Lakes Joint Venture	Serve as facilitators for the meetings with administrators, biologists, GIS personnel and other partners. Provide expertise on species' habitat and connectivity needs. Review and provide feedback on interim products. Provide technical support for GIS and DSS development as requested.
States	Provide data and staff as needed to complete project. Provide expertise relative to species habitat needs and use within respective state. Provide available data. Provide tech support for GIS development.
THE FOLLOWING ARE POTENTIAL PARTNERS SUBJECT TO CONCURRENCE OF THE STATE PARTNERS FOLLOWING ADMINISTRATIVE WORKSHOP:	

US Fish and Wildlife Service	Provide expertise on species' habitat and connectivity needs. Review and provide feedback on interim products. Provide technical support for GIS and DSS development
The Nature Conservancy	Provide expertise on species' habitat and connectivity needs. Review and provide feedback on interim products. Provide technical support for GIS and DSS development
OU/Sutton Avian Research Center	Provide expertise on species' habitat and connectivity needs. Review and provide feedback on interim products. Provide technical support for GIS and DSS development
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Grassland Coordinator	Provide information and feedback regarding potential developments and product (DSS) needs as it relates to potential species affected. Assist in leveraging funds for additional grants
US Geological Survey	Provide expertise on species' habitat and connectivity needs. Review and provide feedback on interim products. Provide technical support for GIS and DSS development
Industry Experts	Provide information and feedback regarding potential developments and product (DSS) needs as it relates to potential species affected.
Oklahoma State University – Dept of Natural Resources Ecology and Management	Provide expertise on species' habitat and connectivity needs. Review and provide feedback on interim products. Provide technical support for GIS and DSS development
Texas Tech University – Natural Resource Management Department	Provide expertise on species' habitat and connectivity needs. Review and provide feedback on interim products. Provide technical support for GIS and DSS development

Glossary

DSS – Decision Support System – comprehensive set of data layers and synthesis of data that will assist in providing information related to importance of a particular area for an individual or guild of species.

GAP – GAP Analysis Program – characterization of vegetation based upon different habitat types

LEPC – Lesser Prairie-chicken

NLCD – National Landcover Dataset – National dataset of land use and land cover types

SGCN – Species of Greatest Conservation Need – Species that have been identified in individual State Wildlife Action Plans as species of greatest conservation need