



# CEHMM

*Conservation and Environmental Services*

## Lesser Prairie-Chicken and Dunes Sagebrush Lizard Candidate Conservation Agreement and Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances

Monthly Report  
June 2017



Swainson's Hawk Chicks with Kangaroo Rat

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## Conservation Activities and Monitoring

### **CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380**

CEHMM conducted an onsite with an enrolled company for twelve wells and a frac pond near Dunes Sagebrush Lizard (DSL) habitat. All surface disturbing activities were located in areas that would not impact DSL habitat.

CEHMM conducted an onsite with an enrolled company for two salt water disposal wells and a frac pond in Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LPC) habitat. All surface disturbing activities were located in areas that would not impact LPC habitat.

CEHMM placed four sets of pitfall traps (with five traps per set) in suitable DSL habitat in an attempt to capture DSL. The traps were checked daily for two weeks. No DSL were captured. The only species of lizard captured was the Side-blotched Lizard (*Uta stansburiana*).

CEHMM conducted DSL surveys on an enrolled ranch that previously did not have any positive locations for DSL. All suitable habitat surveyed contained DSL. Locations were recorded and will be submitted to Natural Heritage to add to the database for DSL.

CEHMM conducted a tour with an enrolled company to discuss the CCA and to see completed projects that have been funded and completed through the CCA.

### **CCA/A – District 2 – North of Hwy 380**

CEHMM has determined that a quarterly check on the condition of all water projects will be sufficient. District 2 will begin quarterly checks in July of 2017.

An enrolled rancher signed an amendment to the voluntary Certificate of Inclusion (CI) agreement with CEHMM/FWS for an additional 320 acres. All signatures have been received on this document.

CEHMM personnel is finalizing paperwork with two enrolled ranchers on amendments to their Certificates of Inclusion.

CEHMM personnel erected 32 grazing exclosures on the remaining five enrolled ranches within District 2 and completed seven vegetative monitoring transects on two enrollees.

The new range conservationist for District 2 and field staff, along with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff, received an all-day training on vegetative monitoring by retired NRCS range biologists currently working with New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD). The collective knowledge, wisdom, insight, and experience was well received by staff.

CEHMM personnel conducted two mesquite transects and bird surveys on Bret Riley for the proposed Sendero application on mesquite in July. Staff found seven active Swainson's hawk nests and one active Chihuahuan raven nest.

## Completed Projects May 2017

### **CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380**

No projects were completed this month.

### **CCA/A – District 2 – North of Hwy 380**

Weaver Burn Plan – The burn plan for the Weaver Ranch/Grasslans Charitable Foundation, funded through the CCA/A, has been completed and approved. The vendor, Don Kearney, completed the final portion and delivered the document to US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), FWS Partners, NM State Land Office (NMSLO), CEHMM, Jim Weaver, and Willard Heck. Burning is planned to commence in 2018 if conditions allow.

## Funded Projects Awaiting Completion

### **CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380**

Pearce Water – CEHMM received the signed well permit from the Pearce Ranch. CEHMM is still waiting on the signed project agreement from the Pearce Ranch to move forward.

Smith Water – CEHMM will develop a bid proposal for contractors. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) has been initiated, and the archaeological clearance will be completed in May 2017.

James Water – CEHMM will develop a bid proposal for contractors. CEHMM has placed this project on hold temporarily, as the owner may be selling the ranch.

### **CCA/A – District 2 – North of Hwy 380**

Riley Mesquite – CEHMM staff conducted mesquite condition checks on Riley mesquite in mid-June and determined the mesquite to be in poor condition due to insect damage, therefore, it is not receptive to herbicide treatment. Mr. Riley has been informed of the change in plans.

## Funded Projects Awaiting Completion

### **CCA/A – District 2 – North of Hwy 380**

Bresenham Mesquite – It has been determined that the proposed aerial application of Sendero to control mesquite on Bresenham is too close to their home and trees and will not be allowed per the protocol. CEHMM staff will revise the budget and request a hand application.

TNC Mesquite Removal – Milnesand Prairie Preserve (MPP) has 1,059 acres of treated mesquite scheduled for removal in 2017. CEHMM initiated mesquite eradication of the dead standing mesquite on January 11, 2017 on the first treatment area in the 602-acre Tree Pasture on the south end of MPP. As of February 28, 2017, CEHMM has eradicated 420 acres. CEHMM stopped work due to LPC timing stipulations and will resume work on July 15, 2017.

Five Fence Projects – CEHMM has contracted work on 20.5 miles of removal, disposal, and replacement of boundary fence and 1.72 miles of interior fence on the five approved projects. Bud Bilberry Boundary Fence was completed prior to work being halted during the March 1 - July 15 timing stipulations in LPC habitat. Anticipated completion for these projects is Fall 2017. CEHMM has received all of the landowners' letters of agreement and is currently working on Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the neighboring ranches on each project. The following are the projects that will be included:

Luman Boundary Fence – Six and one-half miles of old boundary fence will be removed, disposed of, and replaced with wildlife-friendly fencing.

David Thomas Boundary Fence – Six and one-half miles of boundary fence will be removed, disposed of, and replaced with wildlife-friendly fencing.

Garth Coombes Atlee Boundary Fence – Six miles of boundary fence will be removed, disposed of, and replaced with wildlife-friendly fencing.

Running N Interior Fence – One and three-quarter miles of interior fence will be installed to separate one large pasture. The archaeological survey was completed in mid-January 2017 and resulted in no findings. It was reported to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and New Mexico State Land Office (NMSLO) as this fence is on both federal and state trust lands. A Field Operations Division (FOD) was submitted to and accepted initially from NMSLO, and the BLM was contacted. CEHMM was instructed by NMSLO that the FOD is no longer the format required for CEHMM projects on state trust lands; the lessee is now required to submit an "Application for Permission to Make Improvements" to NMSLO. The enrollee submitted the paperwork and payment to NMSLO, and the project has been cleared by NMSLO. CEHMM is now waiting for clearance from the BLM.

## Funded Projects Awaiting Completion

David Thomas Water #3 – Work has begun on this project with 1.75 miles of 1.25-inch water line completed the first week of March 2017. Installation of a pithouse, submersible pump, pitless adapter, pressure tank, and a 75-foot electric line for the pump will be completed by the end of June.

ACEC Dead Standing Mesquite Removal – The ranking team approved a project to remove 1,140 acres of dead standing mesquite (DSM) on the BLM’s Sand Ranch Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in three different treatment areas. By removing DSM in these three polygons, CEHMM will be improving the habitat specifically for six active leks. The archaeological survey was completed on December 20, 2016. CEHMM personnel will begin work on that acreage in mid-July of 2017.

## Reclamation/Restoration

Total Acres Treated for Entire Project	
Roads and Pads Caliche Removal and Reseeding (Number)	154
Mesquite (Acres)	79,363
Dead Standing Mesquite Eradication (Acres)	420
Yucca (Acres)	120

## Operations Moved out of DSL Habitat

Year	Federal Wells	State Wells	ROWs	Seismic Data Acquisition (Acres)
<b>2009</b>	0	0	0	2,900
<b>2010</b>	79	0	0	1,454
<b>2011</b>	83	0	15	0
<b>2012</b>	65	22	1	0
<b>2013</b>	73	3	7	0
<b>2014</b>	77	6	1	0
<b>2015</b>	36	37	68	0
<b>2016</b>	80	15	0	0
<b>2017</b>	9	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>4,354</b>

## Research

Blake Grisham is assessing the impact of land management practices and environmental variability on vegetation communities in shinnery oak grassland communities regarding the LPC population. Dr. Grisham was granted a no-cost extension through December 2017, with the final report expected by January 31, 2018.

## Education

Mark Madsen, Audubon of New Mexico Education/Outreach Manager, has met with CEHMM personnel in District 2 and community members to discuss the possibility of reviving the High Plains Prairie Chicken Festival in 2018.



## Enrollment Numbers

*\*NMDGF acres are included in the rancher numbers*

<b>TOTAL HABITAT ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>ACRES</b>
Total LPC/DSL habitat acres enrolled by Industry	1,885,190.72
Total LPC/DSL habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers	1,930,168.86
Total LPC/DSL CCA habitat acres enrolled by Industry and Ranchers	1,981,238.65
Total LPC/DSL CCAA habitat acres enrolled by Industry and Ranchers	1,220,861.44
Total LPC/DSL CCAA habitat acres enrolled by the NMSLO	404,594.75
Total LPC/DSL CCA/A habitat acres enrolled by Industry, Ranchers (and NMDGF), and NMSLO	3,019,208.49

<b>DSL</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>% ACRES ENROLLED</b>
Total DSL habitat acres in NM	543,362	
DSL habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers CCA/A	415,220.39	76.4%
DSL habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers in BLM RMPA	397,311.47	73.1%
DSL habitat acres enrolled by Industry CCA/A	466,211.88	85.8%
DSL habitat acres enrolled by Industry in the BLM RMPA	249,093.82	45.8%
DSL habitat acres enrolled by NMSLO	179,461.20	33.0%
Total DSL CCA/A habitat acres enrolled by Industry, Ranchers (and NMDGF), and NMSLO	489,235.14	90.0%

<b>LPC</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>% ACRES ENROLLED</b>
Total LPC habitat acres in estimated occupied range (EOR)	2,120,672	
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Industry in EOR	496,885.90	23.4%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers in EOR	951,960.54	44.8%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by NMSLO in EOR	349,149.97	16.4%
Total LPC CCA/A habitat acres in EOR enrolled by Industry, Ranchers (and NMDGF), and NMSLO	1,218,052.07	57.4%

## Enrollment Numbers

*\*NMDGF acres are included in the rancher numbers*

Total LPC habitat acres in estimated occupied range + 10 mile buffer (EOR10)	6,874,894	
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Industry in EOR10	1,603,613.01	23.3%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers in EOR10	1,704,319.71	24.7%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by NMSLO in the EOR10	404,594.75	5.8%
Total LPC CCA/A habitat acres in EOR10 enrolled by Industry, Ranchers (and NMDGF), and NMSLO	2,611,553.26	37.9%
Total LPC habitat acres in historic range	13,650,507	
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Industry in historic range	1,860,018.92	13.6%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers in historic range	1,924,730.05	14.1%
Total LPC habitat acres enrolled by Industry in BLM RMPA	928,274.08	6.8%
Total LPC habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers in BLM RMPA	1,256,502.87	9.2%

<b>CHAT 1</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>% ACRES ENROLLED</b>
Total acres in CHAT 1	782,588.77	
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Industry in CHAT 1	138,599.62	17.7%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers in CHAT 1	404,965.52	51.7%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by NMSLO in CHAT 1	153,913.06	19.6%
Total LPC CCA/A habitat acres in CHAT 1 enrolled by Industry, Ranchers (and NMDGF), and NMSLO	491,990.18	62.8%
Total LPC CCA/A habitat acres in CHAT 1 enrolled by Industry and Ranchers (and NMDGF)	464,385.91	59.3%

## Enrollment Numbers

*\*NMDGF acres are included in the rancher numbers*

<b>CHAT 2</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>% ACRES ENROLLED</b>
Total acres in CHAT 2	704,393.55	
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Industry in CHAT 2	37,047.06	5.2%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers in CHAT 2	64,519.22	9.1%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by NMSLO in CHAT 2	54,460.70	7.7%
Total LPC CCA/A habitat acres in CHAT 2 enrolled by Industry, Ranchers (and NMDGF), and NMSLO	134,321.98	19.0%
Total LPC CCA/A habitat acres in CHAT 2 enrolled by Industry and Ranchers (and NMDGF)	97,798.76	13.8%

<b>CHAT 3</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>% ACRES ENROLLED</b>
Total acres in CHAT 3	3,712,981.05	
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Industry in CHAT 3	1,118,958.80	30.1%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers in CHAT 3	1,089,136.27	29.3%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by NMSLO in CHAT 3	175,431.27	4.7%
Total LPC CCA/A habitat acres in CHAT 3 enrolled by Industry, Ranchers (and NMDGF), and NMSLO	1,579,107.66	42.5%
Total LPC CCA/A habitat acres in CHAT 3 enrolled by Industry and Ranchers (and NMDGF)	1,526,651.97	41.1%

<b>CHAT 4</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>% ACRES ENROLLED</b>
Total acres in CHAT 4	1,494,366.95	
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Industry in CHAT 4	270,180.36	18.0%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by Ranchers in CHAT 4	122,205.41	8.1%
LPC habitat acres enrolled by NMSLO in CHAT 4	23,278.43	1.5%
Total LPC CCA/A habitat acres in CHAT 4 enrolled by Industry, Ranchers (and NMDGF), and NMSLO	360,467.18	24.1%
Total LPC CCA/A habitat acres in CHAT 4 enrolled by Industry and Ranchers (and NMDGF)	345,478.09	23.1%

## Additional Conservation Activity Involvement

CEHMM personnel attended DSL training with Mike Hill and attended CPR training with Michael Reynolds.

### Signature

If you have any questions, please call Tish McDaniel at (575) 675-2324 or Matt Mathis or Emily Wirth at (575) 885-3700.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Douglas C. Lynn, Executive Director

Date: \_\_\_\_\_