



CEHMM

505 North Main Street, Carlsbad, NM 88220 • 575-885-3700 • www.cehmm.org

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

Monthly Report December 2016



Blizzard on the High Plains
Courtesy of Sharon January

Table of Contents

Conservation Activities and Monitoring.....	3
Completed Projects December 2016.....	4
Funded Projects Awaiting Completion	4
Reclamation/Restoration	6
Operations Moved out of DSL Habitat.....	7
Research	7
Education	7
Enrollment Numbers.....	9
Signature	111

Conservation Activities and Monitoring

CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380

CEHMM clipped 50 grazing exclosures on eight ranches. Grazing utilization has not been completed on all samples.

CEHMM conducted an onsite with Apache for nine wells in suitable Dunes Sagebrush Lizard (DSL) habitat. Locations for all nine wells were approved and did not need to be moved during the onsite.

CEHMM attended a meeting with Wayne Smith, an enrolled rancher, to discuss road maintenance on his private land with the companies that have the lease to use that land. A compromise was negotiated wherein all affected parties would pay a percentage of the cost to maintain the roads. The companies and Mr. Smith will determine the contractor to be hired to conduct the maintenance.

CEHMM met with Kelly James who is interested in selling the deeded land that he has enrolled in the CCAA, and also ties him to a federal grazing allotment enrolled in the CCA. Mr. James presented us with information and background on this acreage. He has expressed his desire to sell to a buyer that is conscious of responsible rangeland management and that ability and opportunity to perform research projects relating to lesser prairie chicken and dunes sagebrush lizard habitats and life cycles. Although no specific projects were mentioned, current and future anticipated land management practices such as grazing, energy development, and recreation were discussed. CEHMM has plans to visit the ranch and make a determination if it is a parcel that is worth purchasing.

CEHMM met with Kyle Williams and discussed a boundary fence that he wants to be constructed on his enrolled parcel of land. He was not requesting funds, or proposing a project, but wanted advice on logistics. Routes were identified that will help minimize impact from the project by following roads and existing disturbances. CEHMM will help facilitate communication between the BLM to assist with the development of the project.

CCA/A – District 2 – North of Hwy 380

Project Monitoring: CEHMM personnel completed the monthly task of project monitoring on the eight, completed projects. For the month of December, CEHMM reconnaissance documented the state of water projects on Running N 1, 2 and 3, Luman/Peterson Tank 1 and 2, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Solar, Lee Bilbrey Solar, Gerald Mathis Tank, Dwain Woody Water Project, Riley Tank and Solar and Marjorie Williamson Water Project. All water, solar, and storage additions are working properly.

Grazing Monitoring: Enrollees were divided into three groups for monitoring efforts. Ranches will be clipped every third year unless they do not meet the grazing standards. For the months of November and December, CEHMM personnel clipped 161 exclosures on 17 ranches and all of these ranches met the < 45% utilization of current year's growth.

Onsite: CEHMM personnel conducted an onsite with Nemo on three wells in LPC habitat. Locations for all three wells were found and they will not directly impact LPC. All power lines will be buried in reference to these wells.

Completed Projects December 2016

CCA/A District 1- South of Highway 380

No projects were completed this month.

CCA/A District 2- North of Highway 380

No projects were completed this month.

Funded Projects Awaiting Completion

CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380

Pearce Water – Bids have been received and a contractor will be chosen in January 2017.

Smith Water – CEHMM needs to develop a bid proposal and send to contractors for bid.

James Water – CEHMM needs to develop a bid proposal and send to contractors for bid.

CCA/A District 2 – North of Hwy 380

Bilberry Water – Archaeological survey was completed on November 21, 2016. We have received three bids on this project which includes a 0.2-mile pipeline with a 12-foot fiberglass tank with escape ramp.

Kizer/Mitchell Mesquite – Shannon Kizer sold this property to Steven Soloviev. Mr. Soloviev's (Crossroads West Ag) ranch manager is Jarryd Burris. CEHMM personnel has sent Mr. Burris the CI and CP blank agreements and plan to have a meeting in January.

Kizer/Mitchell Water – Shannon Kizer sold this property to Steven Soloviev. Mr. Soloviev's (Crossroads West Ag) ranch manager is Jarryd Burris. CEHMM personnel has sent Mr. Burris the CI and CP blank agreements and plan to have a meeting in January.

Riley Mesquite – We were unable to spray the mesquite due to Sendero not being approved on BLM lands in time for the herbicide treatment this growing season. In mid-August, Sendero was approved for use on federal lands, so we are hoping to complete this project in the 2017 growing season.

Bresenham Mesquite – Greg Alpers, DOW Chemical Representative, toured the proposed mesquite site and determined that the insect damage was too intense; therefore, we determined to not aerially spray this year. We are considering a hand treatment on this property as the acreage is small.

TNC Fence – Coombes Trucking Company is currently removing and replacing 23 miles of boundary fence. Six neighbors that are CCAA enrollees share this boundary fence. CEHMM is working with Mr. Coombes and neighbors to ensure the cattle remain on their respective ranches during this process. At this time, 11 miles are completed.

Marjorie Williamson Fence – ACS Fencing is currently removing and replacing 15.75 miles of boundary fence. Five neighbors that are CCAA enrollees share this boundary fence. CEHMM is working with Mr. Williamson and neighbors to ensure the cattle remain on their respective ranches during this process. At this time, 13.25 miles are completed.

TNC Mesquite Removal – We will initiate removal of dead standing mesquite (DSM) one mile from leks that have been active in the past five years on TNC property the first week of January. CEHMM personnel will be using the new skid steer after proper training on January 10, 2017.

NFWF Williamson and Mohon Wildlife Water Restoration – We began refurbishing the four wildlife waters on John Mohon in early fall but downscaled our enclosures. Our paperwork is complete and we are now awaiting the contractor to begin work. We are using flexible plumbing, building concrete pads, and surrounding the wildlife waters with wildlife-friendly fencing to prevent cattle use of the waters.

5 Fence Projects – 20.5 miles of boundary fence and 1.5 miles of interior fence on the five approved projects has recently been released for bid. We have received all landowners' letters of agreement and are currently working on MOUs with the neighboring ranches on each project. The following are the projects that this RFP will include:

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.

Bud Bilberry Boundary Fence – One 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 one-half miles of interior, boundary fence will be installed to separate one large pasture; this fence is on both federal and state trust lands. We have submitted a draft FOD to NMSLO and contacted BLM. We will be contracting with a vendor for the archaeological survey in January.

David Thomas Water #3 – The installation of a pithouse, a submersible pump, a pitless adapter, and a pressure tank is planned for David Thomas. Additionally, a 75-foot electric line for the pump will be installed and buried and 1.75 miles of 1.25-inch water line will be installed. We have received his letter of agreement, submitted a SPEC sheet and drafted the RFP.

ACEC Dead Standing Mesquite Removal – The ranking team recently approved a project to remove acres of dead standing mesquite on the ACEC in three different treated areas. By removing DSM in these

three polygons, we will be improving the habitat specifically for six active leks. The archaeological survey was completed on December 20, 2016 and we will have a team trained and working on that landscape in January.

Reclamation/Restoration

Total Acres Treated in 2016

Roads and Pads (Number)	0
Caliche Removal and Reseeding (Acres)	0
Mesquite (Acres)	157.5
Yucca (Acres)	0

Total Acres Treated For Entire Project

Roads and Pads (Number)	154
Caliche Removal and Reseeding (Acres)	148.7
Mesquite (Acres)	80,763.5
Yucca (Acres)	120

Operations Moved out of DSL Habitat

Year	Federal Wells	State Wells	ROWs	Seismic Data Acquisition (Acres)
2009	0	0	0	2,900
2010	79	0	0	1,454
2011	83		15	
2012	65	22	1	
2013	73	3	7	
2014	77	6	1	
2015	36	37	68	
2016	80	15	0	
Total	493	83	92	4,354

Research

Dr. Lauren Chan is investigating the effects of landscape structure and fragmentation on population connectivity of Dunes Sagebrush Lizards. Dr. Chan has been granted an extension through 2016 to allow for an additional field season.

Blake Grisham is assessing the impact of land management practices and environmental variability on vegetation communities in shinnery oak grassland communities in regard to the Lesser Prairie-Chicken population.

Education

CEHMM personnel attended the El Llano Estacado RC&D 8th Annual Prairie Partners Meeting “Digging up the Soil on Dirt” on December 6, 2016 at the Tucumcari Convention Center.

Staff from Audubon of New Mexico, Scot Pipkin and Beth Bardwell, met with CEHMM personnel, local ranchers and educators in late September to initiate their plans for the CCA/A funded project “Engaging Community in Conservation Education”.

CEHMM personnel and private land biologist from NMACD are assisting Audubon NM and other partners in the planning stages for “Audubon Conservation Ranching in New Mexico”.

Three employees from District 2 attend OSHA 10 Hour Safety training in Hobbs, NM. Two employees from CEHMM attended Trench Monitoring Training in Artesia, NM.

CEHMM personnel and private land biologist from NMACD participated in the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Counts in Milnesand and Clovis, NM.



Figure 1: Wren wintering in Barn Swallow nest, *Troglodytes spp.* Photo Courtesy of Christena Stephens

Enrollment Numbers

**NMDGF acres are included in the rancher numbers*

TOTAL HABITAT ENROLLMENT

ACRES

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

DSL

ACRES

% ACRES ENROLLED

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%

LPC

ACRES

% ACRES ENROLLED

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%
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%
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CHAT 1	ACRES	% ACRES ENROLLED
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%

CHAT 2	ACRES	% ACRES ENROLLED
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%

CHAT 3	ACRES	% ACRES ENROLLED
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%

CHAT 4	ACRES	% ACRES ENROLLED
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%

Signature

If you have any questions, please call Tish McDaniel at (575) 714-4577 or Matt Mathis or Emily Wirth at (575) 885-3700.

Signed: _____
Douglas C. Lynn, Executive Director

Date: _____