



CEHMM

Conservation and Environmental Services

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

Monthly Report
October 2016



Male Pyrrhuloxia (*Cardinalis sinuatus*): Photo by Corrie Dillard

Table of Contents

<u>Conservation Activities and Monitoring</u>	1
<u>Completed Projects October 2016</u>	3
<u>Funded Projects Awaiting Completion</u>	3
<u>Reclamation/Restoration</u>	5
<u>Operations Moved out of DSL Habitat</u>	5
<u>Research</u>	6
<u>Education</u>	6
<u>Enrollment Numbers</u>	7
<u>Additional Conservation Activity Involvement</u>	10
<u>Signature</u>	10

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Conservation Activities and Monitoring

CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380

The Center of Excellence (CEHMM) met with companies to discuss finalization of their CCA/CCA amendments and to discuss future development plans. The amendments are planned to be finalized in November.

CEHMM held a ranking team meeting in Carlsbad for an update on projects that are currently in progress. It was determined that CEHMM move forward with developing a project for removal of dead mesquite on a hand treatment that was conducted on the Sand Ranch Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Data will be gathered on Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LPC) movement into the newly cleared area using LPCs with GPS trackers.



Figure 1: Mesquite Treatment 2015



Figure 2: Mesquite Treatment 2016

CEHMM attended a Drought Outlook and Impacts Workshop in Las Cruces to further improve our knowledge of how to prepare grazing activities for drought. The topics covered at the workshop included short- and medium-range weather forecasts, historical climate trends in New Mexico, local monitoring activities, drought tools, and early warning resources.

CEHMM completed monitoring on all completed projects which included mesquite treatments, reclamation and reseeding, and water improvement projects.

Conservation Activities and Monitoring

CCA/A – District 2 – North of Hwy 380

CEHMM personnel completed the monthly task of project monitoring on eight, completed projects. We visited and 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.



Figure 3: Woody Water Storage

District 2 has installed 329 grazing cages to assess utilization of forage on enrolled acres. We are currently in training to finalize our clipping and monitoring protocol and will begin collecting data in early November. District 1 and 2 have coordinated their efforts and training. In our monitoring efforts, we have divided our enrollees into three groups for monitoring efforts; this year, we will focus on the 16 ranches that have completed or planned projects. We still have 10 ranches to place cages on but that will occur prior to 2017 growing season.

Our fall lek surveys on MPP resulted in 10 active leks with 143 birds in attendance.

CEHMM personnel also installed eight wildlife escape ramps on two ranches this month.



Figure 4: Example of Grazing Enclosure

Completed Projects September 2016

CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380

No projects were completed this month.

CCA/A – District 2 – North of Hwy 380

No projects were completed this month.

Funded Projects Awaiting Completion

CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380

Pearce Water – Request for Proposal (RFP) is awaiting final approval and will be sent to contractors upon approval.

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 – We are waiting for the arch survey to be initiated and completed prior to commencing work on the pipeline and tank. We anticipate this in November.

Kizer/Mitchell Mesquite – Shannon Kizer sold this property to Steven Soloviev. Mr. Soloviev's ranch manager is Jarod Burris and CEHMM personnel will be meeting with him in November to discuss the voluntary agreement. Mr. Soloviev's operation is listed as "Crossroads West Ag".

Kizer/Mitchell Water – Shannon Kizer sold this property to Steven Soloviev. Mr. Soloviev's ranch manager is Jarod Burris and CEHMM personnel will be meeting with him in November to discuss the voluntary agreement. Mr. Soloviev's operation is listed as "Crossroads West Ag".

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, this project is approximately 33 percent complete.

Funded Projects Awaiting Completion

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, this project is approximately 50 percent complete.

TNC Mesquite Removal – We are planning to commence work in the winter of 2016 on TNC property.

NFWF Williamson and Mohon Wildlife Water Restoration – We began refurbishing the four wildlife waters on John Mohon in early fall but downscaled our exclosures; we are awaiting paperwork before commencing. We plan to begin work Mohon and Betty Williamson's four wildlife waters in the near future. We are using flexible plumbing, building concrete pads, and surrounding the wildlife waters with wildlife-friendly fencing to prevent cattle use of the waters.

Luman Boundary Fence – Six and one-half miles of old boundary fence will be removed, disposed of, and replaced with wildlife-friendly fencing. We have received Bryce Peterson's letter of agreement and submitted a SPEC sheet and drafted the RFP.

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.

David Thomas Boundary Fence – Six and one-half miles of boundary fence will be removed, disposed of, and replaced with wildlife-friendly fencing. We have received Mr. Thomas's letter of agreement, submitted a SPEC sheet and drafted the RFP.

Bud Bilberry Boundary Fence – One and one-half miles of boundary fence will be removed, disposed of, and replaced with wildlife-friendly fencing. We have received Mr. Bilberry's letter of agreement, submitted a SPEC sheet and drafted the RFP.

Garth Coombes Atlee Boundary Fence – Six miles of boundary fence will be removed, disposed of, and replaced with wildlife-friendly fencing. We have not received Mr. Coombes' letter of agreement as of yet.

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 have received Mrs. Clemmons' signed letter of agreement, submitted a SPEC sheet and drafted the RFP.

Reclamation/Restoration

Total Acres Treated For Entire Project	
Roads and Pads (Number)	154
Caliche Removal and Reseeding (Acres)	148.7
Mesquite (Acres)	72,157.5
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	0	15	0
2012	65	22	1	0
2013	73	3	7	0
2014	77	6	1	0
2015	36	37	68	0
2016	24	0	0	0
Total	437	68	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.

Kristine Johnson and Esteban Muldavin are conducting Dunes Sagebrush Lizard Habitat Mapping and Modeling. Kristine Johnson was granted an extension to complete the map, which was completed in August of 2016. CEHMM received the final report and was able to transfer ownership of the mobile application to CEHMM.

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

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”.

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%

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%

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%

Enrollment Numbers

**NMDGF acres are included in the rancher numbers*

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%

Additional Conservation Activity Involvement

CEHMM personnel assisted Roosevelt Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and NMSU State University Extension Agent, Patrick Kircher, in an informative meeting in Milnesand, NM concerning the invasive weed, African Rue (*Peganum harmala*). Approximately 25 people attended and CEHMM personnel led a tour into the Gallina Wells area to show locations where rue is actively growing.

CEHMM personnel took three 8th grade students from Dora out to view LPCs on their fall leks.

CCA/A funds had been approved for partial funding for the Pheasants Forever biologist position. After a few weeks on the job, the biologist decided it was not a good fit and resigned from the position. Pheasants Forever will be filling the position in the future.

Signature

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

Signed: _____
Douglas C. Lynn, Executive Director

Date: _____