



CEHMM

Conservation and Environmental Services

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

Monthly Report
February 2017



Lesser Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*)

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Conservation Activities and Monitoring

CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380

CEHMM met with Wayne Smith to discuss the results of the grazing monitoring that was conducted in December 2016. All monitoring sites met or exceeded the 45% utilization conservation measure. Future grazing plans were also discussed, to allow for pastures to be grazed at different times of the year.

CEHMM met with Jim Caviness to discuss the results of the grazing monitoring that was conducted in December 2016. All monitoring sites met or exceeded the 45% utilization conservation measure. Future grazing plans were also discussed, to allow for pastures to be grazed at different times of the year.

CEHMM installed 14 escape ramps on Bob McCasland's ranch. Photos and waypoints were taken for all escape ramps.

CEHMM conducted an onsite with Apache for eight wells and two central tank batteries. All planned locations were approved and will not directly impact Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC) or Dunes Sagebrush Lizard (DSL) habitat.

CEHMM conducted an onsite with McElvain for two pipeline routes in DSL habitat. Both planned routes were approved and will not directly impact LPC or DSL habitat.

CEHMM discussed the transfer of enrollment from SM Energy to Colgate Energy. Colgate was unfamiliar with the CCA/CCAA. They will discuss it as a company and contact CEHMM if they are interested in transferring the acres.

CCA/A – District 2 – North of Hwy 380

CEHMM documented the condition 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.

Ranching enrollees were divided into three groups for monitoring efforts. CEHMM is clipping inside the exclosures prior to growing season to ensure only one year of current growth within the cage. CEHMM personnel will return at the end of the growing season to clip inside and outside of the exclosures to determine utilization. Fifty cages on six ranches were clipped with 49 cages remaining on two ranches to be clipped by March 15, 2017.

Completed Projects February 2017

CCA/A - District 1 - South of Hwy 380

No projects were completed this month.

CCA/A - District 2 - North of Hwy 380

NFWF Williamson Wildlife Water Restoration – On February 10, 2017, CEHMM’s contractor completed the refurbishing of the four wildlife waters on the Williamson ranch. Each wildlife water point is anchored, has flexible plumbing, and a concrete base. A 10,000 square foot, four wire-wildlife friendly fence with a gate was erected around each water point to prevent damage from cattle but still allow access by pronghorn, deer, and other wildlife.



Figure 1: Completed wildlife water.

Funded Projects Awaiting Completion

CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380

Pearce Water – Taylor Windmill and Submersible Pump Service was selected as the contractor to drill the well. Upon completion of the contract, work will commence in March 2017.

Smith Water – CEHMM will develop a bid proposal for contractors. NEPA has been initiated, and the archaeological clearance will be completed in March 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

Weaver Burn Plan – In March 2016, a 640 acre prescribed burn was successfully completed on Jim Weaver's property; this burn was part of a burn plan funded through CCA/A funds. The funding was for a burn plan for all of Weaver/Grasslans Charitable Foundation properties. The vendor completed the burn plan for the previously mentioned 640 acres and is to deliver the rest of the plan by March 2017. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), FWS-Partners, NM State Land Office (NMSLO), CEHMM, Jim Weaver and Willard Heck met to discuss future plans for prescribed burns in 2018 on Mr. Weaver's properties.

Bilberry Water – This project will be completed the first week of March 2017. CEHMM is installing 0.2-miles of pipeline and hauling caliche to prepare the pad for a 12-foot fiberglass tank with an escape ramp. BLM has cleared all work on this project.

Kizer/Mitchell Mesquite & Water – Shannon Kizer sold his property, formerly known as "Mitchell Dairy" and "Falsey Draw", to Steven Soloviev in late 2016. CEHMM personnel contacted the ranch manager, Jarryd Burris, who has declined to continue with the voluntary agreements. Total acreage to be withdrawn is 76,479. CEHMM is in the process of drawing up amendments to remove this acreage.

Riley Mesquite – CEHMM has not yet treated this acreage since BLM had not approved Sendero in time for the herbicide treatment in 2016. In mid-August of 2016, Sendero was approved for use on federal lands. If conditions allow, CEHMM plans 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 in 2016; therefore, CEHMM determined to not aerially spray in 2016. CEHMM personnel will begin paperwork to treat this acreage in March 2017.

TNC Fence – Coombes Trucking Company is currently removing and replacing 23.5 miles of boundary fence. Six CCAA enrolled neighbors 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, 22.5 miles are completed with completion date set for the first week of March 2017.

Funded Projects Awaiting Completion

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 has stopped work due to LPC timing stipulations and will resume work on July 16, 2017.

Five Fence Projects – CEHMM has recently set up a contract for work to commence on 20.5 miles of removal, disposal and replacement of boundary fence and 1.72 miles of interior fence on the five approved projects. Work is to be halted during March 1-July 15 in LPC habitat and anticipated completion is fall 2017. CEHMM has 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 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.

Bud Bilberry Boundary Fence – One and one-half miles of boundary fence has been removed and disposed of, and replacement will be complete by the first week of March 2017 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 3/4-miles of interior 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. The archaeological survey was completed in mid-January 2017 and resulted in no findings, which was reported to BLM and NMSLO.

David Thomas Water #3 – Work has begun on this project; the 1.75 miles of 1.25-inch water line will be completed by the end of the first week of March 2017. Installation of a pithouse, a submersible pump, pitless adapter, pressure tank and 75-foot electric line for the pump will be installed and buried later this spring. These improvements are near the Thomas home and can be worked on during this time period.

ACEC Dead Standing Mesquite Removal – The ranking team approved a project to remove 1,400 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 after TNC-MPP mesquite eradication is complete.

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)
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	80	15	0	0
2017	0	0	0	0
Total	493	83	92	4,354

Research

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 LPC population. Dr. Grisham was granted a no-cost extension through December 2017, with the final report expected by January 31, 2018.

Education

Audubon of New Mexico is initiating their plans for the CCA/A funded project “Engaging Community in Conservation Education”. They are developing a high school environmental education program to be delivered to local students within historic and current Lesser Prairie-Chicken/Dunes Sagebrush Lizard habitat in New Mexico. This program will target the following New Mexico high schools: Dora, Floyd, Elida, Portales, and Carlsbad Early College High School with the intent to engage at least one class in each school by the end of the contract period.

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

In early February 2017, CEHMM personnel met with NM Audubon's Conservation Ranching Science Subcommittee to determine the suite of bird species that will be used in conjunction with development of grazing protocol. In concert with those efforts, Audubon private lands biologists, range conservationists and wildlife biologists, will be touring Milnesand Prairie Preserve in early March 2017 to draft a grazing protocol for the southern shortgrass prairie.

CEHMM serves on the Playa Advisory Board for NM Environment Department, Surface Water Quality Bureau, which is currently finalizing the New Mexico Rapid Assessment Method for Playas of the Southern High Plains.

High Plains Cooperative Weed Management is gaining momentum in Roosevelt and Curry counties. This group is being fueled by the increase of the invasive African Rue plant in disturbed areas in rangeland. Border and Roosevelt Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Roosevelt County Extension Service, CEHMM, BLM, NMSLO and Roosevelt County Road Department are a few of the main participants. Plans are moving toward obtaining funds for mapping and spring and fall herbicide treatments. An additional educational program is scheduled for April 6, 2017, 1 pm, at the Elida Community Building in Elida, NM.

CEHMM personnel assisted Dora Schools in a two-day science field trip to Carlsbad, NM.

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: _____