



CEHMM

Conservation and Environmental Services

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

Monthly Report
January 2017



Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) Photo courtesy of Grant Beauprez

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Conservation Activities and Monitoring

CCA/A – District 1 – South of Hwy 380

The Center of Excellence (CEHMM) met with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Roswell, BLM Carlsbad, New Mexico State Land Office (NMSLO), and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) biologists to discuss Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LPC) survey efforts and locations for the 2017 survey year and to determine priority leks in both Districts to conduct hand mesquite treatments. Locations and routes of surveys were divided among the groups in an effort to reduce the chance of overlapping surveys.

CEHMM met with Chevron to discuss CCA/CCA operations with new hires within the company who will be working directly with the CCA/CCA.

CEHMM participated in the quarterly conference call with the CCA/CCA Ranking Team to discuss progress on previously funded projects and vote on one project. The Team funded a project to purchase machinery to remove dead mesquite from areas within LPC habitat. The project will be funded in a three year cycle with year one beginning in 2017.

During the months of November and December 2016, CEHMM monitored forage utilization on acreage with livestock grazing operations enrolled in the CCA/CCA. Monitoring was conducted by visiting a pre-established site protected from grazing in an area that represents the majority of the landscape within that particular pasture. These sites should also represent the impact that grazing is having on the landscape while not including other impacts such as roads, rights of way, and additional infrastructure related to other uses of the land. Data was collected at 88 sites on 11 grazing operations. Out of the 88 sites that were visited 61 of them (69%) did not exceed the 45% forage utilization conservation measure. Of the 11 grazing operations that were visited, data indicated that only one was not achieving the forage utilization conservation measure. CEHMM will work with and assist the Participating Cooperator to determine adaptive management practices to reduce their utilization and ensure conservation goals are achieved.

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 grazing monitoring efforts. CEHMM is clipping inside the exclosures prior to growing season, to ensure only one year of current growth within cage. CEHMM personnel will return at the end of the growing season to clip inside and outside the exclosures to determine utilization. Forty cages on three ranches were clipped in January with 99 cages remaining on eight ranches to be clipped by March 1, 2017.

Completed Projects January 2017

CCA/A - District 1 - South of Hwy 380

No projects were completed this month.

CCA/A - District 2 - North of Hwy 380



Marjorie Williamson Boundary Fence— On January 17, 2017, CEHMM’s contractor completed the removal and disposal of degraded boundary fence and replaced it with wildlife friendly fencing. This project benefited six property owners that are enrolled in the CCAA.

NFWF Mohon Wildlife Water Restoration—On January 30, 2017, CEHMM’s contractor completed the refurbishing of the four wildlife waters on John Mohon. Each wildlife water point

Figure 1: Completed boundary fence on Marjorie Williamson Ranch.

has flexible plumbing and a concrete base with 2,500 square foot enclosures erected around each point to prevent damage from cattle but will allow access by pronghorn, deer, and other wildlife.



Figure 2: Completed wildlife water and enclosure.

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 February.

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 – CEHMM has contracted with a vendor and work will begin the second week of February to install 0.2-mile pipeline, pad preparation 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 to Steven Soloviev in late 2016. CEHMM personnel contacted the ranch manager for Crossroads West Ag, Jarryd Burris, multiple times to encourage him to act upon an amendment to keep the property enrolled. Mr. Burris has declined at this time, but CEHMM will be meeting with him at a later date to further discuss enrollment.

Riley Mesquite – CEHMM is unable to spray the mesquite due to Sendero not being approved on BLM lands in time for the herbicide treatment in 2016. In mid-August of 2016, Sendero was approved for use on federal lands. If conditions allow, we plan 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, we determined to not aerially spray in 2016. CEHMM personnel will begin paperwork to spray this acreage in February 2017.

TNC Fence – Coombes Trucking Company is currently removing and replacing 23 miles of boundary fence. Six 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, 17 miles are completed and completion date is set for March 15, 2017.

TNC Mesquite Removal – CEHMM initiated dead standing mesquite (DSM) eradication on January 11, 2017 with the skid steer. The first treatment area is the 602-acre Tree Pasture on the south end of Milnesand Prairie Preserve (MPP), which is within one mile of four active LPC leks. As of January 31, 2017, CEHMM has eradicated 123 acres. In the process of eradicating the mesquite, we flushed eight LPCs.

NFWF Williamson Wildlife Water Restoration – Work will commence on Betty Williamson's four wildlife waters the first week of February 2017. The refurbishing of the wildlife waters includes flexible plumbing, concrete pads for stabilization and 10,000 square feet enclosures to exclude cattle. The enclosures are wildlife friendly and will allow access by pronghorn, deer, and other wildlife.

Funded Projects Awaiting Completion

Five Fence Projects – A bid was recently accepted for work on 20.5 miles of removal, disposal and re-placement of boundary fence and 1.72 miles of interior fence on the five approved projects listed below. Work will be halted during March 15-July 15 in LPC habitat, and anticipated completion is early 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 this project 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. CEHMM anticipates commencing work in February 2017.

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 and resulted in no findings, which was reported to both BLM and NMSLO.

David Thomas Water #3 – Bids have been accepted for work on this project and completion date is set for March 15, 2017. Work includes installation of a pithouse, a submersible pump, pitless adapter, and a pressure tank. A 75-foot electric line for the pump will be installed and buried. In addition, 1.75 miles of 1.25-inch water line will be installed.

ACEC Dead Standing Mesquite Removal – The ranking team approved a project to remove 1,400 acres of dead standing mesquite on the BLM's Sand Ranch Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in three different treatment areas. By removing DSM in these three polygons, we will be improving the habitat specifically for six active LPC leks. The archaeological survey was completed on December 20, 2016. CEHMM personnel will begin work on this acreage after TNC-MPP mesquite eradication is complete.



Figure 3: Mesquite eradication on TNC MPP.

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)	123
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

Dr. Lauren Chan investigated the effects of landscape structure and fragmentation on population connectivity of Dunes Sagebrush Lizards. Dr. Chan has completed her research and submitted her final report in January 2017.

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”.

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%

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: _____