

Great Plains Landscape Conservation Cooperative

Great Plains Landscape Conservation Cooperative

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with partners to develop the Great Plains Landscape Conservation Cooperative (GPLCC). The GPLCC is an applied conservation partnership that will provide science and decision-support tools for the full complement of plant, fish and wildlife resources in the Great Plains geographic area. The products from this partnership will help inform management actions for greater impact on priority species. The geographic area of the GPLCC encompasses parts of eight states: New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Some of the most imperiled habitats in the U.S are found in this area, along with a number of imperiled species.

Partnerships

There are many existing conservation partnerships within the GPLCC area. The most prominent are focused on the conservation of grasslands and wetlands for waterfowl and other migratory birds. For example, the Playa Lakes and Rainwater Basin Joint Ventures are strong migratory bird partnerships with members representing state fish and wildlife agencies, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, non-governmental organizations, industry, private landowners, local government, and a number of Fish and Wildlife Service programs. We anticipate the joint ventures will be invaluable to the GPLCC given these strong partnerships and their scientific capabilities. Nevertheless, the intent of the GPLCC is to focus on the plant, fish and wildlife species found throughout the respective geographic area. Therefore, we seek to develop a holistic partnership representing broad interests and knowledge that focuses on a scientifically supported integrated movement of landscape conservation.

Clearly, we have numerous stressors acting on the landscape, however our greatest uncertainty is fully understanding regional/local impacts



Short grass habitat near Pecos River, New Mexico.
USFWS Photograph

resulting from a changing climate. It is through the capacity and expertise of the conservation community that we believe this partnership can inform and address regional scale stressors, including climate change, and adaptation strategies to address climate change.

Potential Priority Habitats and Species

Six habitat types have been identified as potential priorities within the GPLCC area (short grass and mixed grass prairies; playa wetlands; riparian streams; prairie rivers; cross-timbers; and, savannahs, shrub lands and sand dune systems). An initial list of species,

Habitat	Priority Species
Contiguous grasslands	Lesser prairie chicken, black-tailed prairie dog, burrowing owl, American bison, American burying beetle, black-footed ferret, mountain plover, ferruginous hawk
Playa wetlands	Northern pintail, whooping crane, snowy plover, long-billed curlew
Riparian streams	Arkansas River shiner, Arkansas darter, Topeka shiner, pallid and shovelnose sturgeon, paddlefish
Prairie rivers	Piping plover, interior least tern, sandhill crane, whooping crane
Cross-timbers	Black-capped vireo
Savannahs, shrub lands, and sand dunes	Sand dune lizard, blowout penstemon, American burying beetle

has been generated, is summarized in the table below. The priority species and habitats will be refined as we further develop this partnership.

Next Steps

We are contacting representatives from NRCS, FSA, State land departments, other Department of the Interior (DOI) agencies, Tribes, and NGO conservation organizations with interests in the fish, wildlife, and plant resources of the GPLCC area. Internal and external outreach will be conducted by various methods, including webinars, presentations, and meetings. If you or your organization would like to participate in the Great Plains LCC, please contact the individuals listed below.

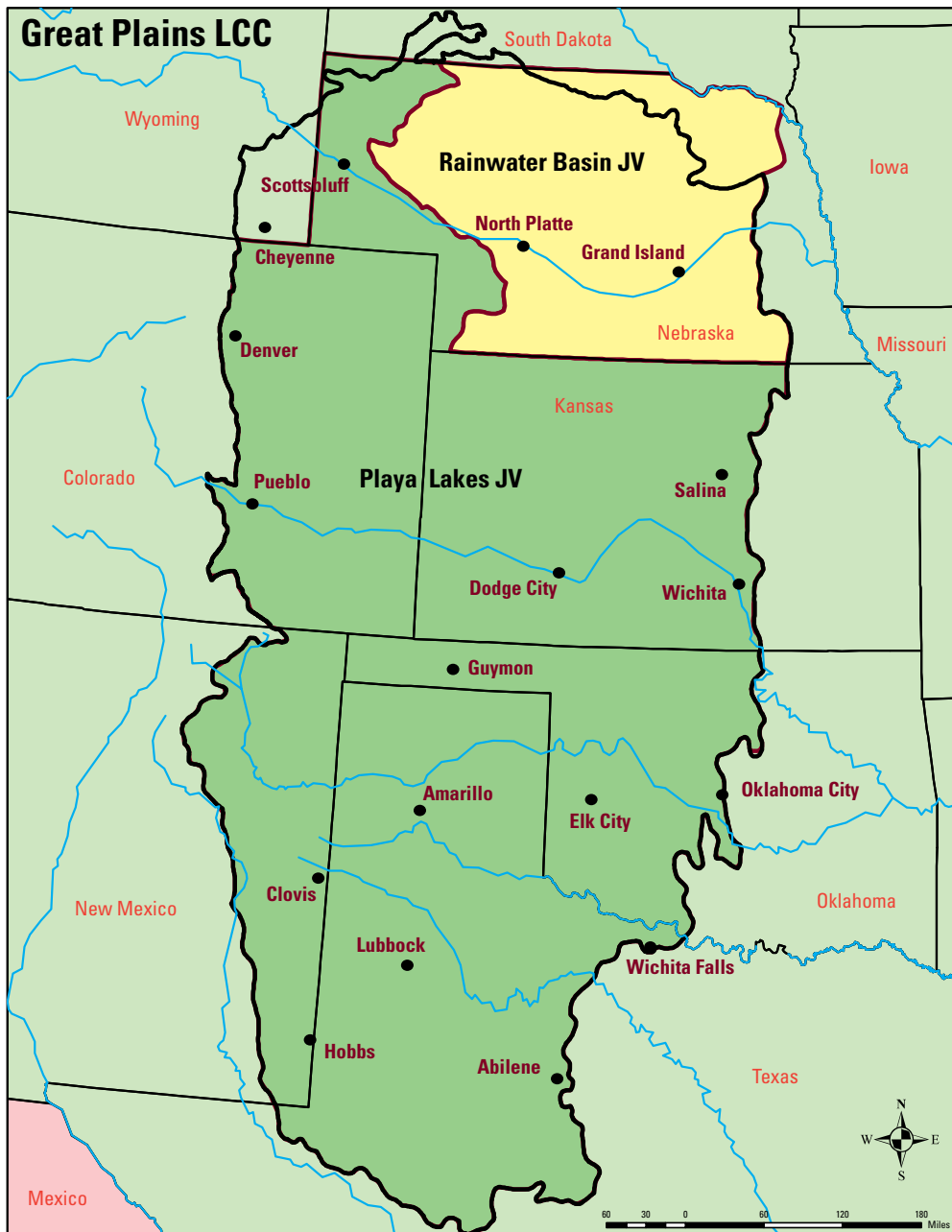
A steering committee will be formed for this LCC, and we plan to have an initial meeting of core members of the steering committee in January/February 2010. An invitation has been extended to State Fish and Wildlife Directors, Joint Venture Coordinators, Federal land managers, other DOI and USDA agencies, EPA, other state agencies, and NGOs.

As the partnership develops more fully, we will determine the potential contributions and resources that can be leveraged through participation of partners. USGS will be a full participant in the GPLCC. The Joint Ventures are in full support of the LCC, and have indicated they are interested in a central role in the management of the GPLCC.



Lesser Prairie Chicken

Photograph by Kathy Granillo, USFWS



That role will be further defined during subsequent discussions between FWS, the Joint Venture Management Boards, and the steering committee. The shared GIS infrastructure of the Playa Lakes and Rainwater Basin Joint Ventures is a ready resource for the GPLCC. Region 2 has recently hired a Southern Plains Coordinator, based out of Lubbock, Texas. That individual's primary role is to facilitate and expand partnerships in the southern portion of the GPLCC area for lesser prairie chicken conservation and other trust resources in the area. A portion of the Southern Plains Coordinator's time will be dedicated to working with the GPLCC coordinator.

A Service team, using input from various partners, developed a Great Plains Landscape Conservation Cooperative Action Plan. If you are interested in learning more about this emerging partnership, we encourage you to contact us and we will provide you with a copy.

For Further Information, Contact

Beth Oms
USFWS Acting GPLCC Coordinator,
elizabeth_oms@fws.gov
505/248-6646
505/248-6922 Fax

Or

Brian Millsap
Deputy Regional Director - Southwest
Region
brian_millsap@fws.gov
505/248-6283
505/248-6287 Fax

January 2010