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Fish and Wildlife Service Reopens Public Comment Period on Special Rule under Endangered Species Act for Lesser Prairie-Chicken

Reopening Ensures Public Access to Range-wide Conservation Plan

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is reopening for 14 days the public comment period on the proposed special rule that would provide regulatory certainty for landowners by exempting from regulation conservation actions and development undertaken in accordance with the state-developed, range-wide lesser prairie-chicken conservation plan, should the prairie-chicken be listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The reopening is to ensure that the public has access to the range-wide conservation plan referenced in the special rule. The range-wide plan is now posted on the agency's web site.

The Service is also accepting public comment on the proposed rule to list the lesser prairie-chicken as threatened under the ESA. The proposed special rule would exempt take incidental to routine agricultural practices on existing cultivated lands and to activities conducted by landowners participating in the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative. The Service must publish a final listing determination for the lesser prairie-chicken no later than March 31, 2014.

Comments must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on February 12, 2014. For further information on how and where to submit comments, visit the Service's Southwest Region's website at www.fws.gov/southwest. More information on the lesser prairie-chicken is available online at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/LPC.html>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/usfws and download photos from our Flickr page at www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq/.

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