

TONY WASLEY, (NV)
President

LARRY L. KRUCKENBERG, (WY)
Executive Secretary

DEB VONDEBUR, (ID)
Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer



SCOTT TALBOTT, (WY)
First Vice President

BOB BROSCHEID, (CO)
Second Vice President

CURT MELCHER, (OR)
Third Vice President

522 Notre Dame Court, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009. 307-631-4536. www.wafwa.org

February 9, 2015

Dear WAFWA Participant:

On behalf of the WAFWA Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative Council (LPCIC), I would like to express our gratitude to the many companies who have enrolled in the Lesser Prairie-Chicken Range-wide Conservation Plan (RWP) and to the Technical Service Providers who have helped make the first year of implementation so successful. The RWP has generated approximately \$37 million in enrollment and mitigation fees for lesser prairie-chicken conservation over the initial 12 months of implementation. Companies enrolled in this plan have processed over 100,000 acres of new development projects, and in doing so have demonstrated a commitment to voluntary conservation by siting nearly 90% of that development in lower quality habitat outside of focal areas and connectivity zones. The mitigation under the RWP also resulted in contracts to restore and maintain high quality habitat for the lesser prairie-chicken on over 55,000 acres within the focal areas and connectivity zones. These accomplishments, together with increases in lesser prairie-chicken populations, and increased precipitation across much of the range of the species are creating a bright outlook for 2015.

The LPCIC would also like to take this opportunity to inform you of several changes in adaptive management, changes in staffing, and coming changes in project submission which will result in a streamlined process for participant companies in the coming year.

LPC Range-wide Plan Adaptive Management Changes for 2015

Several adaptive management proposals came before the LPCIC this winter, which are detailed below.

Lek survey requirements and spatial information

- The LPCIC approved two proposals for lek survey exemptions in 2015 including one based on the analysis on the amount of suitable habitat required for a lek to occur and a one mile buffer of incorporated areas.
- The buffered incorporated areas are included under the infrastructure impact buffers section on the CHAT website.
- There is a 'non-survey' layer included under LEPC surveys on the CHAT website. If a new development is contained within that layer, **no lek** surveys are required. This layer will be updated annually.
- The survey areas and leks have been updated on the CHAT website for 2015. If companies have additional survey information that is not represented or information about leks, they must provide the information to WAFWA before proceeding with new developments. Please send this information to wafwa.gis@wafwa.org and label the information in the subject line as survey data.

Ground-based lek surveys

- Survey dates were extended by three weeks (March 15-May 7)
- Daily survey duration shortened from 2 hours to 1.5 hours past sunrise
- Of the two survey passes, one must occur between April 1-30

Aerial lek surveys

- Survey dates extended three weeks (March 15-May 7)
- Daily survey duration shortened from 2 hours to 1.5 hours passed sunrise
- WAFWA is reviewing other changes to the aerial survey protocol for 2016 to increase detection probabilities

Electric distribution line burial

- Areas within 1 mile of incorporated areas (towns) are exempted from the lek survey requirement and distribution line burial requirements except within 1.25 miles of known active leks, and
- Spur or terminal electric distribution lines outside of the 1 mile buffer around incorporated areas are exempted from the burial requirement if they:
 - extend to any type of non-linear structure with a defined impact buffer and,
 - extend no further than 200 m from an existing distribution line and no more than 200 m from a primary or secondary road.

Impact buffer changes

- An impact buffer of 220 ft (67 m) will now be applied to all railroads.
- The impact buffer for an off-site tank battery was reduced from 656 ft (200 m) to 436 ft (133 m).

WAFWA Staffing Changes for 2015

- WAFWA is pleased to announce that Sean Kyle started as the Industry Services Director in January and Jim Pitman will begin as the Conservation Delivery Director in March.
- WAFWA has contracted with the Kansas Biological Survey for all mapping, analysis, and spatial database management. Mike Houts will serve as the WAFWA Information Services Director under that contract.
- WAFWA has announced the Lesser Prairie-Chicken Program Manager position and will begin interviewing candidates in early March.
- WAFWA is also partnering with Pheasants Forever and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to hire additional field staff to deliver conservation for both the NRCS Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative and the RWP.

Upcoming project submission process changes

- WAFWA is working with Esri on a new web portal for project submissions that will begin limited beta testing later this month. This portal will provide companies with a

ALASKA • ALBERTA • ARIZONA • BRITISH COLUMBIA • CALIFORNIA • COLORADO • HAWAII • IDAHO • KANSAS • MONTANA •
NEBRASKA • NEVADA
NEW MEXICO • NORTH DAKOTA • OKLAHOMA • OREGON • SASKATCHEWAN • SOUTH DAKOTA • TEXAS • UTAH • WASHINGTON •
WYOMING • YUKON

secure, company-specific log-in that will display an individual company's enrollments, current and past projects with their status, and will allow companies to easily submit new projects through a process that will streamline and accelerate the mitigation process.

- Future enhancements to this web portal will include adding accounting information so that companies can easily track account balances, credits and debits.
- We will be transitioning to this system in March, but the wafwa.gis@wafwa.org and wafwa.impacts@wafwa.org emails will remain in place for communication with our GIS staff for data and project submissions as well as questions about mapping and data analysis.
- Please ensure you state whether WAFWA or a TSP will conduct the fieldwork for any project you submit and include the contact information for that TSP or the surface landowner contact information for projects where WAFWA will conduct fieldwork.
- We will be announcing an emergency operations reporting website later this month that will allow participant companies to report these events immediately after they occur.

If you have questions about any of these changes, please contact the WAFWA Industry Services Director, Sean Kyle (Sean.Kyle@wafwa.org or 806-252-2766) for more information.

Sincerely,



Ross Melinchuk
Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative Council Chair