



# Lesser Prairie-Chicken

Oil & Gas Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances

*Advancing Collaborative, Proactive, Science-Based  
Fish and Wildlife Conservation and Management Across the West*



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Since 1922, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) has worked to advance conservation in western North America.

**100<sup>th</sup>**  
Anniversary

We take pride in the many partnerships forged to conserve our treasured fish and wildlife resources. Working together with private landowners, conservation partners and state and federal agencies, we have been the catalyst in developing collaborative landscape-scale conservation efforts across the West. These voluntary efforts are making a difference in the health of iconic western species like lesser prairie-chicken.

As WAFWA moves into its second century, its member agencies are confident that by working together, the fish and wildlife resources of the West and the habitat upon which they depend will be conserved and enhanced for generations to come.

## Brad Loveless

Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks  
Chair, Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative Council

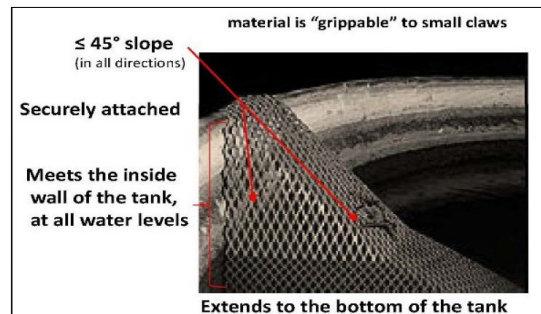
## TANK ESCAPE RAMPS

to Reduce Wildlife Mortality

Under WAFWA's Lesser Prairie Chicken Range-wide Conservation Plan and the Oil and Gas Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCA), the conservation program restores and enhances lesser prairie-chicken habitat to reduce habitat loss and fragmentation of grasslands and shrublands in the southern Great Plains.

In addition to restoration activities, the CCA utilizes **Conservation Measures** to minimize any adverse impacts to the species. One of these measures addresses the potential for mortality caused by drowning in stock tanks. Preventing wildlife fatalities at water troughs conserves our wildlife and helps maintain an uncontaminated water source for healthy livestock operations.

The CCA Conservation Measures for stock tanks are provided within this guidance document, including the design criteria for building and installing escape ramps to reduce wildlife mortality.



Guidelines of a wildlife escape ramp/ladder.



## Livestock Water Tank CONSERVATION MEASURES

### MINIMIZATION

#### Strategic Placement of Escape Ramps

It is required by the CCAA program to install wildlife escape ramps in stock tanks occurring within **0.25-miles** of an occupied lek or in areas where birds are known to occur. Consider installing ramps in all tanks. Preventing wildlife fatalities at water troughs conserves our wildlife and helps maintain an uncontaminated water source for healthy livestock operations.

### REDUCE DISTURBANCE

#### Seasonal Timing Restrictions

To prevent disturbances during the breeding season, avoid human activities, including ramp installation or maintenance, within 0.5 miles of an occupied lek from March 1<sup>st</sup> to July 15<sup>th</sup>. If brief activities must occur, it will be conducted after 10:00 am when lek activities are lessened.

## ESCAPE RAMP DESIGN

*efficient and cost-effective*

#### Ramp Material Criteria

1. Be built of grippable, long-lasting materials, such as: expanded metal,
2. not harmful to livestock or wildlife,
3. be durable to last for 5 years.

#### Ramp Design Criteria

1. Have a slope no steeper than 45 degrees, in all directions,
2. extend down the inside wall of the tank (in both directions), making contact with the sides and bottom of the tank. There should be no gaps where a small bird or mammal could swim under the ramp,
3. be placed at least every 30 linear feet of tank edge (every 15 feet is ideal),
4. be firmly secured to the tank.

#### WAFWA Approved Design & Installation

Expanded Metal Ramp. The use of expanded metal is an efficient and cost-effective technique approved by WAFWA.

*The attached brochure provides details on making and installing wildlife escape ramps.*



For additional information:

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[www.wafwa.org](http://www.wafwa.org)

## LOCATE KNOWN OCCUPIED LEKS

Please visit the Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool ([www.SGPCHAT.org](http://www.SGPCHAT.org)) to locate known occupied leks.

# Make and Install Wildlife Escape Ramps

## GETTING STARTED

### MATERIALS

- **Expanded Metal**  
Flattened expanded 9-gauge  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch.  
May also use 10 -14 gauge, flattened or regular,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch.
- **Rust inhibiting, non-toxic, paint or coating**

### TOOLS

- Metal torch or cutting wheel,
- Paper board (if using a template)
- Soapstone or Permanent Marker
- Safety Equipment (eye/ear protection)

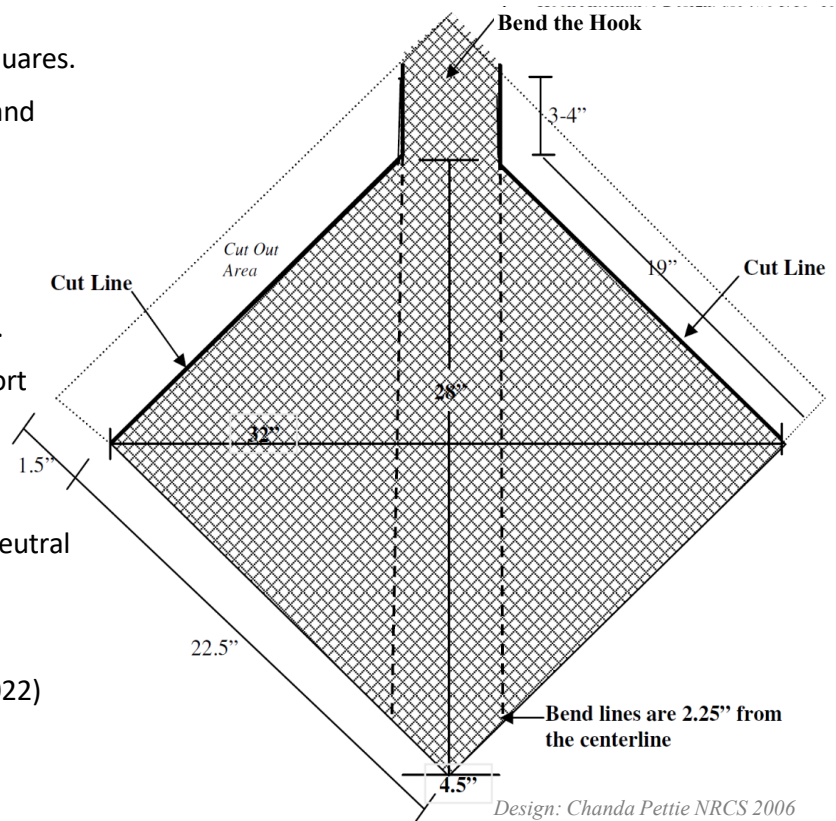
### DETERMINE QUANTITY OF MATERIALS NEEDED

Ramps are placed every 30 linear feet of tank rim length (minimum). Ramps every 15 linear feet is ideal.

## CONSTRUCTION

For additional design options, see [NM NRCS Biology Technical Note No. 55](#).

1. Cut a 4'x8' panel into eight 24"x24" squares.
2. Make a template of the cutout areas and mark the cut lines.
3. Torch cut the cut lines.
4. Mark the bend lines. Use a tin break or bend over a metal edge using a hammer. Bend at a 45° angle (critical).
5. Leave the hook flat for ease of transport and storage. At installation, use a hammer to bend the hook over the rim of the stock tank.
5. Paint with a rust resistant, non-toxic neutral color. Apply 2 coats.



### Cost to Fabricate Eight Ladders

Cost estimate for materials \$130-150 (2022)

Labor estimate is 2.5 hours

## INSTALLATION & MAINTENANCE

Ramps must be firmly attached to the tank. A metal-tapping screw and washer is effective, or a bracket with a bolt and wing nut (allows easier removal for tank maintenance).

Check ramps periodically to ensure proper function; clean off any algae or debris. These ramps should last at least 5 to 10 years if properly painted or coated.