
Compensatory Mitigation for Land-based Wind Energy

Webinar 3: Grouse Management and Conservation

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AUDIENCE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: For K. Tyrell - who decided the mitigation acre ratio? What was the process to decide that ratio?

Answer: The mitigation ratio was largely directed by the USFWS species experts with whom the HCP was collaboratively developed. Mitigation offset requirements follow a prioritization of the value of impacted habitat, such that offsets to impacts in higher priority areas are greater than impacts within relatively lower priority areas. Overall, this approach is meant to ensure that impacts to LEPC, measured in ac of potentially suitable habitat of varying quality, will at least be fully offset by replacing impacted acres with comparatively high-value suitable habitat. (Karen Tyrell)

Question: Where can the lesser prairie chicken HCP be viewed, and where can the habitat layers be downloaded for GIS use?

Answer: Lesser prairie-chicken HCPs: <https://www.fws.gov/media/lesser-prairie-chicken-renewable-energy-habitat-conservation-plan-documents>

Framework for the Review of Lesser Prairie-Chicken Voluntary Conservation Programs (USFWS 2021): <https://www.fws.gov/media/framework-review-lpc-voluntary-conservation-programs>

Conservation Needs of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken (USFWS 2012):

https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/lesserprairiechicken/media/fws_lpc_paper.pdf

Species Status Assessment (SSA, USFWS 2022) : <https://www.fws.gov/media/species-status-assessment-report-lesser-prairie-chicken>

SGP CHAT (version 3.0;

<http://wafwaprojects.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d16dac45cfba4abeab91c1df97370121> , accessed January 21, 2020)

(Karen Tyrell)

Question: For sage grouse credits: how is the time lag of restoration projects before they are quality habitat considered?

Answer: We give them a time frame to get the habitat on the ground before credits are considered and then the habitat must still be conserved and managed for the duration of the impact. Then they must run the full HQT to ensure that the credits are there. (Kathleen Steele)

Question: Question for Kathleen- Have you seen support for your mitigation program from private landowners?

Answer: Nevada private land is limited - 89% of Nevada is public lands. And from there, private land in greater sage grouse habitat is also very limited. But within that, yes we have seen much support. We have over 20 credit projects and one or two new projects every year. The Program is young and ranchers are rightly skeptical of new programs, so we expect a slow response as the Nevada grapevine spreads the word about the Program, but we are pleased with the response thus far.

Question: How were you able to meet the mitigation requirements (timeliness, durability, etc..) when you were implementing mitigation projects on public land?

Answer: Timeliness is difficult. We give them a generous timeframe to ensure that the habitat is established, and it must remain for the duration of the impact. Durability is also difficult. We require a reserve account deposit of 1/3 of their credits that aren't counted towards the debit amount as an insurance pool. (Kathleen Steele)