Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association

Adaptive Management Framework

October 12, 2018
Surface Ownership
77% private
8% state
7% Forest Service
8% BLM

Primary Area
13.2 million acres

MT Acreage
239,700 acres
Is a landowner-led initiative
A 501(c)3 corporation since 2002
15 coal members - 10 Powder River Basin mines
1 oil & gas member
22 ranch members
1 million acres
The Conservation Strategy integrates conservation effort across jurisdictions in the context of the mineral estate and foreseeable development. An implementing Memorandum of Understanding and three Conservation Agreements communicate the strategy:

- A Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for private lands
- A Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) for lands with a Federal interest (e.g., permit or lease)
- A Conservation Agreement (CA) to address future development of the mineral estate within the designated coal development area and a similar oil & gas area
2 Ecotones - 8 Covered Species

**Shortgrass species assemblage**
- ✓ Black-tailed prairie dogs
- ✓ Mountain plover
- 66 conservation measures

**Sagebrush obligate assemblage**
- ✓ Greater sage-grouse
- ✓ Sage sparrow
- ✓ Brewer’s sparrow
- ✓ Sage thrasher
- 110 conservation measures
Strategy Benefits

- Capitalizes on existing collaborative partnerships
- Implements across public and private properties
- Supports management decisions with effective monitoring and reporting
- Uses adaptive management to improve conservation benefit
- Is a voluntary agreement
Adaptive Management Framework

1. Provide flexibility as we respond to changing conditions
2. Trigger changes in management / implementation
3. Adjust conservation measures to ensure desired benefits are achieved
Conservation Advisory Committee

Audubon Rockies
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
BLM
consulting biologists
NRCS
The Nature Conservancy
USFS
USFWS
WY Game & Fish

Candidate Conservation Agreement Participation Flowchart

- Property with a federal interest
- Individual section 7 consultations required on all federal actions that may affect listed species
- Participation in CCA?
  - Yes: Identify occupied habitat, threats, conservation needs, and location of Conservation Priority Areas
  - No: Contact TBGPEA
- Review of C/CP by Conservation Advisory Committee
- Develop combined C/CP
- Provide summary of conservation measures to BLM & FS line officer contacts
- Leaseholder member & TBGPEA develop conservation measures
- Provide summary to BLM & FS line officer contacts and WGFD
- Recommendation to Board, revise if needed, and final approval
- Implement conservation measures funding from Leaseholder, TBGPEA, Federal or State agencies, NGOs or others
- Leaseholder and TBGPEA monitor and report results

Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association - 2017
Conservation Advisory Committee member observations

1. Matt Holloran
2. Willow Bish
3. Gwyn McKee
Coordinated Research / Monitoring

➢ USDA Agricultural Research Service

➢ Thunder Basin Research Initiative
   ☐ TBGPEA, ARS, University of Wyoming with USGS, USFS, Colorado State University, and others

➢ Audubon Grassland Birds Initiative

➢ Cedar Creek Associates