

Prairie Grouse Partners Grassland Restoration Initiative

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Prairie Grouse Partners

- North American Grouse Partnership,
- Ecosystem Management Research Institute
- Pheasants Forever
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- American Bird Conservancy
- Mule Deer Foundation



Grasslands of the Great Plains

- Historically occurred across 585 million acres of the U.S. and Canada
- Today they are considered among our most endangered ecosystems

Direct Conversion



Jeff Nelson



Indirect Conversion



Invasive Species and Exotics



Numerous Existing Programs for Grassland Management

- National Grasslands, Wildlife Refuges, State Game areas, etc.
- NRCS- EQIP, Sodbuster, GRP, etc.
- FSA- CRP
- USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
- State habitat programs
- State WAP's
- NGO efforts
 - NAGP Grassland Conservation Plan for Prairie Grouse

Declines Still Occurring

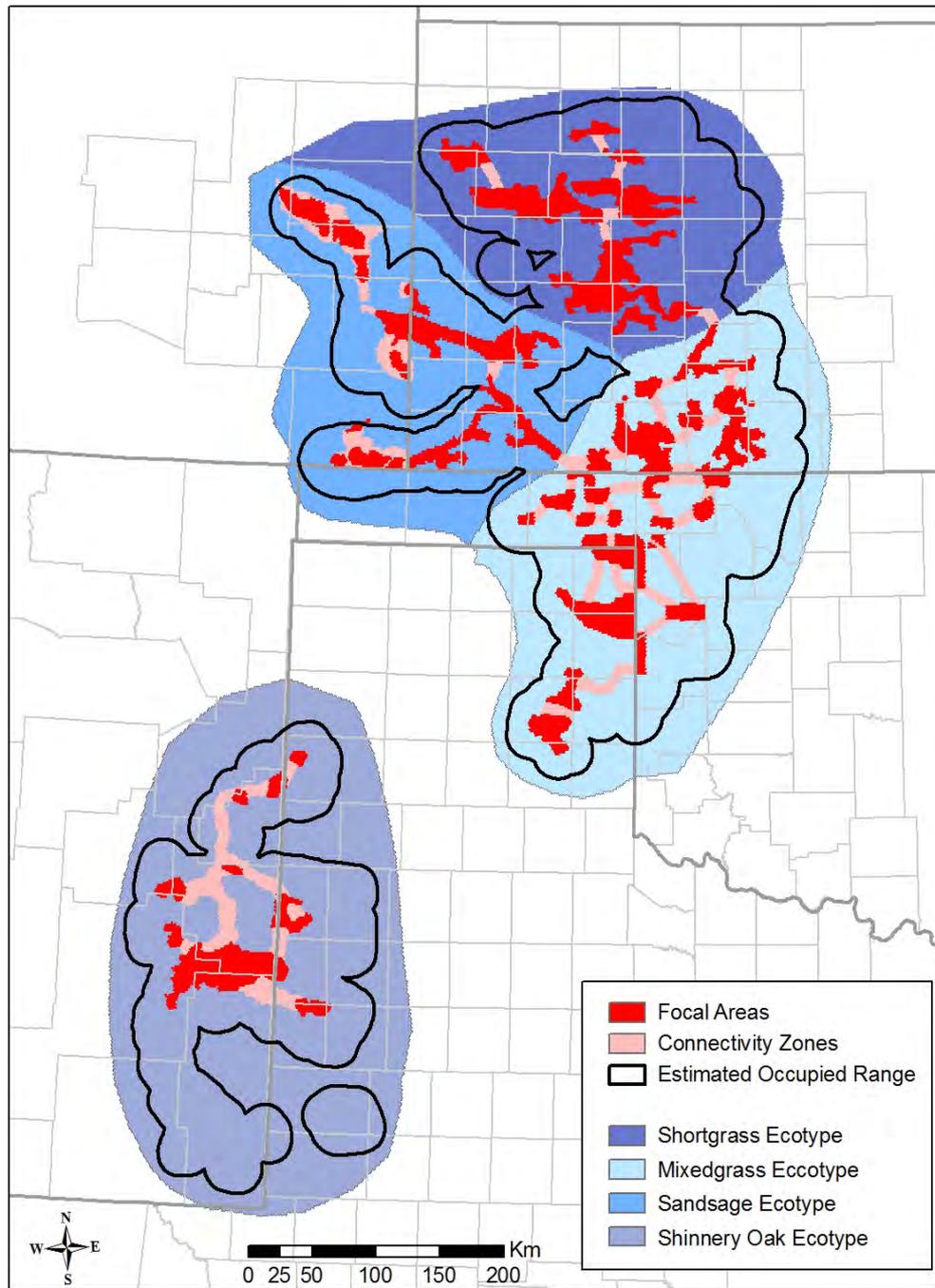
- Examples:
 - Listing of lesser prairie-chicken
 - Sprague's pipit under consideration
 - Grassland birds fastest declining group
- Despite the positive contributions of existing programs, they have not been successful in stopping the decline

Reasons for Continued Losses

- Need clearly described conditions for site-specific restoration of plant communities
- Need clearly delineated conservation areas (CAs) to provide sufficient blocks of grasslands/habitat (rather than random acts of kindness)
- Need clearly described desired outcomes for management practices such as prescribed grazing
- Need increased coordination among programs and organizations to provide optimum delivery within CAs
- Need sufficient incentives focused within CAs to engage a high percentage of landowners to provide the needed blocks of habitat
- Need to engage industry, especially energy, in developing proactive siting assistance and mitigation support
- Challenges of climate change

Solutions

- PGP grassland restoration initiative
 - Describe specific and sustainable desired plant communities for every location
 - Coordinate agencies, NGO's, landowner groups, and industry to delineate a system of CA's
 - Facilitate increased collaboration to deliver conservation programs within CA's along with increased incentives
 - Engage industry in a proactive mitigation program



MAFWA Assistance

- Consider serving as administrator of a mitigation framework for grassland restoration
- Similar to WAFWA serving as administrator of the lesser prairie-chicken mitigation framework

Mitigation Framework

- To be developed as part of the initiative
- Identifies metrics for generating credits and debits associated with grassland restoration or impacts
- Provides advantages to developers that engage in the framework
 - Allow for input on locations of CA's
 - Possible increased efficiency in permitting process
 - Possible advanced credits for improvements in CA's

Next Steps

- Funding request has been submitted to NFWF Northern Great Plains Initiative
- Identify additional funding mechanisms and sources
- Begin coordination with agencies, NGO's, and industry
- Discuss process for possible engagement of MAFWA for mitigation framework

Questions???

