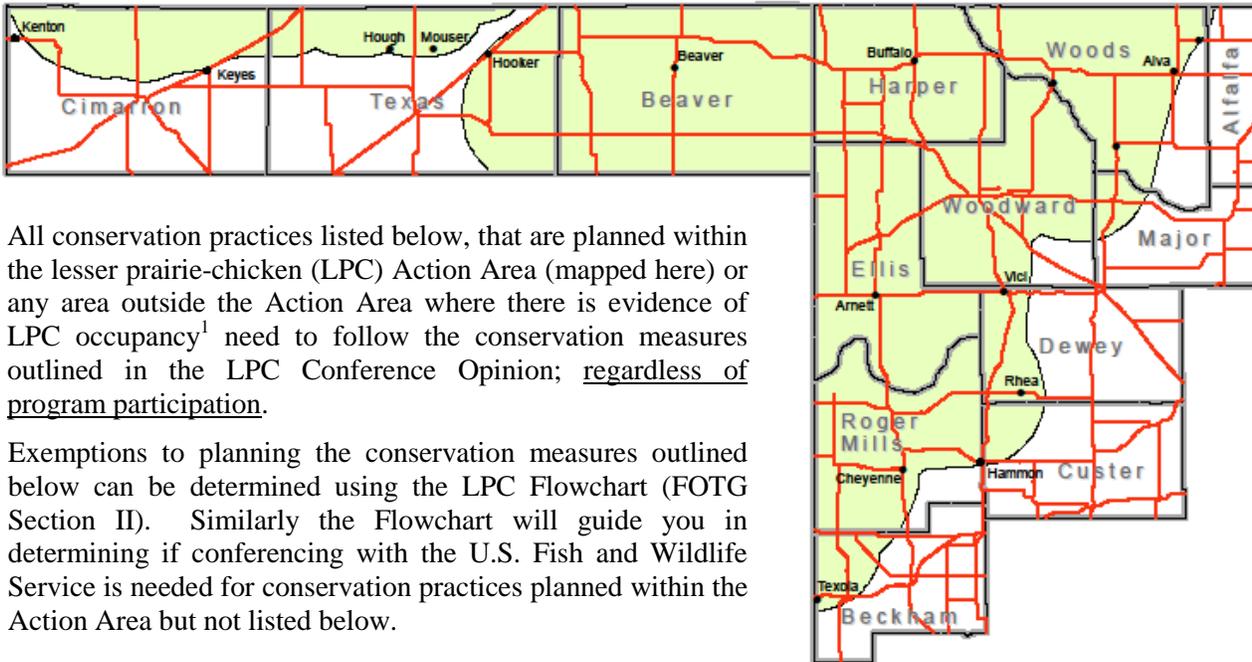


## Lesser Prairie-Chicken Conference Opinion Required Conservation Measures



All conservation practices listed below, that are planned within the lesser prairie-chicken (LPC) Action Area (mapped here) or any area outside the Action Area where there is evidence of LPC occupancy<sup>1</sup> need to follow the conservation measures outlined in the LPC Conference Opinion; regardless of program participation.

Exemptions to planning the conservation measures outlined below can be determined using the LPC Flowchart (FOTG Section II). Similarly the Flowchart will guide you in determining if conferencing with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is needed for conservation practices planned within the Action Area but not listed below.

Conservation Practices with LPC Conservation Measures	
Access Control (472)	Pond (378)
Brush Management (314)	Prescribed Burning (338)
Conservation Cover (327)	Prescribed Grazing (528)
Cover Crop (340)	Pumping Plant (533)
Critical Area Planting (342)	Range Planting (550)
Fence (382)	Restoration of Rare/Declining Habitats (643)
Fire Break (394)	Spring Development (574)
Forage and Biomass Planting (512)	Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
Forage Harvest Management (511)	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
Grade Stabilization Structure (410)	Water Well (642)
Heavy Use Protection (561)	Watering Facility (614)
Herbaceous Weed Control (315)	Well Decommissioning (351)
Obstruction Removal (500)	Woody Residue Treatment (384)
Pipeline (516)	

- <sup>1)</sup> Evidence of LPC occupancy may include (but not limited to) documentation from resource agency, sighting by a reputable source including land owner/operator, or physical evidence of LPC use within the last three years.
- Practices will be completed and installed according to OK NRCS standards and specifications (FOTG Section IV).

Lesser Prairie Chicken Conference Opinion 2013  
**Conservation Measures for Each Conservation Practice Standard**  
*(excerpt from the original document)*

**Access Control (472)**

472 Conservation Measures:

- 1] This practice standard will be designed to support other practices which will create the desired habitat conditions for the LPC as recommended by affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency.
- 2] Routine follow-up will occur to monitor the effectiveness of the practice, at least annually.
- 3] If fence construction is needed to facilitate this practice, use practice 382 Fence conservation measures.

**Brush Management (314)**

314 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] This practice standard will be designed to support other practices which will create the desired habitat conditions for the LPC as recommended by the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency.
- 3] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 4] Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. Avoid disturbing the soil on sensitive areas with a high potential for soil erosion.
- 5] On disturbed areas, use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD's) with consideration to LPC habitat needs.
- 6] Use the conservation measures provided for the facilitating practice of Critical Area Planting (342) in areas where reseeding disturbed areas is needed.
- 7] Regularly monitor the site after implementation to ensure erosion and weed issues are addressed quickly.
- 8] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion and invasion by undesirable plants during practice planning and design.
- 9] The practice will be designed to minimize or avoid unintentional damage to non-target plants.
- 10] The implementation plan shall clearly identify any special resources that need to be avoided; such as riparian areas, wetlands/playas, leks, or habitat of other at-risk species.
- 11] Large brush (>5 ft. tall) will be felled unless other considerations necessitate leaving them standing.
- 12] Woody slash shall be treated if significant buildup of fuels occurs. Slash piles shall be burned when wildfire risk is low (usually when soils are frozen or saturated). Follow state forestry laws, when applicable, for treating slash to minimize wildfire risk.
- 13] Treated sites may be deferred from livestock grazing for a period of time determined to be adequate based on pre and post site conditions (i.e. brush densities, potential for erosion, potential for plant community to improve in health, vigor and cover). NRCS with input from the State Technical Committee and the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency will identify appropriate deferment periods:
- 14] This practice does not apply to removal of woody vegetation to facilitate a land use change.

## **Conservation Cover (327)**

### 327 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
  - When implementing this practice on cropland for the purpose of establishing perennial vegetation a number of activities, primarily planting, will need to take place during the primary nesting season. In these situations an effort shall be taken to complete activities with as little disturbance as possible to adjacent and surrounding existing LPC habitat.
- 3] When converting existing vegetation to an improved cover there will likely be a need for activities to take place during the primary nesting season. In these situations individual on-site determinations will be needed to plan the best course of action. Initial preparations such as mowing or burning may need to be completed prior to the nesting/leking season to eliminate potential activity (LPC) in the area to be seeded. If there are situations where avoidance is not fully possible consultation may be necessary.
- 4] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion and invasion by undesirable plants during practice planning and design. Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. Utilize soil erosion protection measures, if potential for soil erosion exists (silt fences etc.).
- 5] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD). Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and glass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious weeds.
- 6] Timing of planting and post-establishment vegetation management will be designed as per local site conditions to meet NRCS practice specifications and NRCS biologist or State Fish and Wildlife Agency recommendations.
- 7] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 8] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 9] Control livestock access as needed to allow for initial establishment of new vegetation plantings and control weeds through flash grazing.

## **Cover Crop (340)**

### 340 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
  - When implementing this practice on cropland for the purpose of establishing perennial vegetation a number of activities, primarily planting, will need to take place during the primary nesting season. In these situations an effort shall be taken to complete activities with as little disturbance as possible to adjacent and surrounding existing LPC habitat. Known leks: are leks that are occupied or have been recorded as active at least once within the previous five years.
- 3] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion. Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. During installation, utilize soil erosion protection measures if potential for off-site soil erosion exists.
- 4] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 5] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 6] Where practicable use of more than one cover crop species will provide greater benefit to LPC.

## **Critical Area Planting (342)**

### 342 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion. Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. During installation, utilize soil erosion protection measures if potential for off-site soil erosion exists.
- 4] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions. Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 5] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 6] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 7] Timing of planting and post-establishment vegetation management will be designed as per local site conditions to meet NRCS practice specifications.
- 8] Regularly monitor the site after implementation to ensure erosion and weed issues are addressed quickly.

## **Fence (382)**

### 382 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Alternatives to fencing will be evaluated prior to fence installation (e.g., water placement, placement of minerals, prescribed burning) to achieve the desired outcome.
- 4] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 5] Shrub removal will only occur in a < 20 ft. wide swath where fences are being constructed.
- 6] Mark fences within 1/4 mile of a known lek when construction can't be avoided or relocated.
  - Refer to the George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center (Sutton Center) guidelines provided online at: [http://www.suttoncenter.org/pages/fence\\_marking\\_instructions](http://www.suttoncenter.org/pages/fence_marking_instructions)
- 7] Temporary electric fencing may be used in some cases to minimize potential collision fatalities.
- 8] Permanent interior fence requires a maximum of 4 strands of wire < 44 inches high.
- 9] Permanent exterior fencing must meet local fence laws and insurance liability clauses.
- 10] Use the conservation measures provided for the facilitative practice of Critical Area Planting (342) in areas where reseeding disturbed areas is needed.

## **Fire Break (394)**

### 394 Conservation Measures:

- 1] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 2] Disked firebreaks will be allowed to re-establish or be seeded to beneficial grasses, forbs and legumes to provide bugging or brood rearing habitat.
- 3] State-listed noxious and invasive plants will be identified and controlled following firebreak installation.
- 4] Firebreaks will only be installed as part of a grazing management or wildlife habitat plan.
- 5] Operate machinery in a manner that allows wildlife to flush and escape by methods such as starting operations in the middle of field and working outward, and/or by modify equipment with flush bar attachments.

## **Forage and Biomass Planting (512)**

### 512 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
  - When implementing this practice on cropland for the purpose of establishing perennial vegetation a number of activities, primarily planting, will need to take place during the primary nesting season. In these situations an effort shall be taken to complete activities with as little disturbance as possible to adjacent and surrounding existing LPC habitat.
- 3] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD's). Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 4] Timing of planting and post-establishment vegetation management will be designed as per local site conditions to meet NRCS practice specifications and NRCS biologist or State Fish and Wildlife Agency recommendations.
- 5] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 6] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 7] Operate machinery in a manner that allows wildlife to flush and escape by methods such as starting operations in the middle of field and working outward, and/or by modify equipment with flush bar attachments.
- 8] Control livestock access as needed to allow for initial establishment of new vegetative plantings and control weeds through flash grazing.

## **Forage Harvest Management (511)**

### 511 Conservation Measures:

- 1] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March I through July 15, or as modified by affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 2] Operate machinery in a manner that allows wildlife to flush and escape by methods such as starting operations in the middle of field and working outward, and/or by modify equipment with flush bar attachments.
- 3] Leave corners, field borders, and odd areas un-harvested for supplemental cover and brood rearing habitat.

## **Grade Stabilization Structure (410)**

### 410 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion. Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. During installation, utilize soil erosion protection measures if potential for off-site soil erosion exists.
- 4] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD's). Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 5] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 6] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 7] Timing of planting and post-establishment vegetation management will be designed as per local site conditions to meet NRCS practice specifications.
- 8] Regularly monitor the site after implementation to ensure erosion and weed issues are addressed quickly.
- 9] Ingress/egress routes will avoid nesting/brood-rearing/lek areas as mortality may occur on routes.
- 10] Use the conservation measures provided for the facilitative practice of Critical Area Planting (342) in areas where reseeding disturbed areas is needed.

## **Heavy Use Protection (561)**

### 561 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March I through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion and invasion by undesirable plants during practice planning and design. Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. Utilize soil erosion protection measures, if potential for soil erosion exists (silt fences etc.).
- 4] Design conservation practice to minimize or avoid loss of shrubs during practice installation.
- 5] If access for operation and maintenance is required, limit access to one side of disturbance and limit access to one vehicle width.
- 6] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions. Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 7] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 8] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 9] Timing of planting and post-establishment vegetation management will be designed as per local site conditions to meet NRCS practice specifications.
- 10] Regularly monitor the site after implementation to ensure erosion and weed issues are addressed quickly.
- 11] Limit duration of construction period to the minimum practicable.

## **Herbaceous Weed Control (315)**

### 315 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Spot treatment should be utilized where practicable.
- 4] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD's). Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 5] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 6] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 7] Use the conservation measures provided for the facilitative practice of Critical Area Planting (342) in areas where reseeding disturbed areas is needed.
- 8] Operate machinery in a manner that allows wildlife to flush and escape by methods such as starting operations in the middle of field and working outward, and/or by modify equipment with flush bar attachments.

## **Obstruction Removal (500)**

### 500 Conservation Measures:

- 1] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 2] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion. Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. During installation, utilize soil erosion protection measures if potential for off-site soil erosion exists.
- 3] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD's). Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 4] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 5] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 6] Regularly monitor the site after implementation to ensure erosion and weed issues are addressed quickly.
- 7] Ingress/egress routes will avoid nesting/brood-rearing/lek areas as mortality may occur on routes.
- 8] Use the conservation measures provided for the facilitative practice of Critical Area Planting (342) in areas where reseeding disturbed areas is needed.

## **Pipeline (516)**

### 516 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD's). Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 4] Design the pipeline route to minimize or avoid the loss of desirable shrubs during practice installation.
- 5] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 6] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 7] Timing of planting and post-establishment vegetation management will be designed as per local site conditions to meet NRCS practice specifications.
- 8] Regularly monitor the site after implementation to ensure erosion and weed issues are addressed quickly.
- 9] Use the conservation measures provided for the facilitative practice of Critical Area Planting (342) in areas where reseeding disturbed areas is needed.

## **Pond (378)**

### 378 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD's). Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 4] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 5] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 6] Use the conservation measures provided for the facilitative practice of Critical Area Planting (342) in areas where reseeding disturbed areas is needed.
- 7] This practice will only be applied where needed to meet the daily water requirements of livestock and to facilitate prescribed livestock grazing distribution.

### **Prescribed Burning (338)**

#### 338 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] This practice standard will be designed to support other practices which will create the desired habitat conditions for the LPC as recommended by the State Fish and Wildlife Agency.
- 3] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.

### **Prescribed Grazing (528) - *LPCI Core Supporting Management Practice, when livestock are present.***

#### 528 Conservation Measures:

- 1] Implementation of grazing management plans, to the extent practicable, will meet habitat conditions for each habitat type as recommended by the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency.
- 2] Frequency-Grazing recurrence will occur at a rate necessary to create or maintain desired habitat structure. Grazing systems which prescribe high intensity or rapid forage removal will allow for adequate recovery time (non-grazed periods) to meet LPC habitat needs as recommended by the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency.
- 3] Duration-Grazing periods (days, weeks, or months) for scheduled grazing events will be designed to address limiting habitat factors as identified by the habitat assessments for the LPC. Scheduled grazing periods will also be used to manipulate or create desired or targeted habitat conditions as recommended by the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency.
- 4] Timing-Grazing events will be scheduled when possible to avoid potential disturbance to known breeding or lek sites.
- 5] Intensity-The amount of forage removed (or left) during any particular grazing cycle will be in keeping with the specific life cycle requirements (i.e. nesting, leking, brood rearing, etc.)

### **Pumping Plant (533)**

#### 533 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March I through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 4] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 5] Limit construction and access footprint and future vehicle traffic access to one vehicle width.
- 6] New windmills for pumping or power generation will not be used within the Action Area (unless approved by FWS).
- 7] Design solar panel mounting pole as short as possible to avoid use as raptor perch.
- 8] Minimize noise levels of fuel- powered plants to less than 40dbA.

## **Range Planting (550)**

### 550 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
  - When implementing this practice on cropland for the purpose of establishing perennial vegetation a number of activities, primarily planting, will need to take place during the primary nesting season. In these situations an effort shall be taken to complete activities with as little disturbance as possible to adjacent and surrounding existing LPC habitat.
- 3] When converting existing vegetation to an improved cover there will likely be a need for activities to take place during the primary nesting season. In these situations individual on-site determinations will be needed to plan the best course of action. Initial preparations such as mowing or burning may need to be completed prior to the nesting/leking season to eliminate potential activity (LPC) in the area to be seeded.
- 4] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion and invasion by undesirable plants during practice planning and design. Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. Utilize soil erosion protection measures, if potential for soil erosion exists (silt fences etc.).
- 5] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD's). Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 6] Timing of planting and post-establishment vegetation management will be designed as per local site conditions to meet NRCS practice specifications and NRCS biologist or State Fish and Wildlife Agency recommendations.
- 7] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 8] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 9] Control livestock access as needed to allow for initial establishment of new vegetative plantings and control weeds through flash grazing.

## **Restoration/Mgmt of Rare/Declining Habitats (643)**

### 643 Conservation Measures:

- 1] The conservation measures identified under the core practice of Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) shall be used. In addition, any vegetative or structural facilitating practices used to implement this management practice will follow the conservation measures of the practice used.
- 2] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 3] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
  - When implementing this practice on cropland for the purpose of establishing perennial vegetation a number of activities, primarily planting, will need to take place during the primary breeding and nesting season. In these situations an effort shall be taken to complete activities with as little disturbance as possible to adjacent and surrounding existing LPC habitat.

## **Spring Development (574)**

### 574 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion and invasion by undesirable plants during practice planning and design. Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. Utilize soil erosion protection measures, if potential for soil erosion exists (silt fences etc.).
- 4] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD's). Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 5] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 6] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 7] Timing of planting and post-establishment vegetation management will be designed as per local site conditions to meet NRCS practice specifications.
- 8] Regularly monitor the site after implementation to ensure erosion and weed issues are addressed quickly.
- 9] Ingress/egress routes will avoid nesting/brood-rearing/lek areas as mortality may occur on routes resulting from bird-vehicle collisions.

**Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)** - *Note:* Plantings under an LPCI/WLFW contract must follow the Practice Application Criteria noted below. All other assistance (tree or shrub plantings) must only follow the conservation measures.

612 Conservation Measures

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of shrub planting under this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LEPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] This practice standard will be designed to support other practices that will create the desired habitat conditions for the LPC as recommended by the State Fish and Wildlife Agency.
- 3] Defer site preparation for this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 4] Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. Avoid disturbing the soil on sensitive areas with a high potential for soil erosion.
- 5] Evaluate and minimize the site's potential for soil erosion and invasion by undesirable plants during practice planning and design.
- 6] Regularly monitor the site after implementation to ensure erosion and undesirable plant issues are addressed quickly.
- 7] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 8] The implementation plan shall clearly identify any special resources that need to be avoided; such as riparian areas, wetlands/playas, leks, or habitat of other at-risk species.
- 9] When livestock are present, plots must be deferred from livestock grazing for a period of time determined to be adequate based on recommendations in the 612 Standard and Specification.
  - *"A plot is defined as the area encompassing a localized planting of shrub species either as thickets, clumps, or individual plantings."*
- 10] Species planted must be ecologically appropriate, arranged to minimize predator impacts, and beneficial to LPC. For LPCI, plot locations should not be in close proximity to permanent vertical structures when possible. There may be circumstances when locating plots next to certain vertical structures will provide LPC habitat benefits which offset the negative effects associated with the vertical structure.
- 11] Within the LPC Action Area, all practice 612 shrub plantings shall be completed in coordination with the local biologist (Service, NRCS, Joint Farm Bill Biologists, or State Wildlife Agency) who will sign off on the planting as either providing LPC habitat (LPCI requirement) or not negatively impacting LPCs.

612 Practice Application Criteria - *required for LPCI/WLFW contracts.*

- Planting scattered plots of native shrub species that are beneficial to LEPC as determined by the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency. Shrub species will be planted using manual or mechanical means including: tree planters, hand planting, or seeding.
- Plots will be designed to avoid creating linear features that can function as predator corridors.
- The length of a plot should be no more than twice the width.
- Individual plots will be up to one acre in size, at least 500 feet apart, and involve a maximum of 5 percent of the LPCI contracted acres\* within each state. \*Current contracted acres.
- A plot is defined as the area encompassing a localized planting of shrub species either as thickets, clumps, or individual plantings. In the presence of livestock, only the area from which livestock have been excluded by a perimeter fence will be considered to be a portion of the plot.

## **Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) - LPCI Core Management Practice**

### 645 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] The best scientific data available will guide the development of this practice; to ensure effectiveness, adaptability and increased knowledge.
- 3] Utilize acceptable habitat evaluation tools and monitoring protocol such as the WHEG to evaluate habitat conditions, on a regular basis, to ensure the conservation plan is adapted to meet the habitat and wildlife needs.
- 4] Ensure all facilitating practices include critical non-disturbance dates to minimize their effects on leks and nesting periods, as appropriate to the practice.
- 5] This practice may be used to modify existing infrastructure to reduce or eliminate potential adverse effects resulting from those structures; including installation of wildlife escape ramps in open water sources or in open trenches/pits, and marking fence lines to prevent bird collision in critical areas. At the time of conference report development financial assistance for fence marking and escape ramps was provided as a component of conservation practice 645. A new conservation practice Fish and Wildlife Structures is being developed and once this practice is finalized and approved financial assistance for fence marking and escape ramps will be covered under this conservation practice.
- 6] NRCS shall ensure that plans and specifications for this practice are prepared by persons with adequate training in the fields of wildlife management, biology or range ecology.
- 7] For the purposes of the LPCI, NRCS will encourage the establishment of "permanent" photo points to serve as visual documentation of changing habitat conditions over a period of time for the life of the management system.
- 8] NRCS will work with conservation partners to implement strategies to determine habitat use by wildlife species and/or to determine estimates/indices of abundance where possible.

## **Water Well (642)**

### 642 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Install low profile pumping devices and housings and use solar pumps whenever practicable, as the power source for wells rather than electric lines.
- 4] Place wells and infrastructure as close as possible to existing structures rather than creating new vertical structure in areas presently devoid of such features. These measures will reduce the presence of raptor perch sites and prevent habitat fragmentation by allowing continued use of suitable habitat.
- 5] Design the water well to minimize or avoid the loss of desirable shrubs during practice installation.
- 6] Use the conservation measures provided for the facilitative practice of Critical Area Planting (342) in areas where reseeding disturbed areas is needed.
- 7] Design solar panel mounting pole as short as possible to avoid use as raptor perch.



## **Watering Facility (614)**

### 614 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion and invasion by undesirable plants during practice planning and design. Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. Utilize soil erosion protection measures, if potential for soil erosion exists (silt fences etc.).
- 4] Design conservation practice to minimize or avoid loss of shrubs during practice installation.
- 5] If access for operation/ maintenance is required, limit access to one side of disturbance and a limit access to one vehicle width.
- 6] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions (ESD's). Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 7] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 8] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 9] Timing of planting and post-establishment vegetation management will be designed as per local site conditions to meet NRCS practice specifications.
- 10] Regularly monitor the site after implementation to ensure erosion and weed issues are addressed quickly.
- 11] Install wildlife escape ramps.
- 12] Limit duration of construction period to the minimum practicable.

## **Well Decommissioning (351)**

### 315 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Use the conservation measures provided for the facilitative practice of Critical Area Planting (342) in areas where reseeding disturbed areas is needed.



## **Woody Residue Treatment (384)**

### 384 Conservation Measures:

- 1] NRCS shall coordinate with the affected State Fish and Wildlife Agency and confer with the State Technical Committees to identify appropriate restrictions on the placement, extent, configuration, and timing of this conservation practice standard and the area where these practice restrictions would apply so as to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the LPC and supporting habitat conditions.
- 2] Defer implementation of this conservation practice within 1/2 mile to known leks until all breeding and nesting activities are completed, typically March 1 through July 15, or as modified by State Fish and Wildlife Agency or State Technical Committee recommendations.
- 3] Evaluate the site's potential for soil erosion and invasion by undesirable plants during practice planning and design. Minimize soil and vegetative disturbances during installation of conservation practices. Utilize soil erosion protection measures, if potential for soil erosion exists (silt fences etc.).
- 4] Consider air quality regulations, state and local burning regulations, and safety if utilizing prescribed burning as a treatment.
- 5] Design conservation practice to minimize or avoid loss of shrubs during practice installation.
- 6] If access for operation and maintenance is required, limit access to one side of disturbance and limit access to one vehicle width.
- 7] Use site specific reclamation strategies developed using ecological site descriptions. Native species will be used whenever possible to meet practice objectives with preference to forbs, grasses and grass-like plants preferred by the LPC as well as those plants that reflect the potential of the specific ecological site to optimize LPC habitat needs. Seed mixes should be State-certified, meeting the appropriate State certification criteria as being free of state declared noxious and invasive vegetative material.
- 8] Monitor, evaluate and control State listed invasive and noxious plants during practice planning and design.
- 9] Machinery associated with the practice should be clean and free of vegetative debris prior to use to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- 10] Timing of planting and post-establishment vegetation management will be designed as per local site conditions to meet NRCS practice specifications.
- 11] Regularly monitor the site after implementation to ensure erosion and weed issues are addressed quickly.
- 12] Limit duration of construction period to the minimum practicable.

--END--

