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## VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

**TECHNICAL GUIDE NOTICE NO. 693**

**OCTOBER 13, 2015**

Re: Transmit Wetland Conservation Compliance (WCC) policy revisions, amendment to the Lesser Prairie Chicken Biological Opinion, and revision of the Gunnison Sage Grouse Biological Opinion.

This Technical Guide Notice transmits the following materials to the Colorado electronic Field Office Technical Guide ([eFOTG](#)).

### **Section II, Special Environmental Concerns, Threatened and Endangered Species, ESA Programmatic Consultation**

[GUSG Biological Opinion, 09/29/15](#). Revision. This Opinion replaces the original document dated December, 2014. An overview of the changes is provided in the attached letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the NRCS (page 2).

[GUSG Biological Opinion, Action Area](#). Revision. The prior version showed greater sage grouse and the Gunnison sage grouse Action Areas, this version only identifies the Gunnison sage grouse Action Area and clarifies data sources and terminology.

[GUSG Biological Opinion, Conservation Measures](#). New. Colorado Conservation Measures for the Gunnison Sage-Grouse Biological Opinion (Opinion).

In the Opinion, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NRCS identified ten potential adverse effects to the species that may result from implementation of NRCS conservation practices. To address these potential adverse effects, the Service, in cooperation with NRCS, developed specific conservation measures to minimize, avoid, or eliminate those effects. In addition, NRCS agreed to coordinate with the affected State Wildlife Agencies to establish state-specific guidance to the conservation measures, where more expansive protective measures are appropriate or where further clarification was necessary. This document establishes Colorado's statewide coordination with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW).

[GUSG Biological Opinion, Flowchart](#). Revision. Clarifies that 1] CPR actions (planning and implementation) are not covered under NRCS's biological opinion; 2] Working Lands for Wildlife, Sage Grouse Initiative planning and implementation must follow the NRCS's biological opinion in all cases; 3] and it removed the question asking if the site was capable of

supporting GUSG habitat, replacing it with a more direct question asking if the action “may effect” the species.

[LPC Biological Opinion, 08/13/14, amended 03/31/15](#). Amended. On 03/31/2015 the Opinion was appended to include coverage for the Conservation Practice Standard, Structures for Wildlife (CPS 649). The CPS 649 will have the same Conservation Measures as CPS 645.

### **Section III, Legislated Programs, Wetland Conservation Compliance**

[WCC Action Plan](#). New. The Food Security Act, Wetland Conservation Compliance Provision Improvement Action Plan (WCC Action Plan) provides Colorado policy and procedures to address a national mandate on improving WCC effectiveness and efficiency.

*Key policy and procedure items:*

- Establishment of policy on WCC separation-of-duties,
- revision of WCC Job Approval Authorities, and
- development of WCC guidance and streamlining tools.

[WCC JAA Training](#). New. The Food Security Act, Wetland Conservation Compliance (WCC), Job Approval Authority (JAA) Training Requirements. Provides a current list of training courses that are state-approved to obtain WCC JAA. Included is a fillable form for NRCS employees to report training received (training record).

[WCC Job Approval Authority](#). New. The JAA roster will provide a current list of qualified NRCS employees (WCC agency experts) who have demonstrated the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct the various tasks of wetland conservation compliance.

[WCC Request a Wetland Determination](#). New. Guidance document for NRCS service centers on processing wetland determination requests for the purposes of wetland conservation compliance under the 1985 Food Security Act.

This Technical Guide Notice cancels the following materials and removes them from the Colorado eFOTG.

### **Section II, Special Environmental Concerns, Threatened and Endangered Species, ESA Programmatic Consultation**

GuSG Biological Opinion, 12/22/14. Replaced.

GuSG Action Area Map. Replaced.

GuSG Flow Chart. Replaced.

### **Section III, Legislated Programs, Wetland Conservation Compliance**

Wetland Approval Authority, Revised 01/2013. Replaced.

### **Printing and Filing Instructions**

District Conservationists are not required to maintain a hard copy of the eFOTG in their respective field offices. A copy of the Colorado eFOTG is maintained electronically at the

National Information Technology Center (NITC) Web Farm at [http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/efotg\\_locator.aspx](http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/efotg_locator.aspx), and a hard copy is maintained at the State office in Denver.

**Contact Information**

Contact Chanda Pettie, State Biologist, at 720-544-2804 or [chanda.pettie@co.usda.gov](mailto:chanda.pettie@co.usda.gov) for information regarding the biology and wetland compliance content of this notice.

This notice is filed in the Section I, Transmittals folder of the Colorado eFOTG. A [Section I Transmittals Index](#) is available in PDF format to comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1998. This is the only copy of this notice you will receive from the State office.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clint Evans".

CLINT EVANS  
State Conservationist

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