

## Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT)

Affected Colorado Counties: Cheyenne, Lincoln, Kiowa, Prowers, and Baca.

The Southern Great Plains [Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool \(CHAT\)](#) is an online mapping application created by a coalition of states to provide information on lesser prairie-chicken (LPC) habitat; to help facilitate targeted conservation efforts and responsible development of natural resources.

- CHAT contains a suite of data layers such as current and historical range of the lesser prairie chicken, land cover, oil and gas well density, and vertical structures.
- CHAT classifies lesser prairie-chicken habitat into the following 5 categories:

**Category 1** is the **focal area** for lesser prairie-chicken conservation.

*The focal areas contain intact lesser prairie-chicken habitat as defined by GIS layers incorporating landscape integrity, land cover, soil, and human disturbance, other factors, and expert opinion. See Exhibit 1 identified by red shading.*

**Category 2** is the **connectivity zones** linking the focal areas.

*The connectivity zones linking focal areas facilitate movement of individual birds between blocks of good quality habitat and improving genetic diversity among lesser prairie-chicken populations. See Exhibit 1 identified by yellow shading.*

**Category 3** is considered to be **potentially suitable habitat**.

*Areas described as potential lesser prairie-chicken habitat, derived from ecological niche modeling using base layers such as leks, nests, land cover. See Exhibit 1 identified by light green shading.*

**Category 4** is considered the **current range of the species**.

*Considered to be the estimated occupied range for the lesser prairie-chicken, plus a 10 mile buffer. See Exhibit 1 identified by dark green shading.*

**Category 5** is areas **outside the current range of the species**.

*See Exhibit 1 (areas not shaded).*

CHAT is intended to provide useful and non-regulatory information during early conservation planning stages. For NRCS planning purposes, CHAT will also be used for: targeting conservation efforts for the Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative (LPCI); helping to determine when the NRCS' LPC Conference/Biological Opinion conservation measures apply (e.g. flowchart use); and for CRP conservation planning to ensure compliance with the provisions of FSA' LPC Biological Opinion.

### Notes:

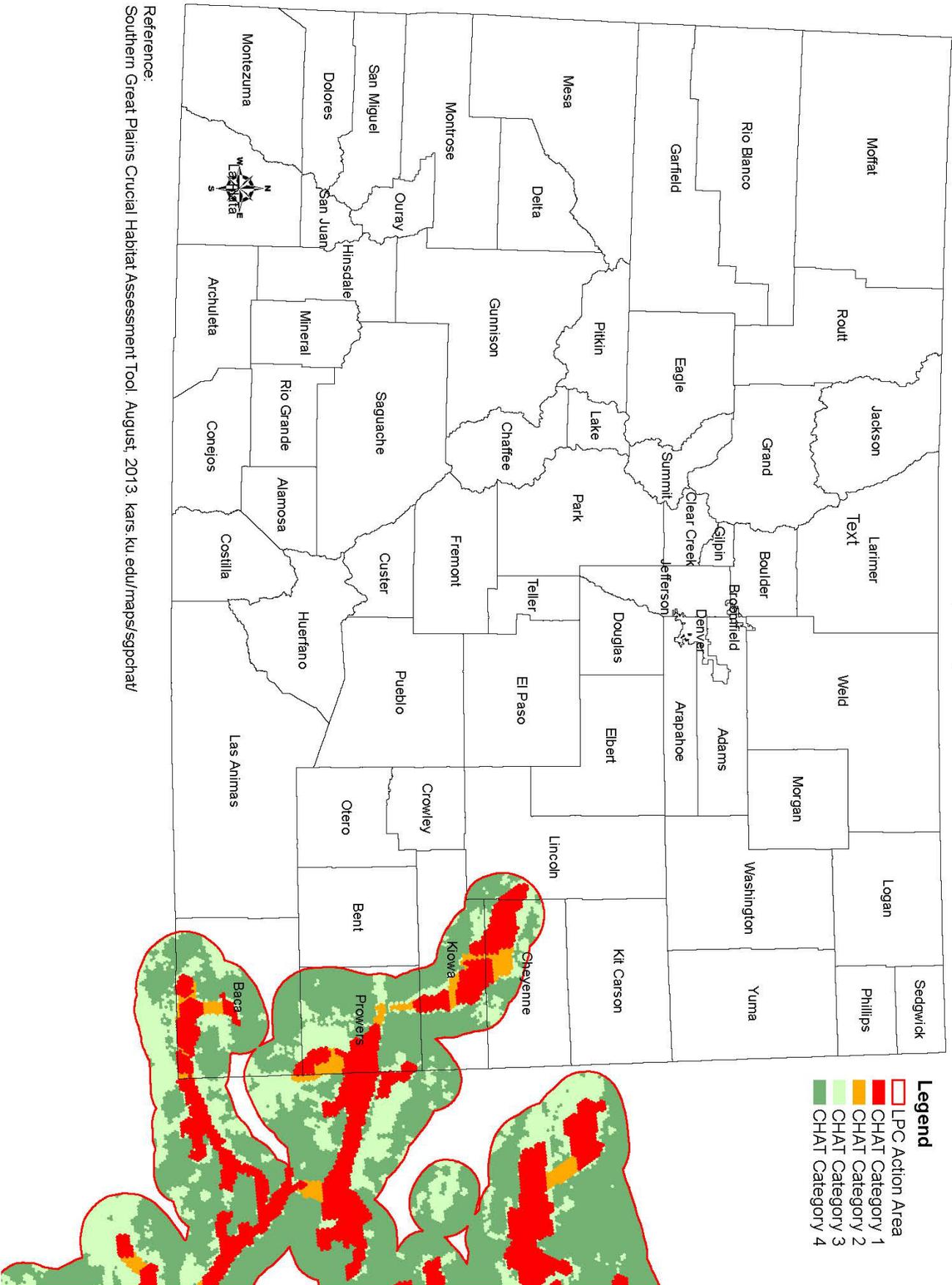
1. The finest data resolution is 1 square mile hexagons. Using these data layers at a more localized scale may lead to inaccurate interpretations.
2. The CHAT shapefile layers are also provided on the Service Center's data drive, located at F:\geodata\wildlife
3. It is expected that this version (dated 11/08/2013) will be updated in 3-5 years.

### Reference:

Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool. August, 2013. [kars.ku.edu/maps/sgpchat/](http://kars.ku.edu/maps/sgpchat/)

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- Legend**
- LPC Action Area
  - CHAT Category 1
  - CHAT Category 2
  - CHAT Category 3
  - CHAT Category 4

Reference:  
Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool, August, 2013. [kars.ku.edu/maps/sgpchat/](http://kars.ku.edu/maps/sgpchat/)