Successful "Across-States" Examples

Jim Giocomo, Central Region Director
American Bird Conservancy

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

Conservation Delivery Supply Chain

Voluntary, Private-Lands Model

National

RAW MATERIALS: Information and financial assistance programs

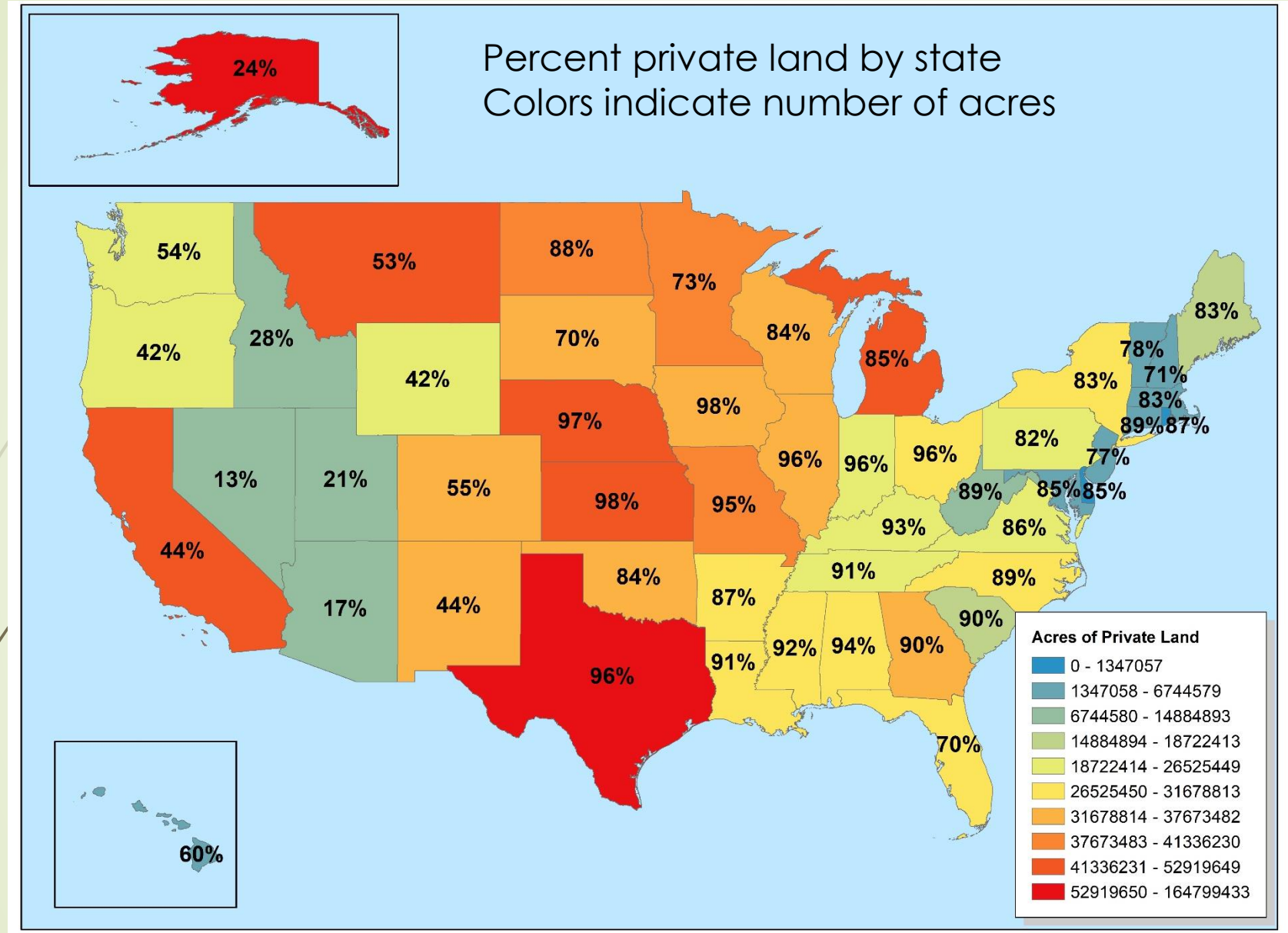
State

Information Flow to improve the system

County

GOODS & SERVICES: habitat, increased wildlife populations, ecosystem services

Customers: Individual Landowner and land manager & Wildlife

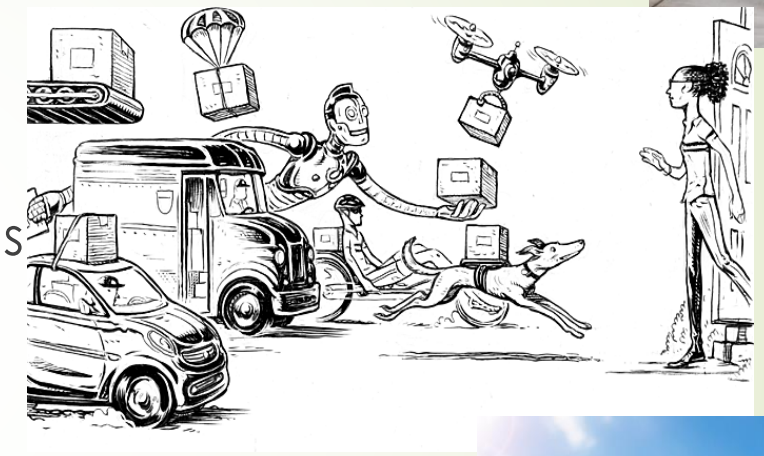


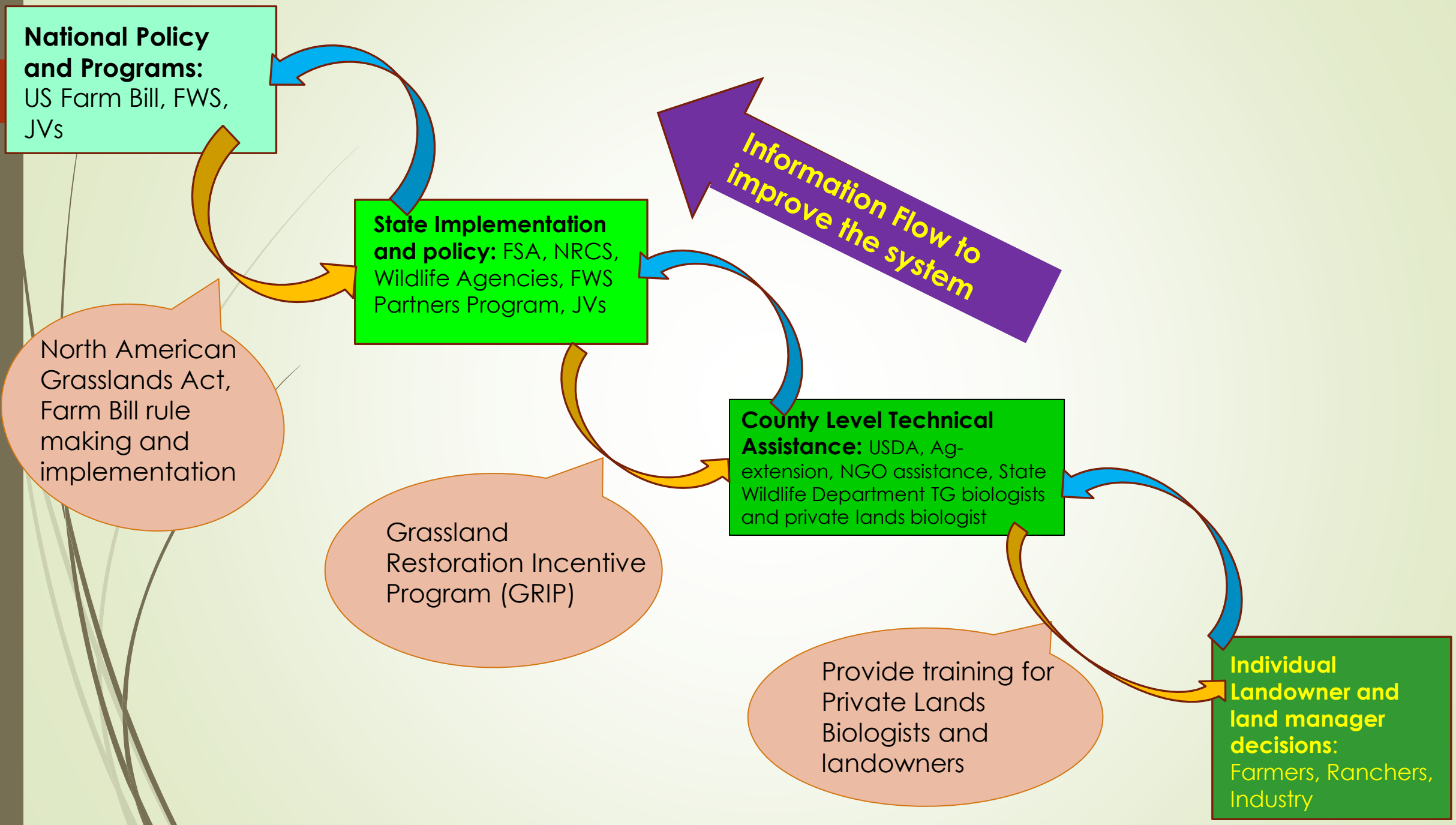
Wildlife Society Bulletin Special Issue: Private Lands Review: History Conservation Strategies Future

JJ MORGAN, CM RHODEN, B WHITE, SP RILEY. 2019. A State Assessment of Private Lands Wildlife Conservation in the United States. Wildlife Society Bulletin. Volume 43 Issue 3:1–11.

Innovation in Science-based Conservation Delivery

- Build a conservation supply chain
  - National Planning and Policy
  - Regional rule making and programs
  - On-the-ground conservation
- Last Mile Delivery Challenge
- Working at the Speed of trust
  - Takes at least 8 visits to build enough trust to discuss shared objectives
- Looking for win-win-win solutions
  - Win-win or no deal




National Policy and Programs: US Farm Bill, FWS, JVs
State Implementation and policy: FSA, NRCS, Wildlife Agencies, FWS Partners Program, JVs
Information Flow to improve the system
North American Grasslands Act, Farm Bill rule making and implementation
Grassland Restoration Incentive Program (GRIP)
County Level Technical Assistance: USDA, Ag-extension, NGO assistance, State Wildlife Department TG biologists and private lands biologist
Provide training for Private Lands Biologists and landowners
Individual Landowner and land manager decisions: Farmers, Ranchers, Industry

Who are our customers?

- The birds
- The partner biologists
- The landowners
- The funders

GRIP-Grassland Restoration Incentive Program

Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture

GRASSLAND RESTORATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association

Audubon

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

NWTF Conserve. Hunt. Share.

Native Prairies Association of Texas

USDA NRCS United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Nature Conservancy Protecting nature. Preserving life.

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

PHEASANTS forever The Habitat Organization

QUAIL forever The Habitat Organization

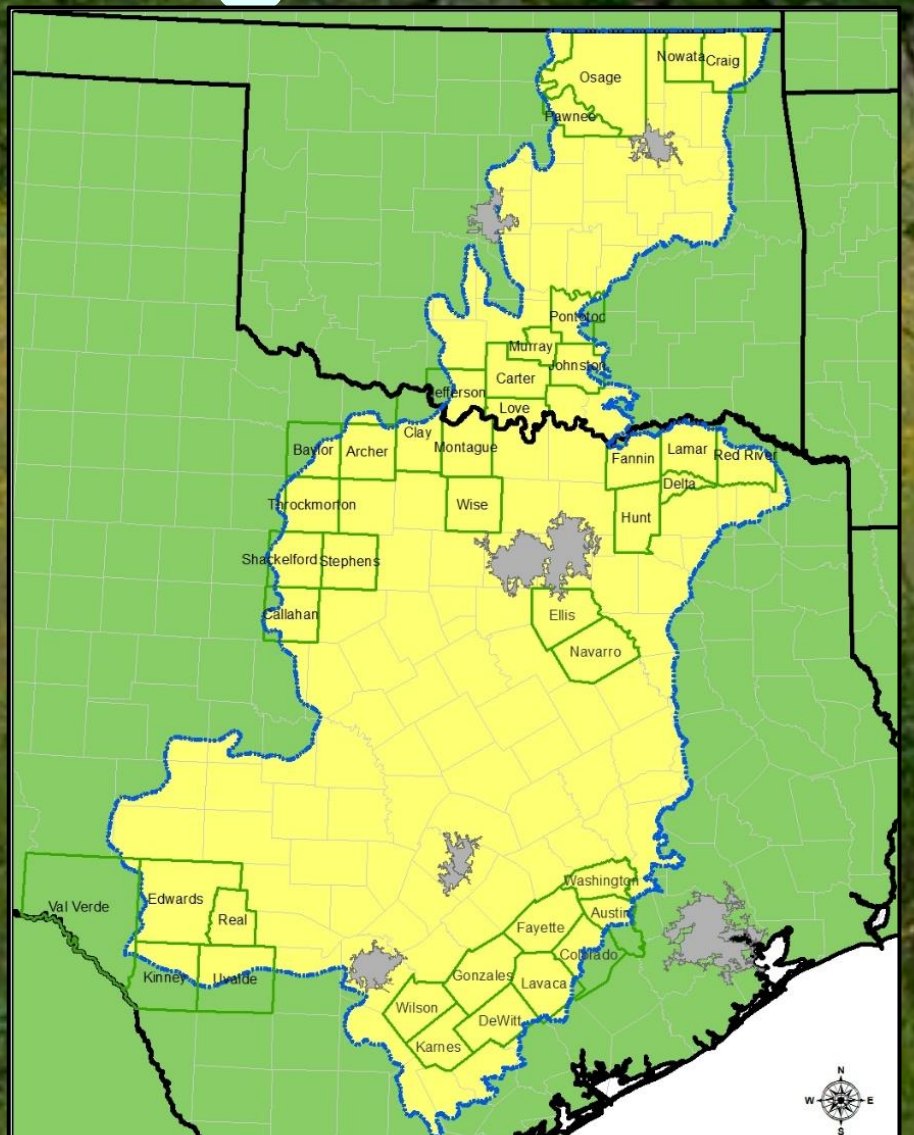
OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

QUAIL COALITION

George Miksch Sutton AVIAN RESEARCH CENTER

TEXAS WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION

NOBLE RESEARCH INSTITUTE



CONSERVATION Wrangler TEXAN by NATURE

Breeding Population Changes

Northern Bobwhite

-77%

Eastern Meadowlark

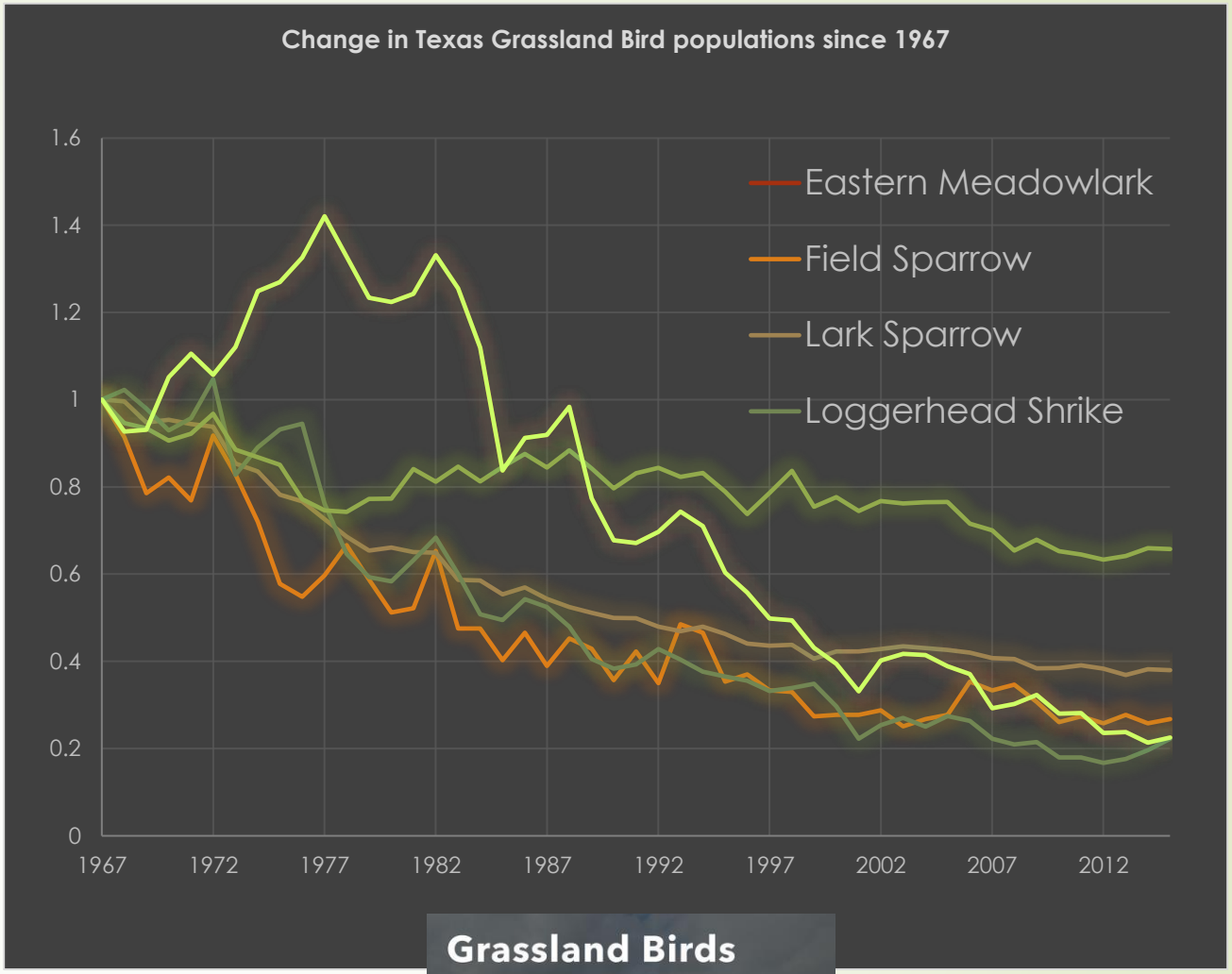
-77%

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

-34%

Loggerhead Shrike

-78%



Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture

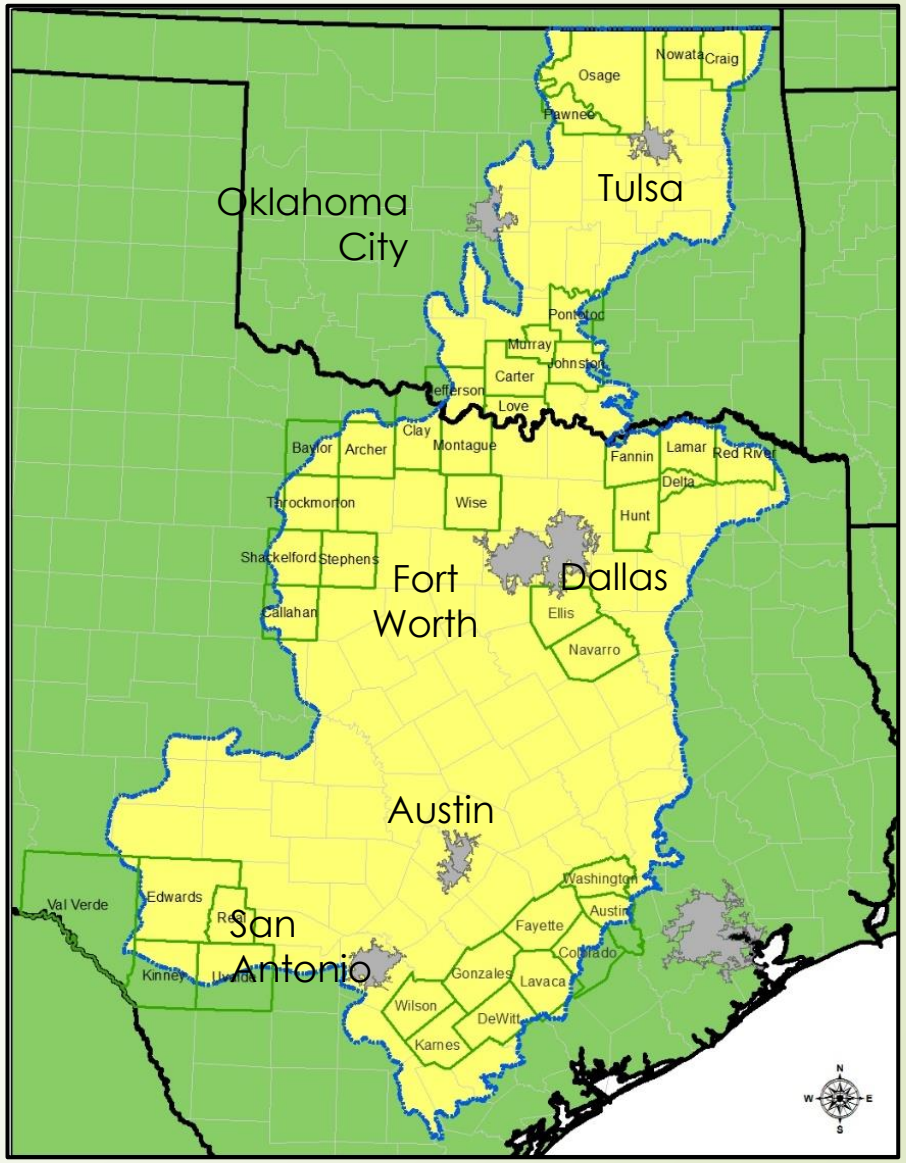
Grassland Restoration Incentive Program (GRIP)

GRIP provides incentive payments to help private landowners put conservation practices on the ground

Works in parallel with USDA Farm Bill programs EQIP (minimum 25 acres)

Must work with partner biologist to write a plan

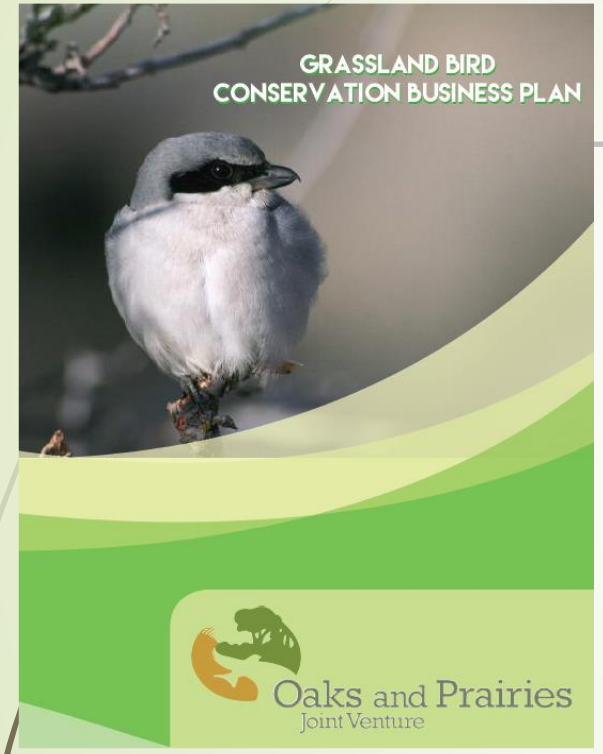
Eligible Counties
30 counties in Texas, 10 counties in Oklahoma

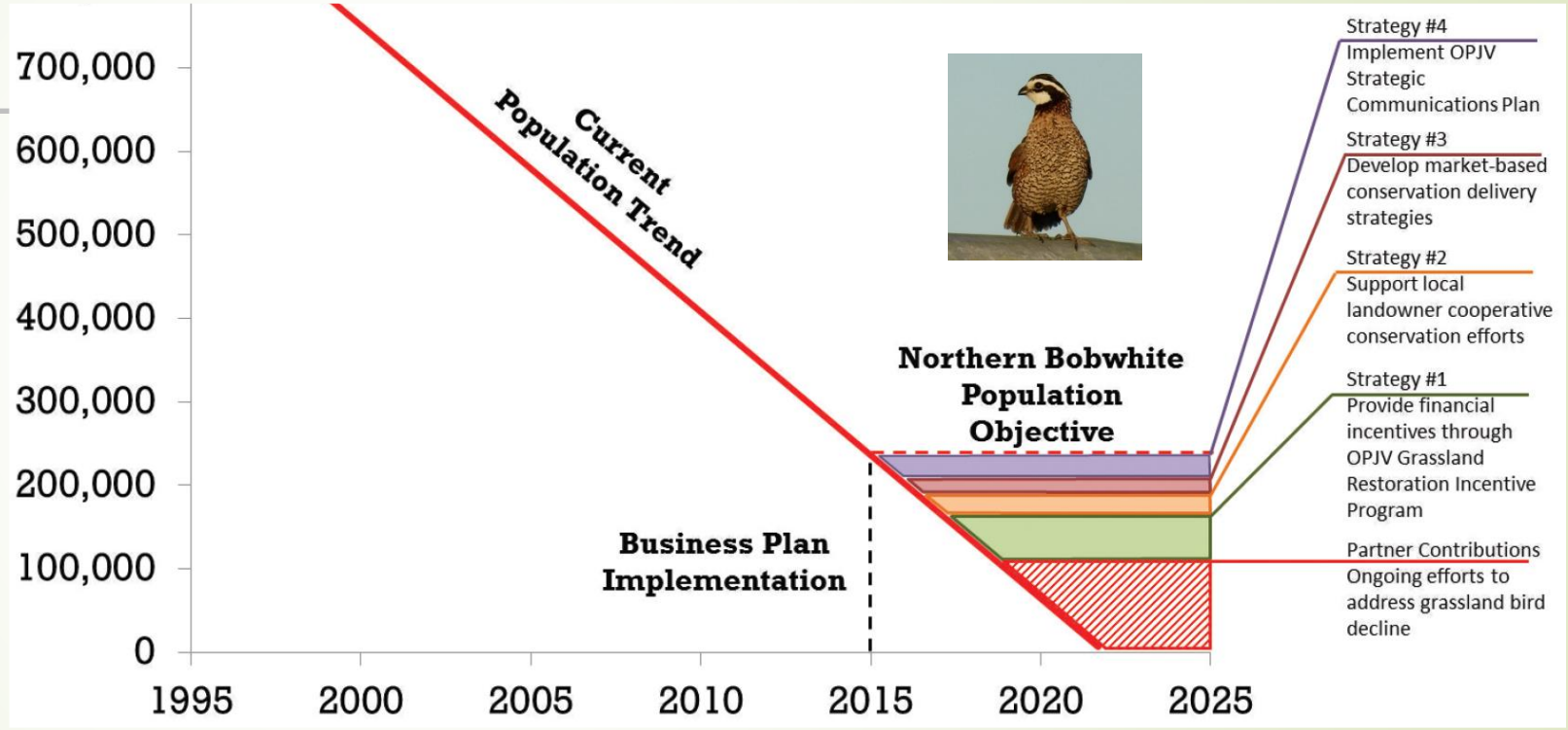


Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture

GRASSLAND RESTORATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Our goal is 3 million acres of “good” grassland management over 10 years or 5% of OPJV





Oaks and Prairies
Joint Venture

Bird Populations - Acres – $$$$

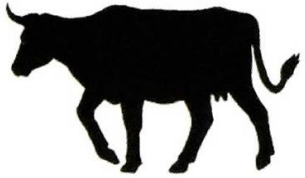
GRIP, as in "**Get a GRIP on Grassland Conservation**" Conservation Practices include Ax, Cow, Plow and Fire (Aldo Leopold)

GRASSLAND RESTORATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

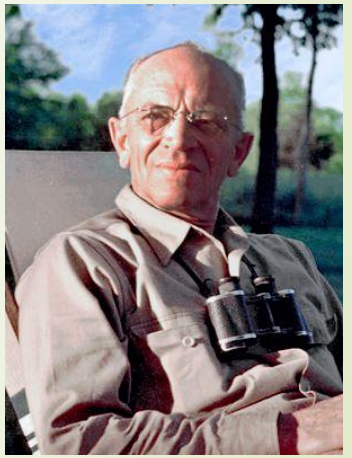
Prescribed Fire - The intentional setting of fire to manage brush and reset ecosystem succession.

Brush Management - Using either mechanical or chemical means to remove woody plants from grassland systems.

Prescribed Grazing - Following grazing management guidelines that support healthy native grassland plant communities.



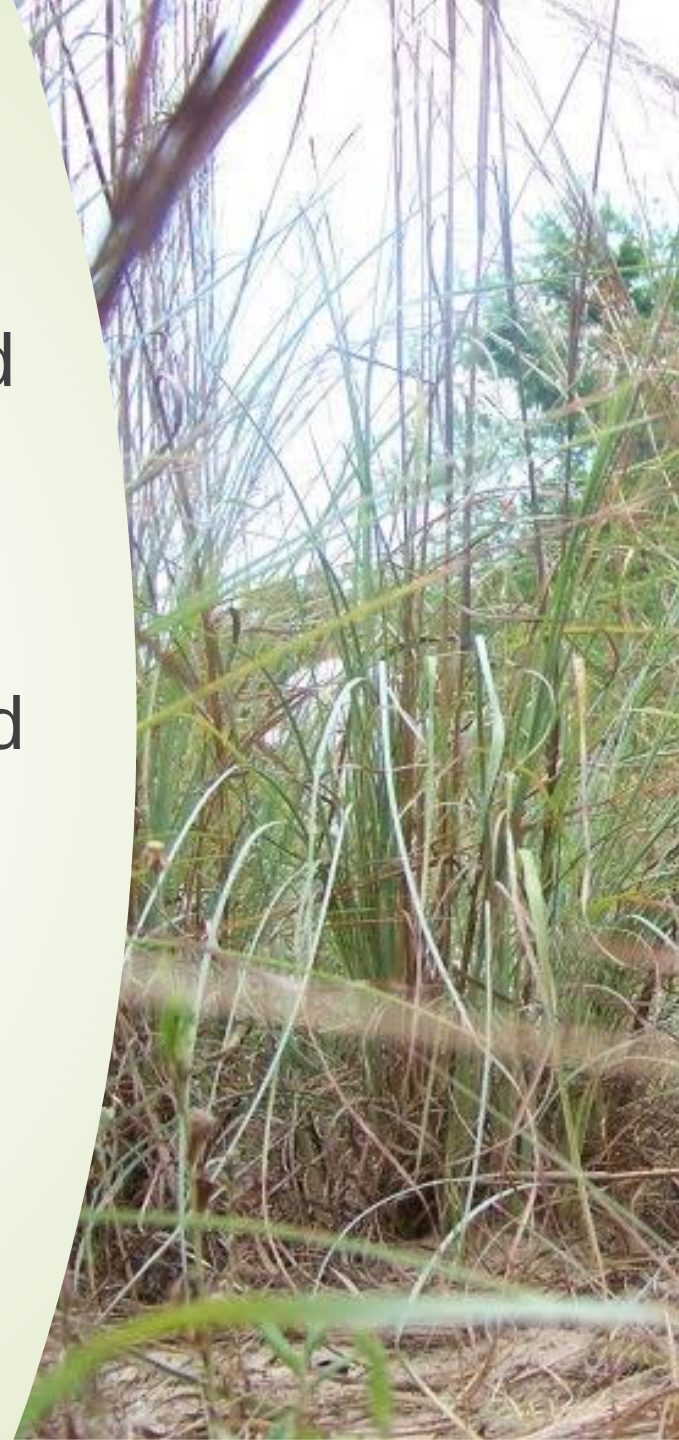
Native Grass Reseeding - Replanting native grass species in areas dominated by non-native exotic grass species.



Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture

GRIP Basics

- Restore Grassland Function for Wildlife and Working Lands
  - 3 million acre over 10 years = 300,000 acres per year
  - Big Hairy Audacious Goal = “BHAG”
- Uses partner-based team to achieve shared objectives
- Uses partner strengths
  - Existing Partner Private lands staff
  - NGO partner contracting, payments = fast moving projects



GRIP Basics

- Uses several funding streams…USDA-RCPP is one of them
  - Allows for larger funding pool (US Farm Bill Conservation Title)
  - Allows for faster projects with non-Federal funds (e.g., prescribed fire)
  - JV staff can help with paperwork
- Relies on Focal Areas to target conservation efforts.
- Incorporates monitoring.
- Discrete Practices used in logical sequences simplify a complex undertakings.

The OPJV GRIP Practice Pyramid

- Greater Conservation Benefit
- More Natural
- More Resilient
- Cheaper
- Win-win-win

Initiate Prescribed Fire System — Prescribed Fire

Add Firebreaks

Institute Appropriate Grazing System — Prescribed Grazing

Add Necessary Cross-fencing

Plant Missing, Desirable Plant Materials — Plow

Remove Invasive Woody and Herbaceous Plants — Ax

Keep pushing that rock up the hill

GRIP Accomplishments 2014-2021

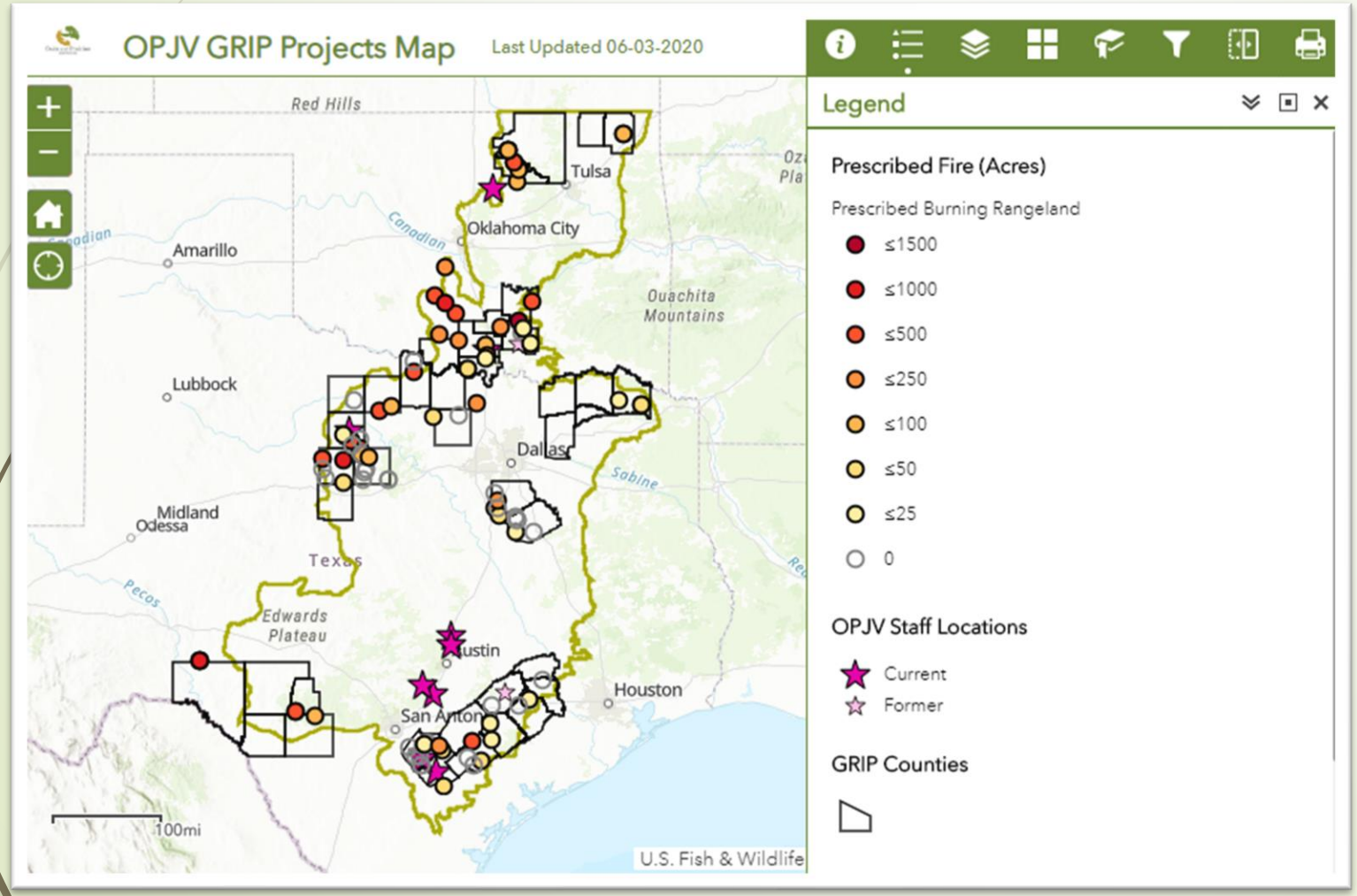
- Over 200 projects
- Total acreage = Almost 120,000 acres
- Total in Agreements = ~$2 million

Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture

Based on models and monitoring we can calculate the Number of Home Ranges Created Since Inception

- Northern Bobwhite – 6,800
- Dickcissel– 41,810
- Eastern Meadowlark– 16,360
- Painted Bunting – 32,253
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher – 94,072

GRIP projects become places to test solutions in Real-world conditions = Science opportunities

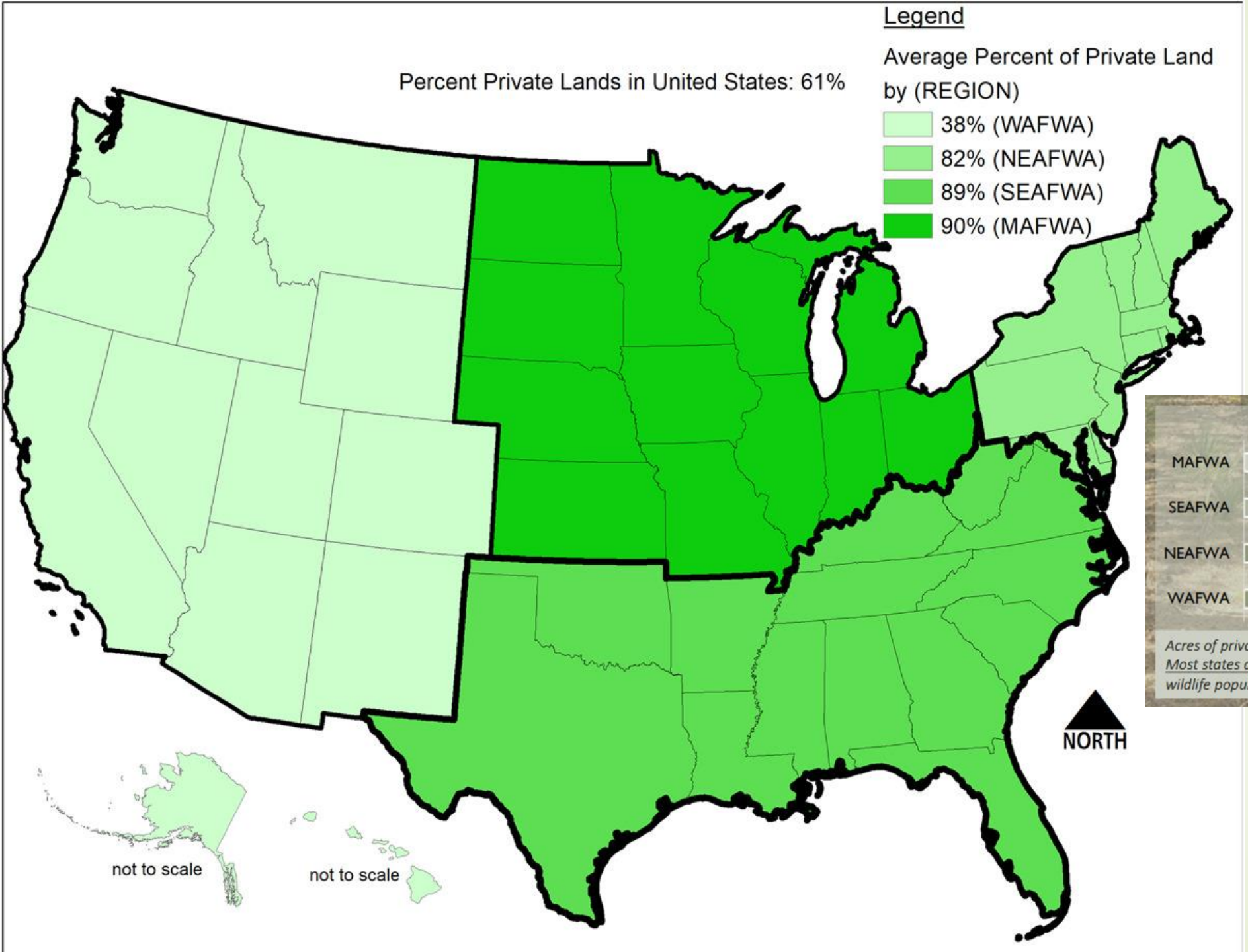


Key Lessons of OPJV GRIP

- Keep It Simple
  - Limited number of USDA practices…limits *Paradox of Choice* problems
  - USDA practices and payment schedules—A standardized approach
- Partners as fiduciaries
  - Capturing donated effort and Technical Assistance match
  - Flexibility with funding sources
- Targeted conservation landscapes
  - Advanced ranking system
  - Outcome-based projects
- Monitoring

Giocomo, J.J., R.M. Perez, K. Gee, Steven, Riley, D. Wiley, A. M. Matthews, et al. (2022)"Lessons Learned from the First 10 Years of the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture's Grassland Restoration Incentive Program (GRIP)," National Quail Symposium Proceedings: Vol. 9 , Article 13 (15) (PDF) Lessons Learned from the First 10 Years of the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture's Grassland Restoration Incentive Program (GRIP).

Providing tools for our partners to work with landowners.
Providing Technical Guidance.
Creating Win-Win-Win situations.



Private Lands State?

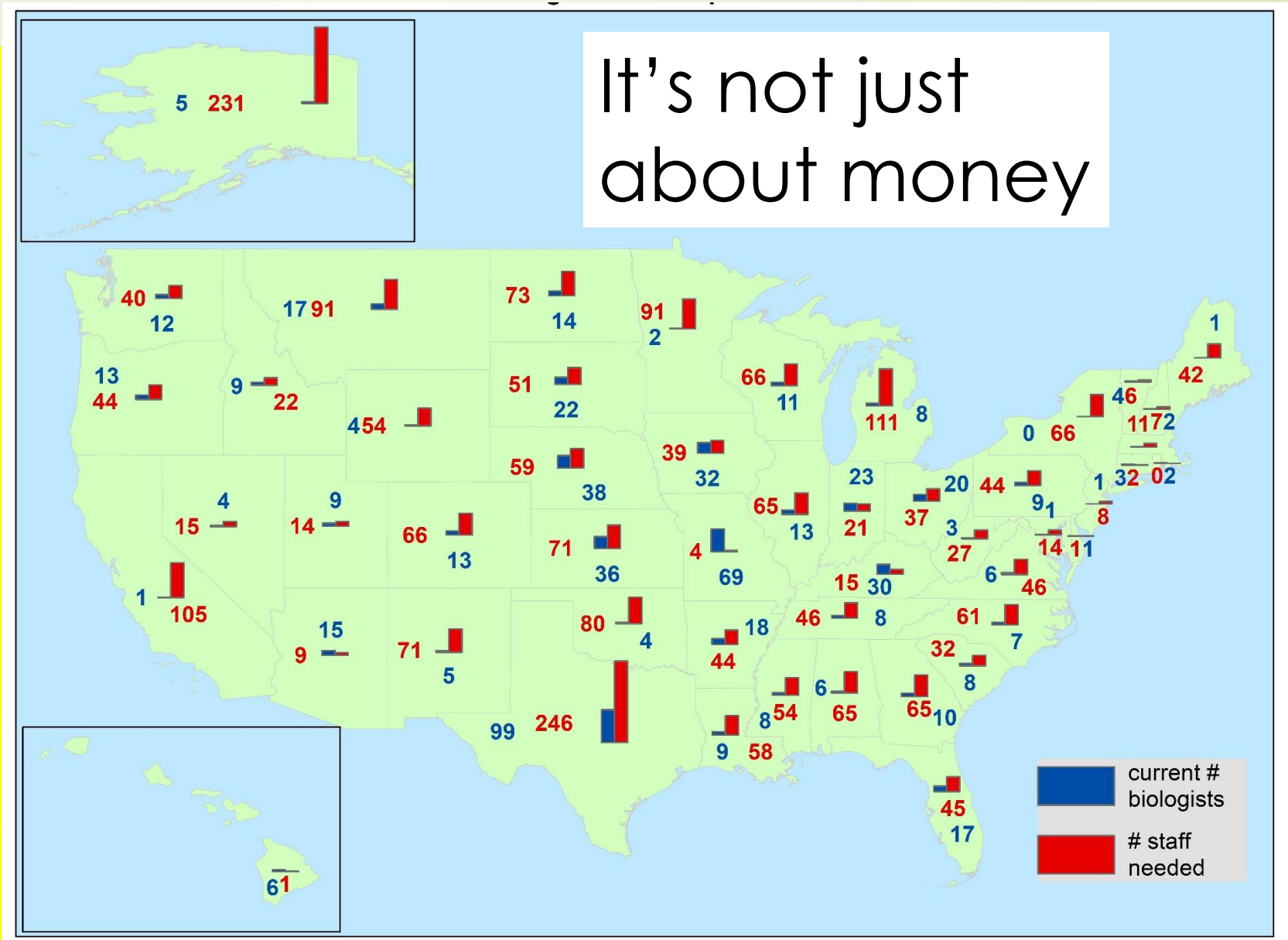
MAFWA	464,836,348 ac.	90%
SEAFWA	520,465,336 ac.	89%
NEAFWA	102,456,291 ac.	82%
WAFWA	399,264,942 ac.	38%

Acres of private land and percentage of private land by AFWA Region.
Most states are Private Lands States. Private lands are important for supporting wildlife populations in places where conservation needs are most urgent.

Need support staff Private Lands Biologists

Need 2,537 PLB staff nationally $304,320,000 per year

Projections expected from the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H. R. 4647) of **$1.4 billion per year** (NWF 2019) or the cost of the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (H. R. 2 2018) of **$1.75 billion in 2019**



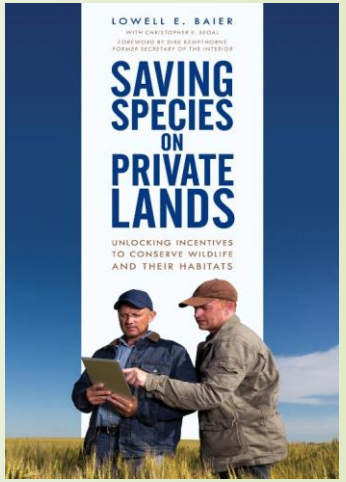
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/John-Morgan-30/publication/342529627_Wildlife_Conservation_on_Private_Lands_A_National_Discussion_A_Special_Symposium_at_The_85th_North_American_Wildlife_and_Natural_Resources_Conference/links/5ef9e65e299bf18816f010a9/Wildlife-Conservation-on-Private-Lands-A-National-Discussion-A-Special-Symposium-at-The-85th-North-American-Wildlife-and-Natural-Resources-Conference.pdf

Training: Private Lands Forum 2022, Kansas City, MO

- Successful Conservation Planning
- Working at Effective Scales
- Economic Considerations
- Building Relationships
- Conservation Projects: Getting to “Yes”
- Human Dimensions Considerations

Private Lands Forum 2022, Kansas City, MO

- Lowell Baier and Christopher Segal, collaborating authors, *Saving Species on Private Lands: Unlocking Incentives to Conserve Wildlife and Their Habitats*
- **Theme: Landowner and Partner Relationships**
  - ***Building Relationships***
    - Building relationship and partnering skills among diverse perspectives (with landowners, managers and other conservation practitioners)
    - Customer service related to landowners
    - Best practices for landowner communications
  - ***Economic Considerations***
    - Wildlife and the producer's bottom line
  - ***Conservation Projects: Getting to "Yes"***
    - Determining landowner objectives and capabilities.
    - Matching landowner goals with conservation and access program options and wildlife habitat needs.
    - Coordinating with partners to prevent landowner fatigue from too many people "knocking on the door."

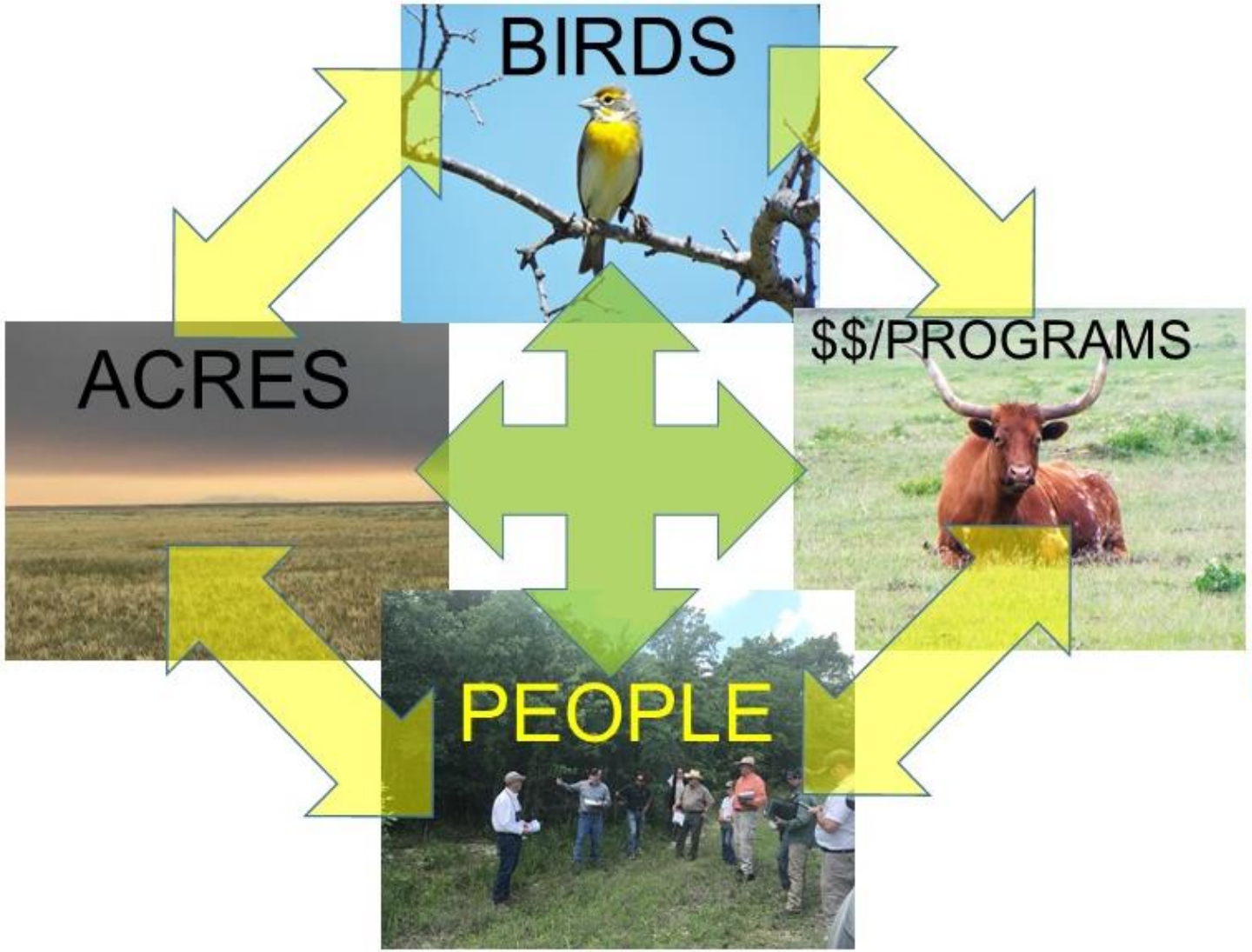


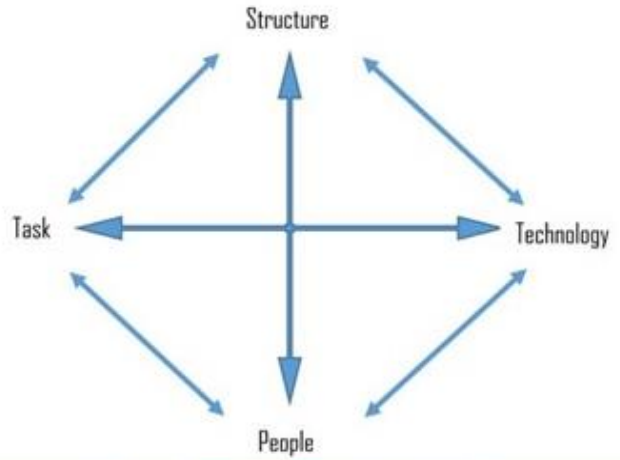
Private Lands Forum 2022, Kansas City, MO

- **Theme: Successful Conservation Planning and Implementation**
  - ***Successful Conservation Planning***
    - Balancing the desired conservation objectives with the needs, desires and resources of the landowner
    - Developing plans landowners will use
      - Example of good/bad planning
      - Planning checklist: things that partner/private lands biologists should do every time
  - ***Human Dimensions Considerations***
    - Key concepts to better bridge social, economic, and ecological considerations
    - Insights about landowner, operation, and practice characteristics for conservation adoption
    - Lessons learned for practitioners and conservation programs

Private Lands Forum 2022, Kansas City, MO

- **Theme: Successful Conservation Planning and Implementation**
  - ***Working at Effective Scales***
    - Consideration of scale and duration for private land conservation and access
    - Accomplishing conservation at a landscape scale by encouraging landowners/neighbors to work together with each other.
    - Landowner Cooperatives: how they work, how they can be successfully established





Leavitt's Diamond Model

Questions

- Jim Giocomo
- jgiocomo@abcbirds.org

Charles Thomas, Greater Prairie-Chicken (Attwater's) Tympanuchus cupido attwateri

Training: Conservation Cooperative Leadership Accelerator

Cooperative Conservation

A common component of "new conservation" which seeks to move away from top-down approaches towards more locally oriented, community driven, landowner led, conservation efforts.

BLACKFOOT CHALLENGE

QUIVIRA COALITION
education, innovation, restoration—one acre at a time

MALPAI BORDERLANDS GROUP

In the private sector… Support for Start-up Companies in Incubators and Accelerators

ati austin technology incubator
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS INCUBATOR

LACLEANTECH INCUBATOR
at La Kretz Innovation Campus

What could a Cooperative Conservation Incubator do?

- Engaging and understanding local communities works
- Regulation and economic incentive often fall short
- Pluralism, deliberation, and inclusion matter
- It can't just be "getting more people on-board" existing strategies
- Smaller groups that can build social capital and impact social norms are most effective

According to a report by UK innovation experts, NESTA, the most successful accelerator models incorporate the following five factors;

- An application process that is open to all yet highly selective
- The provision of pre-seed investment usually in exchange for equity
- A focus on small teams not individual founders
- Time-limited support with programmed events and intensive mentoring
- Cohorts or ‘classes’ of startups rather than individual companies

Cooperative Conservation Leadership Incubator

Program Structure

- Year long program
- Cohort of 4-5 cooperative conservation teams (3-4 individuals)
- Begins and ends with three day retreat
- Each team selects a conservation professional as a mentor
- Teams receive training throughout year (likely through remote education)
- Expected to meet individually tailored S.M.A.R.T. benchmarks
- Provided with $15k capacity grant to be spent on building organization