

## Short Grass Prairie Stewardship Fund Subawards Approved in FY 2012

<b>1) Lesser Prairie Chicken Habitat Restoration</b>	NFWF Federal Funds (BLM):	\$110,000.00
<i>Center of Excellence for Hazardous Materials Management</i>	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$110,000.00</u>
	Total Project:	<u>\$220,000.00</u>

This project will result in a range of activities in SE New Mexico to benefit the Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC) by increasing carrying capacity of the land. The grantee will reclaim two legacy industry well pad sites which will be made to reflect the contours of the natural landscape by removing caliche, tilling, and re-seeding with natural grasses. The treatment will decrease fragmentation across the landscape and restore connectivity. Shrub encroachment by honey mesquite on neighboring ranches, comprised of private and public lands, will be aerially treated with herbicide to preclude its persistence and promote growth of natural grasses and re-seeded as necessary. The grantee will prioritize its efforts by working on ranches which have Conservation Candidate Agreements in place to assure implementation of best management grazing practices. In addition, two windmills will be replaced with solar pumps on ranches to provide water to prairie chickens and other wildlife. Pre- and post-project implementation will include monitoring using vegetation surveys, surface photography, and surveys for lesser prairie chickens and dunes sagebrush lizards.

<b>2) Aerial Survey Assessment of Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC)</b>	NFWF Federal Funds (BLM):	\$125,000.00
<i>Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies</i>	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$115,000.00</u>
	Total Project:	<u>\$230,000.00</u>

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies will work with a contractor to coordinate aerial helicopter surveys of "action area" throughout the range of the Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC) to collect data for population assessments. Surveys will be flown over two 15km transects in selected sample blocks at approximately 60mph and approximately 25m in elevation above ground from sunrise and until 2.5 hours after sunrise during the peak period of lek attendance between March and May. In addition to number of birds counted, other observations to be recorded include activity (strutting or flushed), whether leks were man-made or natural, and habitat type (crop land, short grass grassland, tall-grass grassland, sand-sage prairie, shinnery oak and will be supplemented with ground surveys as needed. Annual range-wide surveys, in combination with 2012 pilot efforts, will enable managers to know the response of the LPC to Farm Bill conservation efforts across the landscape, target future efforts to enhance populations, and assess the probability of LPC presence based on habitat conditions.

<b>3) Short Grass Prairie Conservation in New Mexico and Texas</b>	NFWF Federal Funds (BLM):	\$15,000.00
<i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	NFWF Misc. Federal Funds (NRCS):	\$10,000.00
	NFWF Non-Federal Funds (Wells Fargo):	
	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$25,000.00</u>
	Total Project:	<u>\$50,000.00</u>
		<u>\$100,000.00</u>

This project proposes a range of activities to complement work being done by NRCS and private lands biologists. Activities will include enhancing the NM - TX habitat corridor, developing a grazing cooperative with input from multiple stakeholders, improving awareness and relationships with area landowners, herbicide treatment of invasives, and monitoring to assess success of habitat restoration and enhancement. In addition, the grantee will host informational workshops focusing on incentives for landowners to engage in best management practices and technical assistance to agricultural producers which lead to benefits for the LPC.