Strategic Habitat Conservation for Declining Grassland Wildlife Populations in the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture

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Jeff Raasch, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Robert Perez, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture
GRASSLAND RESTORATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM
Current – 18 U.S. Joint Ventures

North American Bird Habitat Joint Ventures

Habitat Joint Venture
- Appalachian Mountains
- Atlantic Coast
- Canadian Intermountain
- Central Hardwoods
- Central Valley Habitat
- East Gulf Coastal Plain
- Eastern Habitat
- Gulf Coastal
- Intermountain West
- Lower Mississippi Valley
- Northern Great Plains
- Olympic Mountains
- Pacific Coast
- Prairies and Lakes
- Prairies-Pothole
- Rainwater Basin
- Rio Grande
- San Francisco Bay
- Sonoran
- Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region
- Western Boreal Area of Interest

NORTHERN BOBBWHITE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE
March 2002

TENNESSEE Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy
March 2002

TEXAS Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy
March 2002

SOUTHEAST UNITED STATES WATERSHED CONSERVATION PLAN
Implementation Framework

UNITED STATES SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION PLAN

PARTNERS IN FLIGHT

2001 Landbird Conservation Plan Part 1: The Continental Plan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joint Venture</th>
<th>BCR</th>
<th>Area Importance</th>
<th>Urgency/ Half Life</th>
<th>Long-term trend</th>
<th>Short-term Trend</th>
<th>Cumulative percent of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playa Lakes</td>
<td>18, 19</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-28%</td>
<td>-5.40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Mississippi/ Great Lakes</td>
<td>22, 24</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-79%</td>
<td>-5.40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Coast Joint Venture</td>
<td>27, 29, 30, 31</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-93%</td>
<td>-5.80%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oaks and Prairies</td>
<td>20, 21</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-93%</td>
<td>-7.30%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Grande</td>
<td>35, 36</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-59%</td>
<td>-2.10%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Hardwoods</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-86%</td>
<td>-5.10%</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Gulf Coast</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-91%</td>
<td>-5.30%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Mississippi Valley</td>
<td>25, 26</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-92%</td>
<td>-5.80%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulf Coast</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-79%</td>
<td>-3.30%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain Water Basin</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-35%</td>
<td>-4.70%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appalachian Mountain</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-98%</td>
<td>-6.90%</td>
<td>88%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture BCRs

Oaks and Prairies
45 million acres

Edward’s Plateau
14 million acres

97% private land
6 of the top 50 cities
Many counties >90% Ag
**Strategy 1** - Provide financial incentives through the OPJV Grassland Restoration Incentive Program (GRIP) to private landowners for conducting beneficial grassland bird habitat management practices.

**Strategy 2** – Support local landowner cooperative conservation efforts.

**Strategy 3** – Develop market-based conservation delivery strategies

**Strategy 4** – Implement OPJV Strategic Communications Plan

[www.opjv.org](http://www.opjv.org)
Our goal is 3 million acres of “good” grassland management over 10 years or 5% of OPJV
Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
Biologist Ranking Index

Score
High
Medium
Low

Focus Areas
Grassland Restoration Incentive Program (GRIP)
Eligible Counties

~$1 million since November 2013
OPJV Partnership accomplishments

• Over $1 million in financial assistance to private landowners
• Over 40 partner organizations working together
• Over $1 million in financial assistance to private landowners
• Over 60,000 acres in conservation practices
• Supported by over 12,000 grassland bird point counts
• GRIP support provided by many diverse sources including TPWD Upland Gamebird Stamp Fund, local Quail Coalition Chapters, Monarch Conservation Grant, ConocoPhillips SPIRIT of Conservation Award and many others.
GRIP, as in
“Get a GRIP on Grassland Conservation”
Conservation Practices include Ax, Cow, Plow and Fire
(Aldo Leopold)

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.
Coming soon

- NRCS RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program)
  - $2.9 million NRCS Investment over 5 years
  - $3.1 million partner investment to “match”
  - Existing partner investments
    - Cash and in-kind
    - Monitoring and tracking
- NFWF Partnership Grant through Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation
- NFWF ConocoPhillips SPIRIT of Conservation through Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation
Bird Conservation is complicated
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spatial Scale</th>
<th>Biological Planning</th>
<th>Conservation Design</th>
<th>Conservation Delivery</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Communications</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National/International</td>
<td>NBCI &amp; Partners in Flight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Breeding Bird Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>State Wildlife Action Plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Breeding Bird Survey, State Agency Fall Counts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus Area</td>
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<td>Grassland Restoration Incentive Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>OPJV Grassland Bird Monitoring</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td></td>
<td>NRCS EQIP, FSA</td>
<td></td>
<td>OPJV Grassland Bird Monitoring</td>
<td>OPJV Human Dimensions</td>
<td>OPJV Communication Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field</td>
<td></td>
<td>Landowner Decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Many Graduate Student Research Projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural Extension</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Questions!

jgiocomo@abcbirds.org

www.opjv.org