



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Working Lands for Wildlife

Conservation Beyond Boundaries

# A Proven Model for Species Conservation

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# “Helping People Help the Land”



**Born in response to  
national tragedy**

**≈11,000 employees**

**92% in county field  
offices**

**Staff trained in soils,  
agronomy, range,  
engineering, biology**

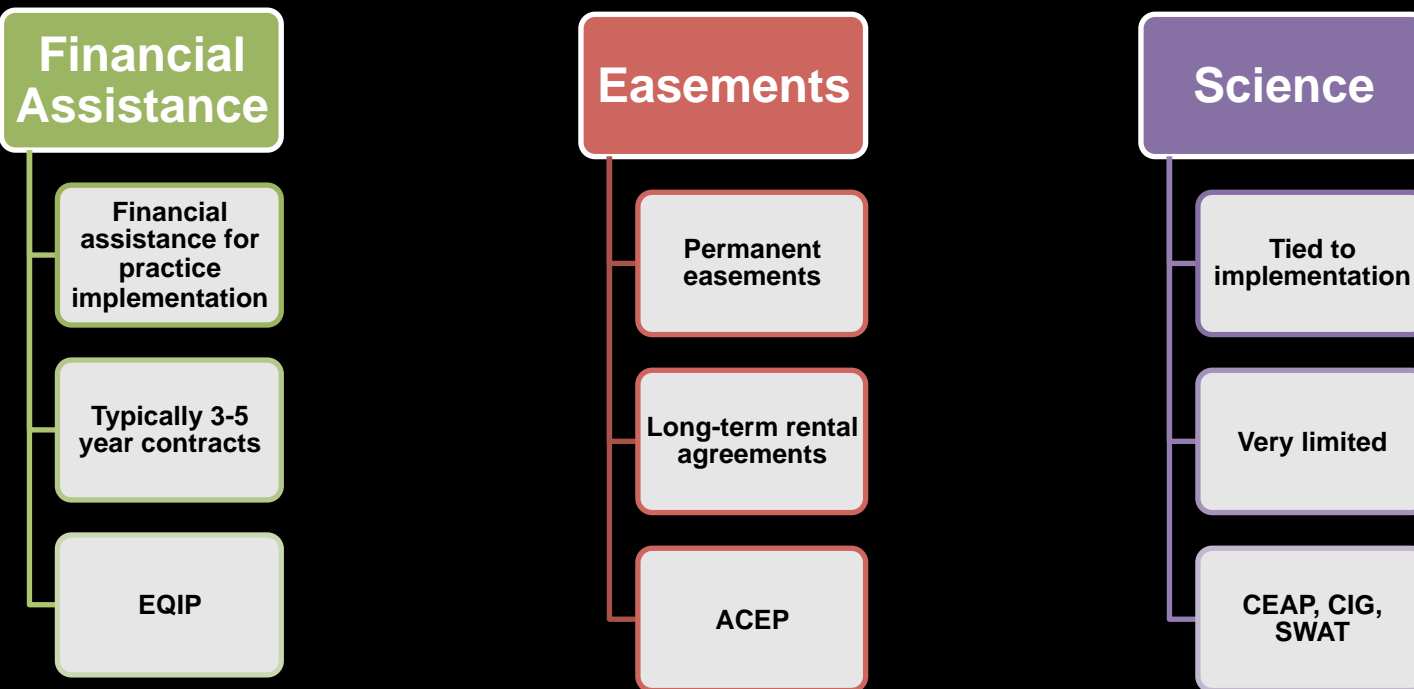
**Private lands focus**

**Non-regulatory**

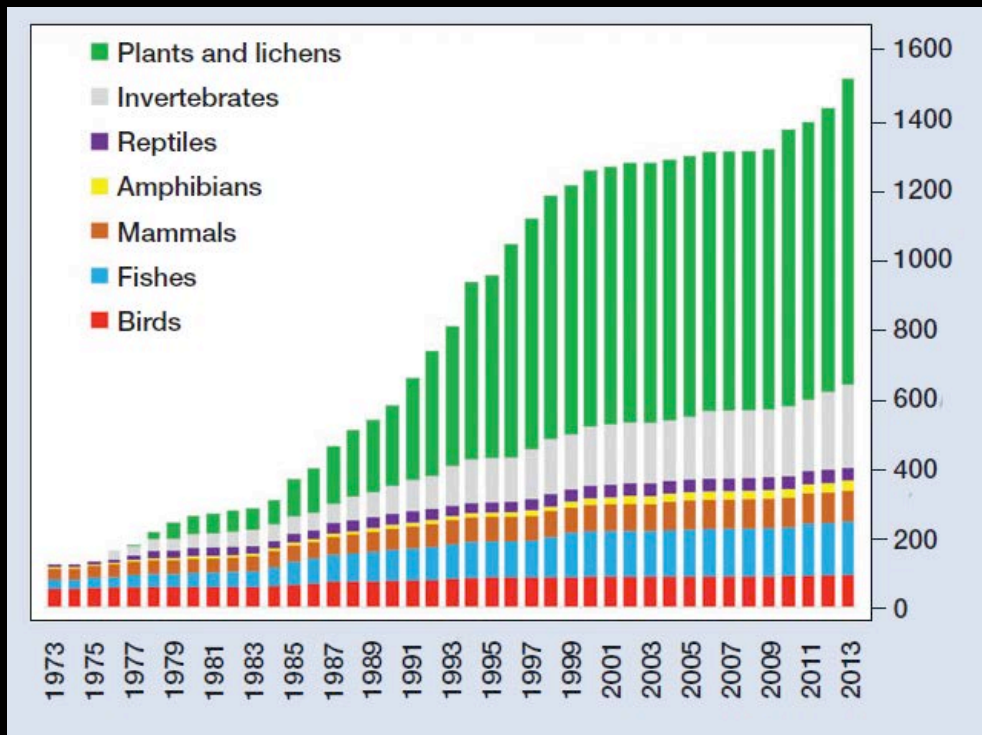


# NRCS programs key for delivery

## Technical Assistance Conservation planning

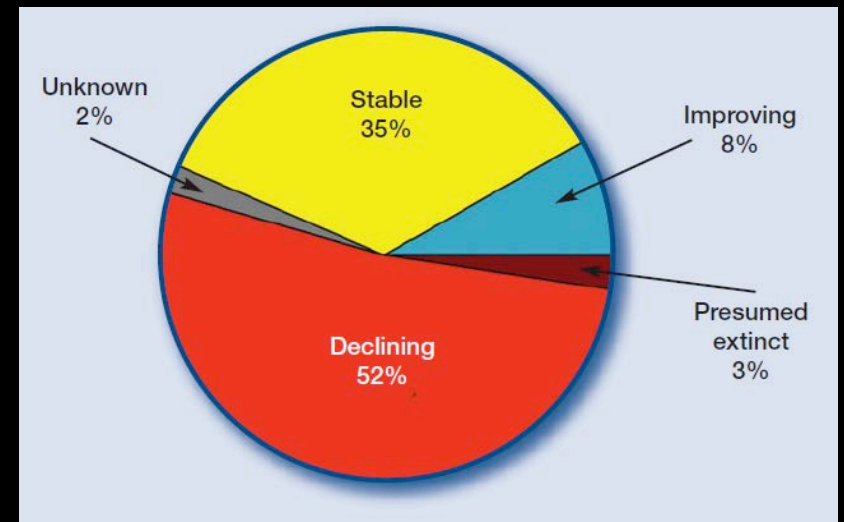


# Status quo Acceptable?



Number of listed species  
skyrockets

Few species are improving



Trends in recovery status for  
1,292 listed species, 1990-2010

# A New Paradigm in Wildlife Conservation

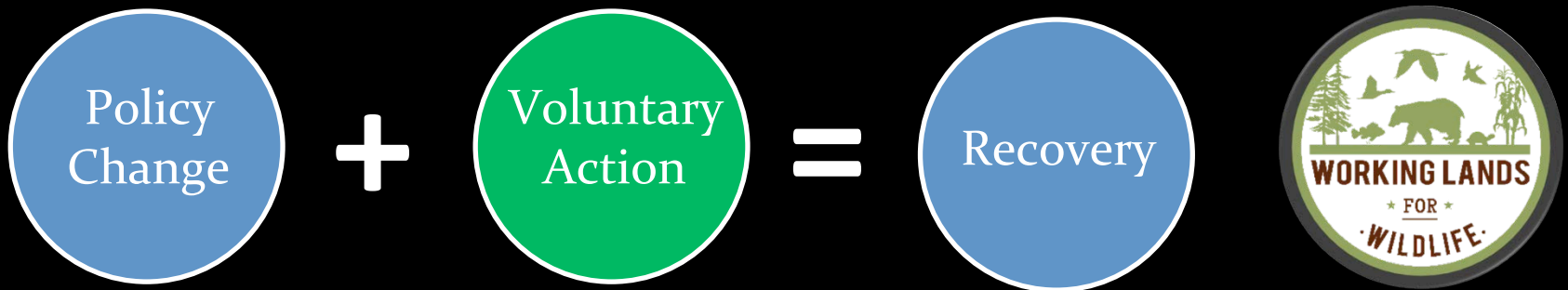
- An innovative application of the ESA
- “The regulatory approach embodied in the Endangered Species Act is being extended to include promoting management trajectories needed to address complex ecosystem problems through the Working Lands for Wildlife Partnership” (Boyd et al. 2014)

# Voluntary Conservation Provides Solution

traditional regulatory approach



conservation-reliant species



- Voluntary conservation on private land can influence species' outcomes
- Species' needs are compatible with agricultural practices and rural land management
- Viable core habitat areas can be protected and habitat recovery opportunities exist
- Partnership opportunities exist
- Endangered Species Act tools are in place to provide regulatory certainty
- Habitat improvements benefit other species



# Recipe for Species Conservation

From: The NRCS WLFW Team

**1 Part Shared Vision:** Finding the common link that invites cooperation over conflict.

**1 Part Strategic Approach:** Direct resources where the biological returns are highest.

**1 Part Accountability:** Use science to guide conservation.

**1 Part Leverage:** Multiply investments through partnerships.

**1 Part ESA Predictability:** Provide peace of mind to participating landowners

**2 Parts Trust and Credibility:** “Kitchen table conservation”









## Voluntary Conservation and the ESA

<u>Species</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
1. Louisiana Black Bear	delisted	Mar 2016
2. Lesser Prairie Chicken	not listed	Sep 2015
3. Greater Sage Grouse	not listed	Sep 2015
4. New England Cottontail	not listed	Sep 2015
5. Bi-State Sage Grouse DPS	not listed	Apr 2015
6. Oregon Chub*	delisted	Mar 2015
7. Arctic Grayling	not listed	Aug 2014



*\*first listed fish ever recovered*

# WLFW Alignment to SWFL Recovery Plan

- 1.2 Work with private landowners to conserve and enhance habitat on nonfederal lands
- 1.3 Work with Tribes to develop plans for conservation and recovery on Tribal Lands
- 6.4 Investigate grazing systems, strategies and intensities for riparian recovery and maintenance



# WLFW Approach for SWFL

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- Targeted approach near historic or extant SWFL territories
- Using science provided by USGS to working in areas with best potential to increase nesting
- Enhancing riparian habitat with local partners & NGO
- Increase nesting habitat and connectivity through invasive species management
- Outreach to FWS and CADF&W for restoration funds



# WLFW - SWFL

## Actions

- Protect, maintain, and restore riparian habitat
- Increase and improve occupied, suitable and potential breeding habitat
- Manage livestock grazing to increase habitat quality and quantity
- Improve weed and invasive species management
- Increase connectivity of existing habitat



# SWFL Scorecard

Fiscal Year 2015 Southwestern Willow Flycatcher  
NRCS Financial Assistance (FA) and Active and Completed Contracts through WLFW

State	Acres	NRCS Investment	Contracts
California	705	\$613,283	5
Nevada	0	\$0	0
Utah	26	\$11,616	2
Arizona	214	\$103,894	3
Colorado	71	\$98,670	3
New Mexico	0	\$0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,016</b>	<b>\$827,463</b>	<b>13</b>

# SWFL Scorecard

## Overall Summary

### Total NRCS Investment



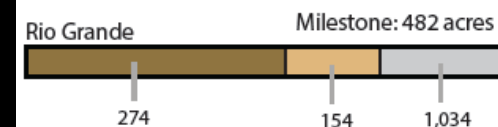
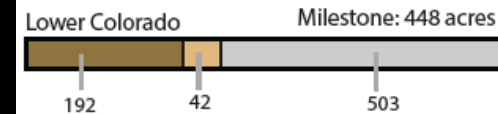
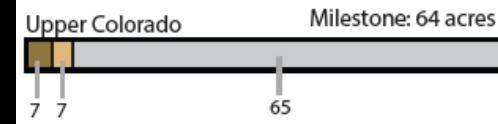
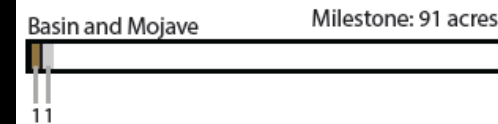
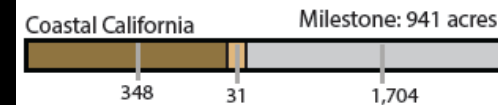
### Number of Contracts



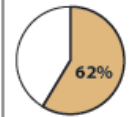
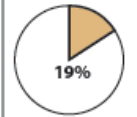
### Total Acres Contracted



## 2018 Milestones: Nesting Habitat in Population Recovery Units



### Progress on 10-Year Plan Goals



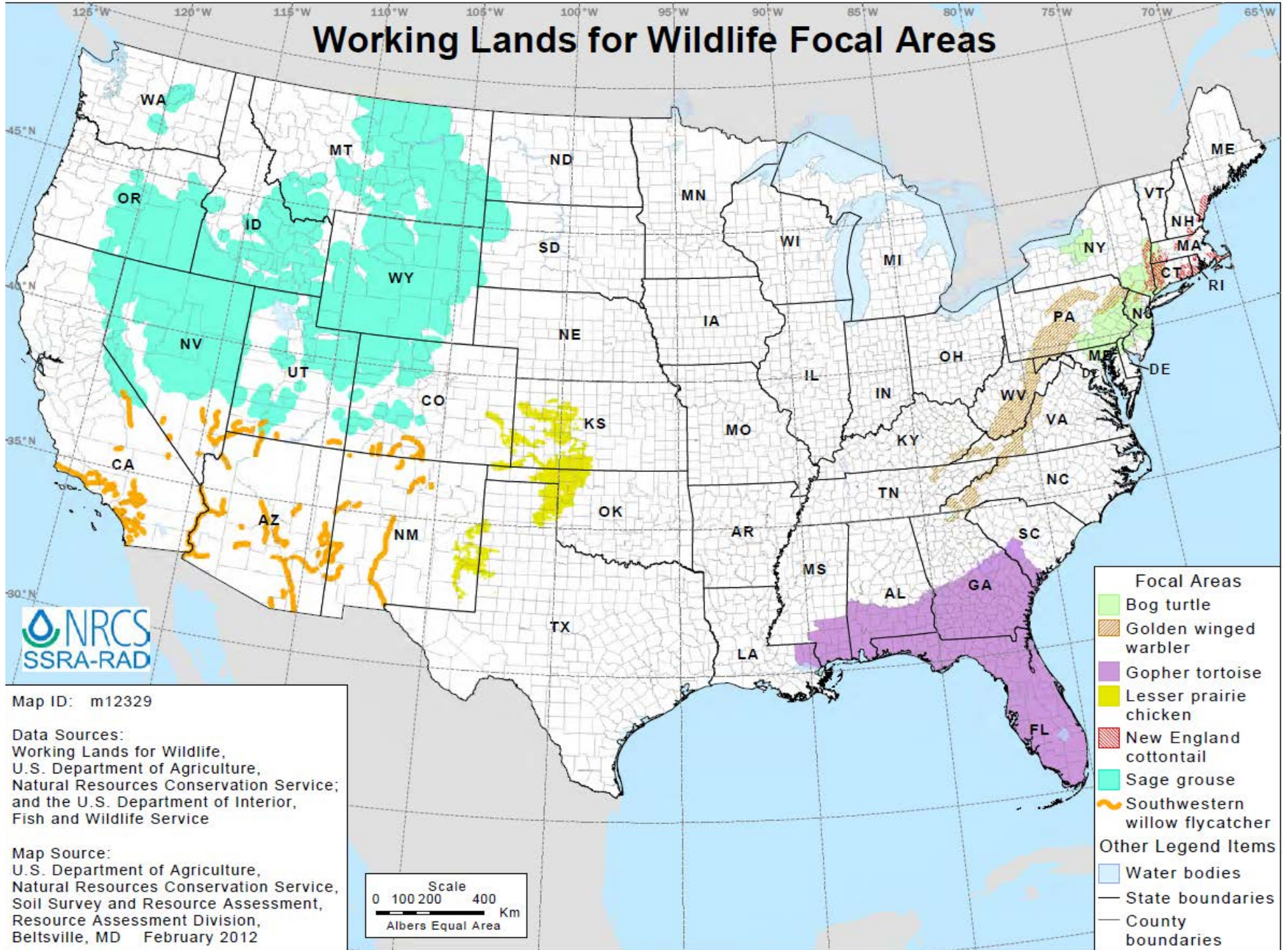
# WLFW – SWFL Coordination with FWS

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- Selection of SWFL as one of WLFW Seven Species
- Jointly decided on priority areas to target NRCS technical and financial assistance
- Developed a SWFL Habitat Evaluation Guide in coordination with USFWS
- Consultation Process with USFW in 2012 and 2015
- Some NRCS projects funded jointly through FWS Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program
- Met with FWS in Region 8 regional and Field offices



# Working Lands for Wildlife Focal Areas



## Recovery Unit: CA Coastal Santa Margarita River

- Locate along the southern part of Camp Pendleton
- Worked with FWS to refine priorities
  - Yellow = observed territories
  - Hatched – Critical Habitat
  - Blue Critical Habitat Lines



# Potential opportunities to work with other federal partners

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- Increase the joint funding for riparian habitat enhancement occurring with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
- Expand technical assistance in Southern CA with partnerships with FWS, CADF&W, DOD, and NGOs
- Secure matching funding for easements or enhancement funds through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program

# Nevada REPI Project

## Partners Cooperatively Focused on Key Areas of Sage grouse Habitat

- Benefits many other species using the same sage brush and landscape.

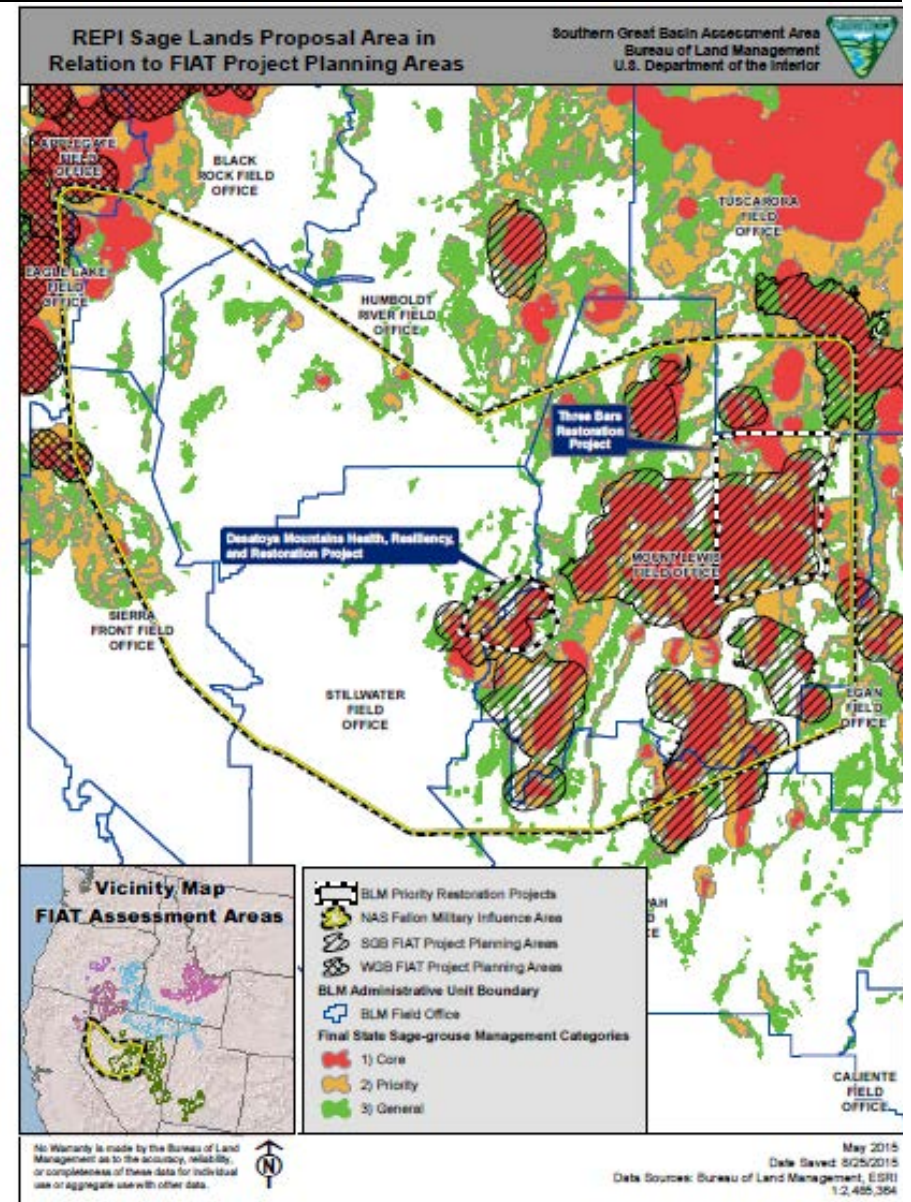


Photo by McEwan

# Other Focal Species

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- Tri-colored blackbirds
- Least Bell's vireo
- Western yellow-billed cuckoo
- Monarch butterfly
- Burrowing owl





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# Thank You

# QUESTIONS?

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.