



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

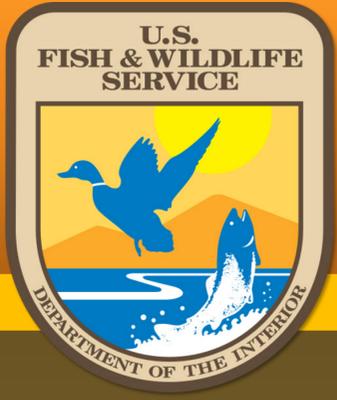
**Lesser Prairie-Chicken  
Stakeholder  
Conservation Strategy EIS**

**Public Scoping Meeting**

**6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**



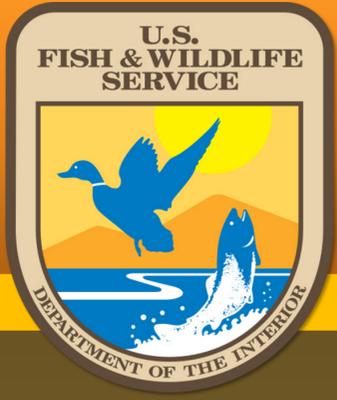




# Why Are We Here Tonight?

- Educate the public on the Stakeholder Conservation Strategy for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken (Proposed Action)
- Explain the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning process
- Answer questions about the Proposed Action and planning process
- Solicit comments on potential concerns or issues for use in the NEPA process





# Purpose of Scoping

## **Scoping is a planning tool to:**

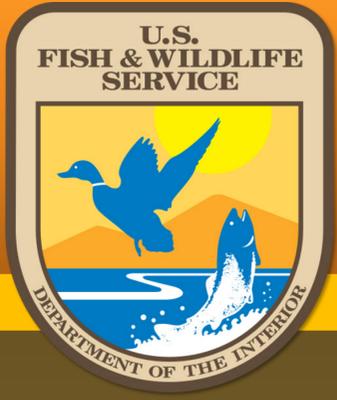
- Identify relevant issues
- Identify potential impacts
- Determine appropriate level of analysis
- Inform the overall permit decision process

## **Goal is full disclosure to:**

- Provide the public with a clear understanding of the Proposed Action and NEPA process

**We also need your input; we encourage public participation and comments**





# Stakeholder Conservation Strategy

**If the LPC is listed then the Service will evaluate the plan proposal and determine if it is appropriate to support issuance of an incidental take permit**

Developed by stakeholders

**Habitat Exchange Agreement**

Developed by industry and agriculture

**HCP/Section 10 Permit Application**

Developed by scientific experts

**Habitat Quantification Tool (Metrics)**



# Stakeholder Conservation Strategy

## Proposed Action Habitat Conservation Plan / Section 10 Permit Application

### **Non-Federal Participants will be allowed to conduct Covered Activities under an incidental take permit**

- Covered activities include:
  - Agricultural and Ranching Activities
  - Oil and Gas Activities
  - General Activities
    - Conservation Activities
    - Hunting
    - Off-Highway Vehicle Use
    - General Construction
    - Other Land Management Activities

### **Habitat Conservation Plan must:**

- Contain measures to minimize incidental take including avoidance
- Mitigate for effects of incidental take to maximum extent practicable
- Ensure that take is incidental to, and not the purpose of, an otherwise lawful activity

**Funding for implementation (including biological and compliance monitoring) must be ensured by applicant**

# Stakeholder Conservation Strategy

## Habitat Exchange Agreement

### Transactions

- Landowners contract either directly with the Exchange Administrator or through a third party
- Contracts range from 10 to 30 years
- Enrollment process similar to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
  - Credit assessment based on habitat quality
  - Verification of credit assessment
  - Credits available for sale

### Elements of the Exchange

- Net benefit
- Habitat Quantification Tool (HQT)
- Independent verification
- Reserve Account
- Monitoring
- Adaptive management
- Three conservation offset options:
  - Term
  - Static permanent
    - Mitigation that is perpetual in nature both over time and location
  - Dynamic permanent
    - Mitigation that is permanent over time but shifts in location

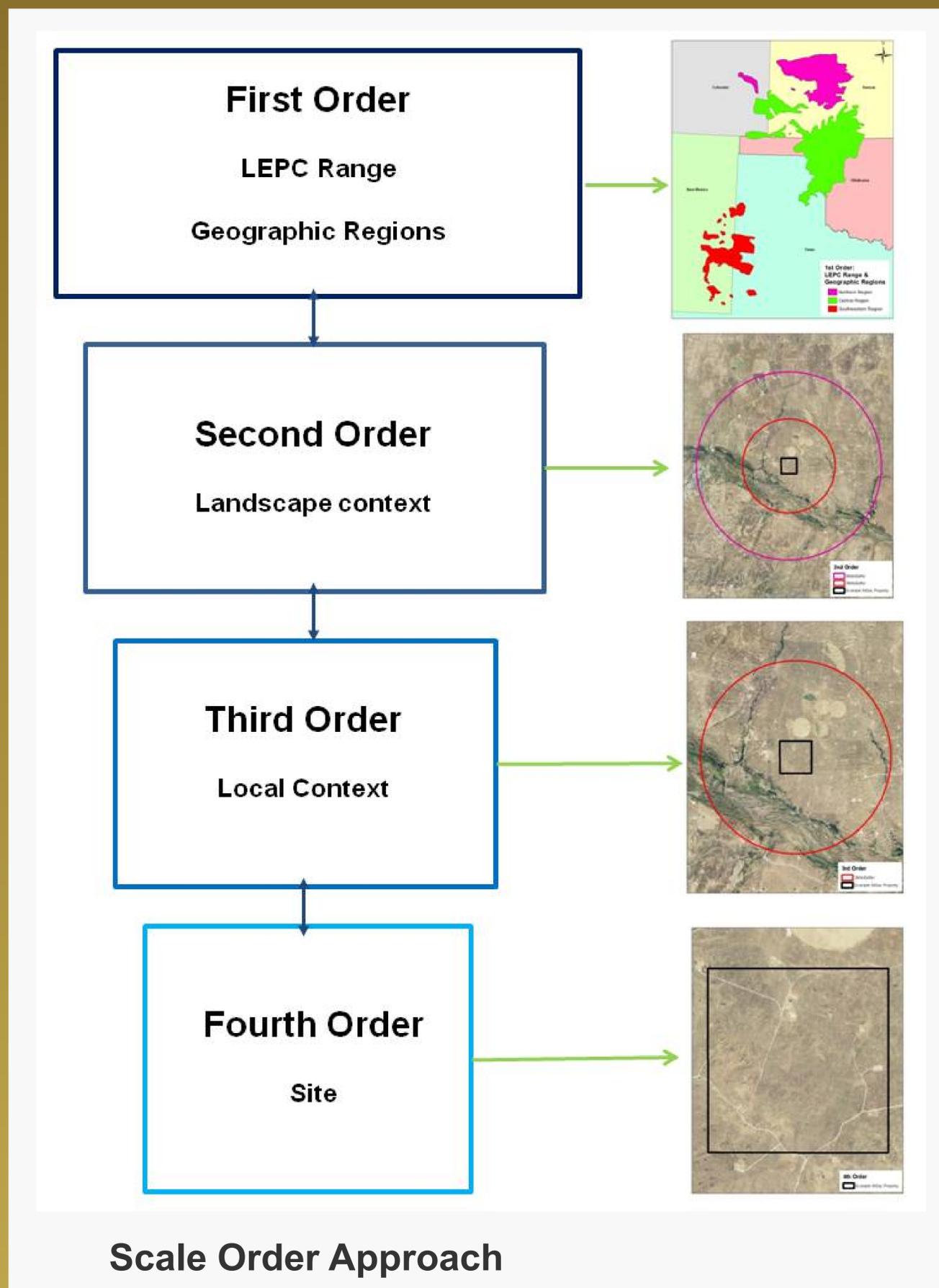


# Stakeholder Conservation Strategy

## Habitat Quantification Tool

A system of measurements to quantify credits and debits

- Simple
- Standardized for repeatability
- Incorporates adaptive management
- Meets FWS regulations



# Stakeholder Conservation Strategy

## Possible Alternative Stakeholder Conservation Plan / Section 10 Permit Application

**Stakeholder  
Conservation Plan  
(SCP)**

=

**Habitat  
Conservation Plan  
(HCP)**

+

**Candidate  
Conservation  
Agreement with  
Assurances (CCAA)**

Property Owners can participate in SCP by entering into an Enrollment Agreement. Encourages Participants to enact conservation measures prior to proposed LEPC listing and provides regulatory certainty and a compliance mechanism if LEPC is listed.

### **Prior to LEPC listing decision:**

- Non-Federal Participants encouraged to manage property in exchange for coverage under an enhancement of survival permit
- Under a CCAA, non-Federal Participants who sign a Certificate of Inclusion are only responsible for voluntary conservation activities they agreed to and are not responsible for additional requirements if LEPC is later listed

### **After LEPC listing decision (if listed):**

- Non-Federal Participants will be allowed to conduct Covered Activities under an incidental take permit

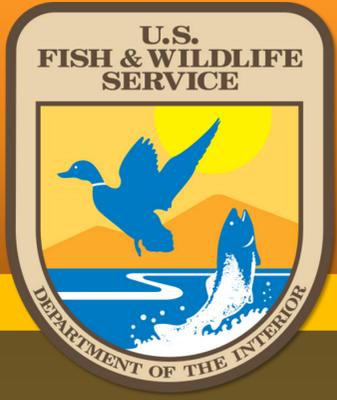
**Habitat Exchange Agreement & Habitat  
Quantification Tool would be the same as for  
the Proposed Action**



# NEPA and the EIS Process

- Federal agencies are required by NEPA to analyze, document, and disclose the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts of a Proposed Action and its alternatives before any Federal action is taken
- An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a document that describes:
  - Current resource conditions
  - Potential impacts of the Proposed Action (LPC SCS) and alternatives, including the no action alternative
  - Plans to mitigate the impacts
  - Public review and opportunities for comment on the Draft EIS are required by law





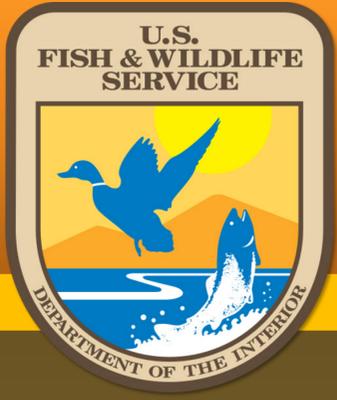
# Resources to be Evaluated in the EIS

- The existing condition of each resource is described in the EIS.
- Anticipated effects (impacts), both adverse and beneficial, are assessed:
  - **Intensity** (negligible, minor, moderate, or major)
  - **Duration** (short-term, long-term)

## Resources Expected to be Evaluated (can change during scoping)

- **Soils/Geological**
- **Paleontological**
- **Water (surface and ground)**
- **Wetlands/Riparian**
- **Wildlife/Special Status Species**
- **Vegetation/Rangelands**
- **Agricultural Production**
- **Cultural/Historical**
- **Socioeconomics**
- **Environmental Justice**
- **Urban Development**
- **Energy Development**
- **Recreation**
- **Transportation**





# Public and Stakeholder Participation

- NEPA requires solicitation of public and stakeholder participation
  - Engage the public in the decision-making process
  - Written comments are the most effective form of public and stakeholder participation
- Public involvement opportunities include:
  - Initial scoping comments (requested by March 10, 2014)
  - Review and comment on the Draft EIS (July through October 2014)
  - Review the Final EIS (December 2014)





# Approximate Schedule

## LPC Stakeholder Conservation Strategy EIS

