



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM**

**TELEPHONIC INTERVIEW Time (4:47)**

**MARBOB ENERGY CORPORATION CANDIDATE CONSERVATION AGREEMENT:  
LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKEN AND SAND DUNE LIZARD (HOST – SARAH LEON  
WITH RAND FRENCH)**

This transcript was produced from audio provided by FWS Endangered Species Program

**P R O C E E D I N G S**

(Music plays.)

MS. LEON: Thanks to a conservation partnership involving private landowners, the oil and gas industry and a slew of federal conservation agencies, Endangered Species Act protection may be unnecessary for the lesser prairie chicken and its neighbor the sand dunes lizard, two candidates for listing.

Hello there, this is Sarah Leon for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I'm on the phone today with Rand French, biologist at Marbob Energy Corporation of Artesia. Hi Rand, how are you today?

MR. FRENCH: I'm doing fine. How are you doing Sarah?

MS. LEON: I'm doing fine, thanks.

MR. FRENCH: Good.

MS. LEON: I've actually heard that you company is doing a lot of great things to help benefit the lesser prairie chicken and the sand dunes lizard, is that correct?

MR. FRENCH: It's hopefully correct. Our company's been very active in numerous partnerships with the BLM and Fish and Wildlife Service and the prairie chicken and sand dunes lizard happens to be one of them.

MS. LEON: Can you give us a brief history of Marbob?

MR. FRENCH: Marbob Energy Corporation, it's locally owned, family operated company. It's been very active in the Southeastern corner of New Mexico. Pretty much that's where all we do our work in the Permian Basin in Eddy and Lee County. And like I said, it's family owned so you have a lot of flexibility when it's a small company.

MS. LEON: Okay, and your company was the first to enroll in the Candidate Conservation Agreement. Rand, can you tell us why an energy company might want to enter into such an agreement? I mean, what's in it for them?

MR. FRENCH: Well, like I said this company looks at things a little differently. It has a lot of flexibility, and any time you have options or what we call put tools in the toolbox. It's always good to participate and leave any tool that is necessary to not only make your company successful, but to do the right things in the field, whether it be for lesser prairie chickens, sand dunes lizards or just habitat and reclamation overall. What's in it for them primarily is somewhat of an assurance or security that the Fish and Wildlife Service and BLM has given.

It's not quite like the – what they call a CCA, where you actually have assurances. But companies signing up under a CCA have somewhat confidence level that they will still be able to continue their operations, and though the federal mineral is the domain to threaten endangered species, if one of these species do become listed, can delay production.

When you sign up for one of these and agreed to the conservation measures, which are somewhat strict, and it's negotiable before you sign up, what you're signing up – what conservation measures you will have to apply, you at least are assured some assurances or given some level of confidence that you will still able continue to develop under those conservation measures when a species becomes listed. So it is a valuable tool. There's a lot of leaseholds out there that are not developed that the permitting and approval process will be delayed significantly if you're not signed up for one of these.

MS. LEON: What's the general sentiment now towards conversation of these two species in your area? Are more energy companies now lining up to enroll in this agreement?

MR. FRENCH: We are, we really are, Sarah. A lot of these companies since we signed the first one way back in December, have always asked us questions or asked me questions, "Why would you do such a thing?" And I've kind of been hopefully a leader in stirring on more interest. Since we've come back and modified the original CCA, it's given a little bit more flexibility because a lot of leaseholders have so much leases they can't really get a handle on how much of it's inside the habitat, how much is outside of the habitat, what are the effects thereof based upon density and population.

And so a lot of other companies are lining up. I know of several other companies that – one primarily has already signed. We are fixing to sign up several more, almost 100,000 acres ourselves into a larger CCA, and there's been other companies that have been coming to the table in negotiations. The industry nor the BLM or the Fish and Wildlife Service want to see these species listed. It's a black eye for the government. It's also a black eye for industry, and that's also including the livestock operators. They've been sitting at the table, and I know there's a lot of private ranchers, livestock operators, which we also own private lands as a company within those habitat areas.

And so it's just a win-win for everybody, and I do believe more companies will come to the table and sign up their agencies. And it's not because of the fear of listing. It's kind of – if it does become listed, they'd have some security, but it's also the money goes back to restore habitat which is a good thing.

MS. LEON: Okay, great. Well, thank you so much, Rand, for taking the time today to tell us about your company. And of course, thank you for all of the work that you're all doing to help the lesser prairie chicken and the sand dunes lizard.

MR. FRENCH: Thank you.

MS. LEON: For the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Sarah Leon. Thanks for listening.