Sage-grouse conservation efforts database briefing for FMT

Purpose

Clarity on why we are developing a database.

1. We need a transparent way to give credit to conservation partners for the good work they are doing as we develop our listing decision.

2. It provides a way of accounting for this information and receiving it from partners in an organized way that can be summarized and queried at different scales.

3. Provides the underlying data to support any conclusions in narrative assessments provided by State and Federal partners.

Goal today

Have the FMT select a database option so that development of a database tool can move forward.

Our Team's Process

I was tasked to lead a small team to report back to the FMT at our June meeting in Boise. Since that time we've done a number of things.

1. Compiled a list of existing tools to select from.

2. We looked at 7 different options, but narrowed the pool significantly after looking at the functionality, cost, and the feasibility of having something up and running quickly.

3. This left us with 3 viable options, as presented in our options paper. LCMAP, Conservation Registry, and updating the existing Access database we used in 2009.

4. We then had several follow up conversations with the developers of LCMAP and the Conservation Registry and provided them with a mock-up of what we were looking for in a database to make sure their systems could be designed or modified to meet our needs.

5. LCMAP folks have been working on drafting schematics of the architecture of the system and how information would flow through it. They have also identified existing databases that we could take components of – off the shelf and plug into our database, which would significantly reduce development time.

Options Paper

Not going to walk through all the pros and cons for each options. I trust that you've had a chance to look at the document.

I will highlight why we are recommending going with a custom database in LCMAP.

1. We have in-house expertise that could make this happen with some consultation and help from USGS.

2. It is the cheapest customizable option. Less than half the cost of what it would take to customize the Registry.

3. The exact costs of customizing the Registry site are unknown. We really couldn't nail them down on cost, so going with that option has significant uncertainty. Also, going with the Registry would require going through contracting which could add significant delays to getting going.

I will add that although our recommendation is to develop a custom database in LC MAP, there is also the option of looking to the Registry as a potential add-on if resources are available. Because of its very nice mapping and reporting features, we could create a link between LC MAP and the Registry, where all or some of the data is exposed to the Registry where they could serve it up for us or the public.

This is possible but would require financial resources to support development of a dedicated portal and customized reporting in the Registry, as well as resources to customize data entry in LC MAP. Get the best of both worlds, but you are paying for the best of both worlds.

Things to think about here are whether we are making an investment in this tool for the long term tracking of conservation efforts for sage-grouse or whether we are talking about a one-time tool to help us with our listing decision.

Recommendation

Our team is recommending developing a custom database in LC MAP. If resources are available and the FMT believes this could be an important tool beyond our 2015 listing determination, the FMT should also consider investing in an interface with Conservation Registry so that the systems can talk with one another. This would allow users to enter data either through the Registry or LCMAP, whatever they are most comfortable with. It could also allow additional reporting and web mapping functions so partners could easily access this information on a user-friendly website.

Before opening it up for discussion, just like to thank the team of folks that helped with this and see if they had any thoughts or comments. Other team members thoughts?