



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Regional Lesser Prairie-Chicken Stakeholder Conservation Strategy

Environmental Impact Statement
Public Scoping Meeting

February 2014



Purposes of this Presentation

- Introduce organizational roles
- Describe regulatory process
- Explain Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Describe proposed project



Why are We Here Tonight?

- Help you understand the Proposed Lesser Prairie-Chicken Stakeholder Conservation Strategy (Proposed Action)
- Explain National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning process
- Collect comments from you for use in the NEPA process

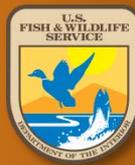


Who is Here Tonight?

- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)
 - Lead Federal Agency
- American Habitat Center, Represented by Natural Resources Solutions, LLC
 - Project Proponent
- ARCADIS U.S., Inc.
 - EIS Third-Party Contractor



NEPA and the EIS Process



National Environmental Policy Act

- Requires federal agencies to analyze, document, and disclose potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the Proposed Action and its alternatives before any action is taken
- Analysis made available to public in an EIS
- NEPA requires that the public be part of the decision-making process



Purpose of Scoping

- Effective Planning Tool
 - Identify relevant issues
 - Identify potential impacts
 - Determine appropriate level of analysis
- Ensure public disclosure
 - Provide the public with a clear understanding of the Proposed Action
- Solicit public participation

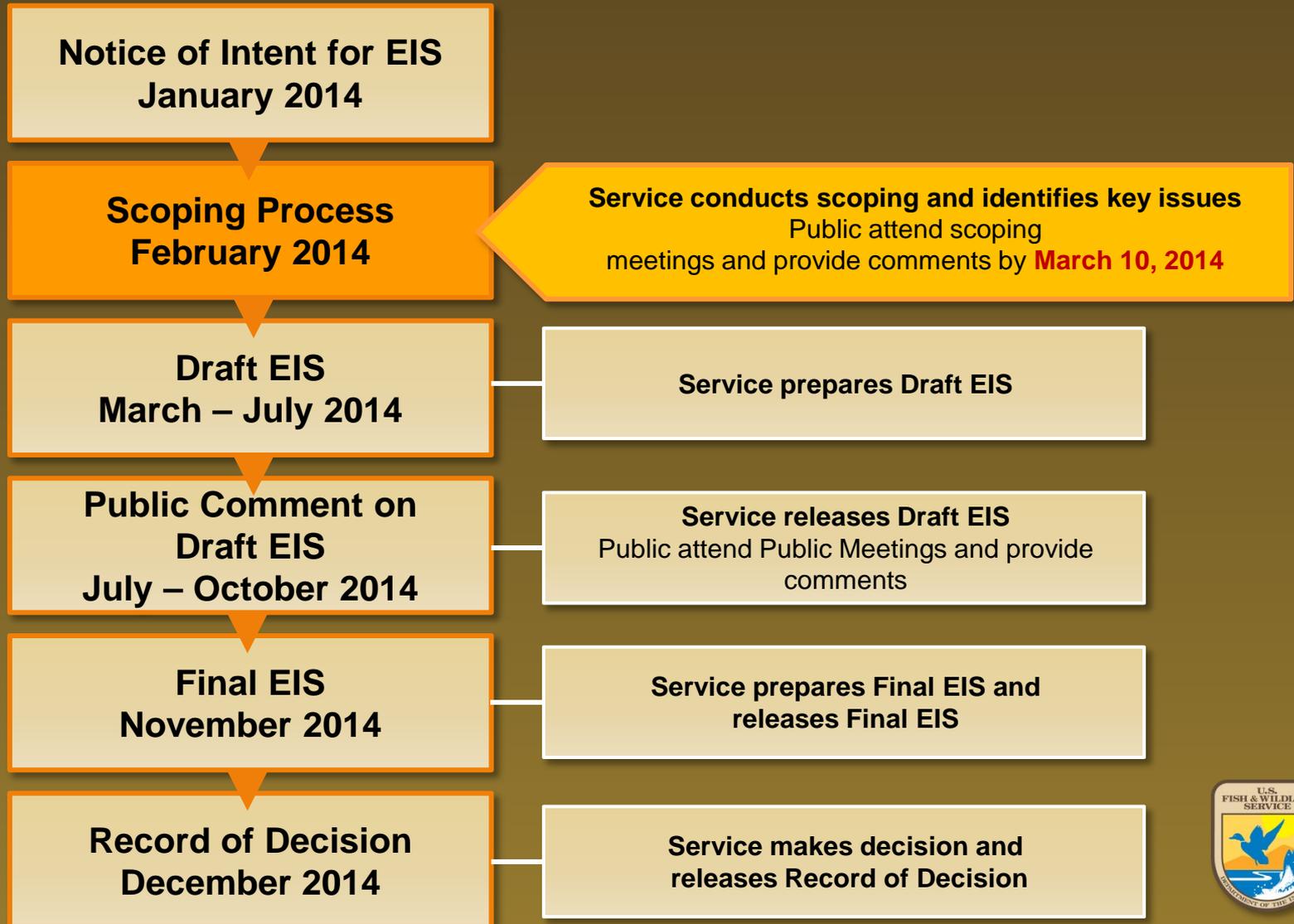


Environmental Impact Statement

- An EIS document describes:
 - Existing conditions of each resource to be analyzed
 - Anticipated effects (impacts), both adverse and beneficial to each resource
 - Plans to mitigate any impacts
- Resources to be evaluated, potential concerns / issues for each resource, and potential impacts all determined through scoping



Approximate Schedule



Public Review & Comment Opportunities

- **Initial scoping** (comments needed by March 10, 2014)
- **Review and comment on Draft EIS** (July - September 2014)
- **Review of the Final EIS** (December 2014)
- *Written comments are most effective participation*



Stakeholder Conservation Strategy

The Lesser Prairie-Chicken



Components of Stakeholder Conservation Strategy

Developed by Stakeholders

Habitat Exchange Agreement

Developed by Industry & Agriculture

HCP/Section 10 Permit Application

Developed by Scientific Experts

Habitat Quantification Tool (Metrics)

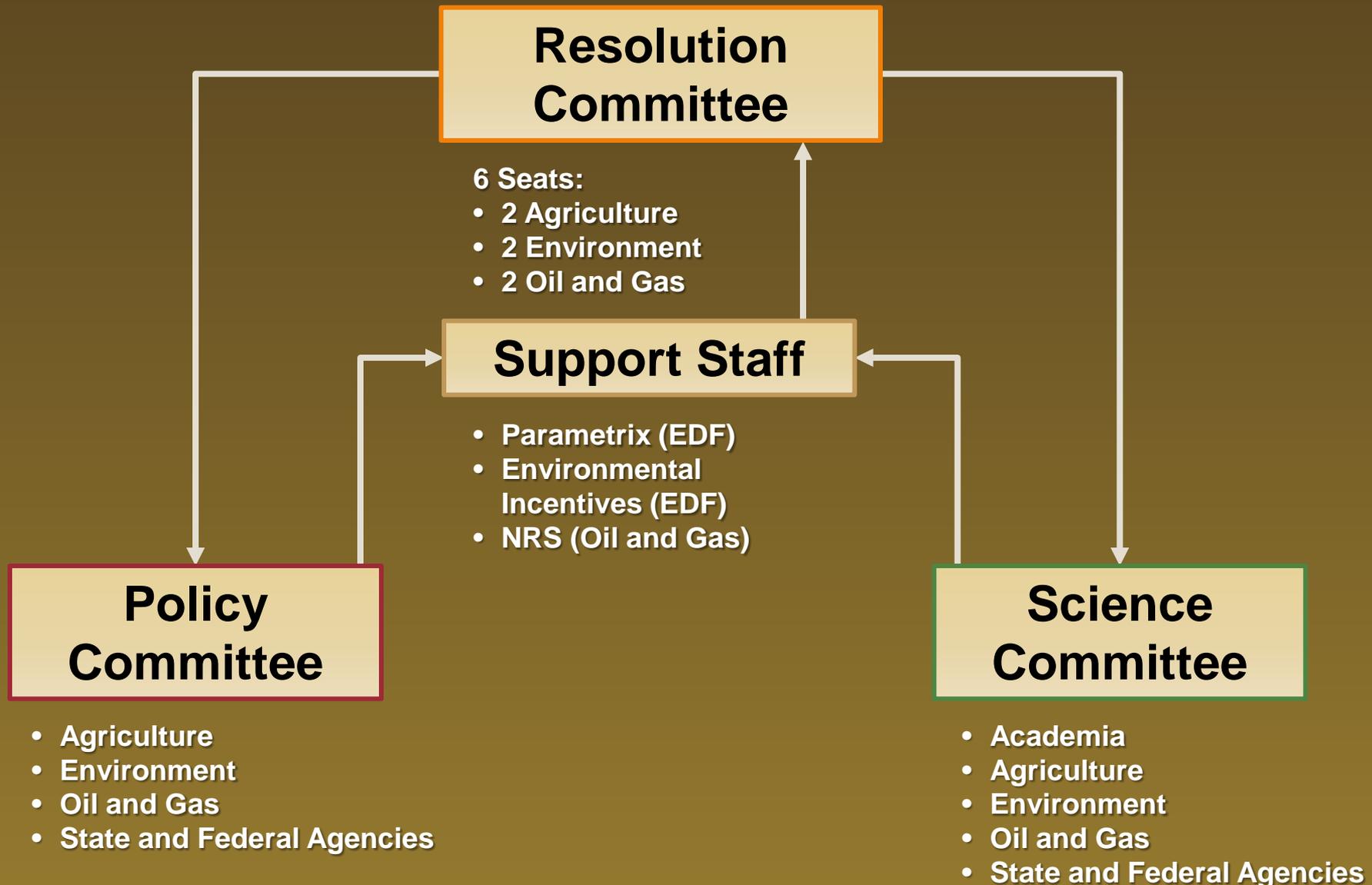


Operating Structure of Stakeholder Conservation Strategy



**Note: This is a different Science Committee than the one used to develop the Exchange.*

Overview of Stakeholder Committee Process



Habitat Exchange

for the Lesser
Prairie-Chicken



Elements of Exchange

- Net benefit
- Habitat Quantification Tool (HQT)
- Independent verification
- Reserve Account
- Monitoring
- Adaptive management
- 3 conservation offset options:
 - Term
 - Static permanent
 - Dynamic permanent

Transactions

- Landowners contract directly with the Exchange Administrator or through a Third Party
- Contracts range from 5 to 30 years
- Enrollment process similar to Conservation Reserve Program
 - Credit assessment based on habitat quality
 - Verification of credit assessment
 - Credits available for sale

Habitat Quantification Tool (HQT)

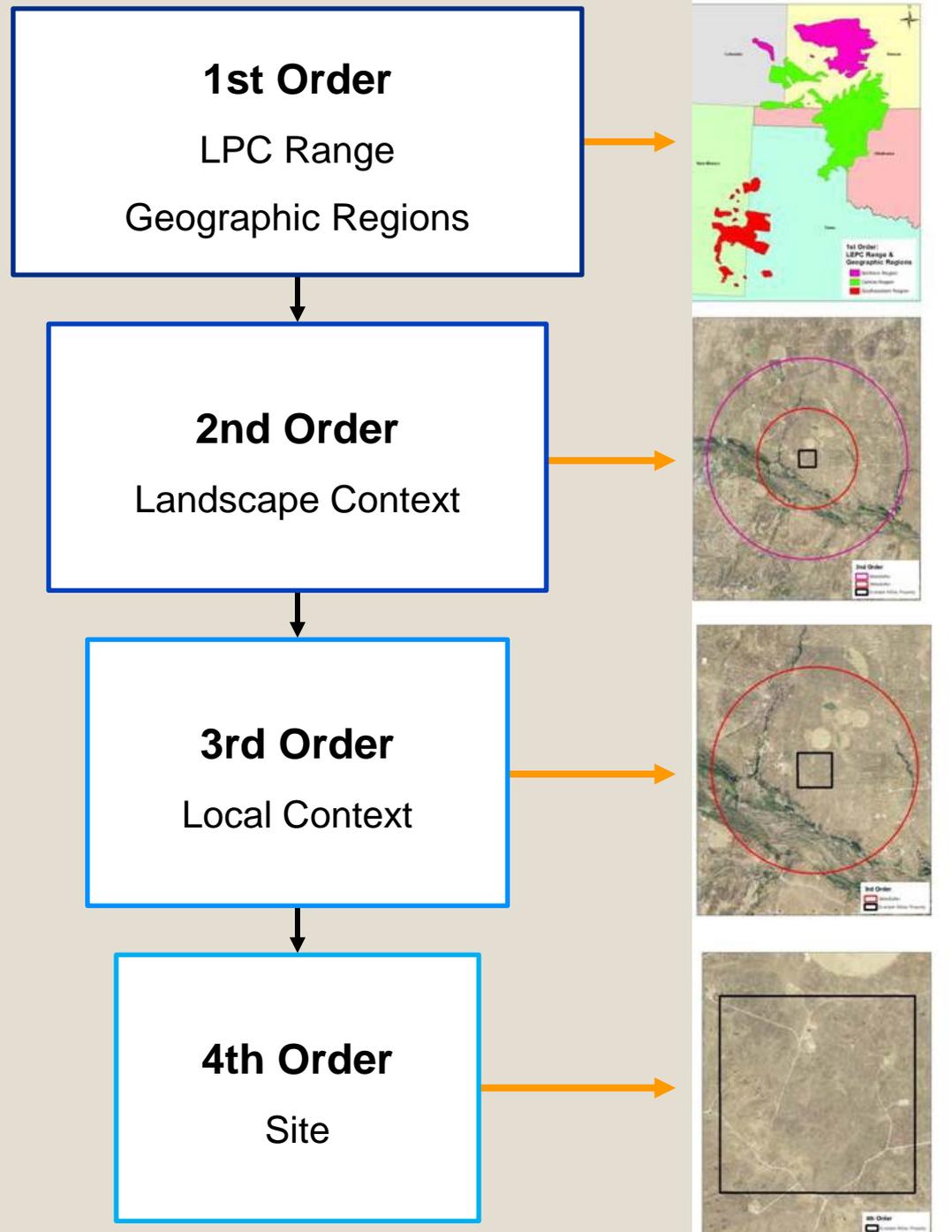
A system of measurements
used to quantify
credits and debits



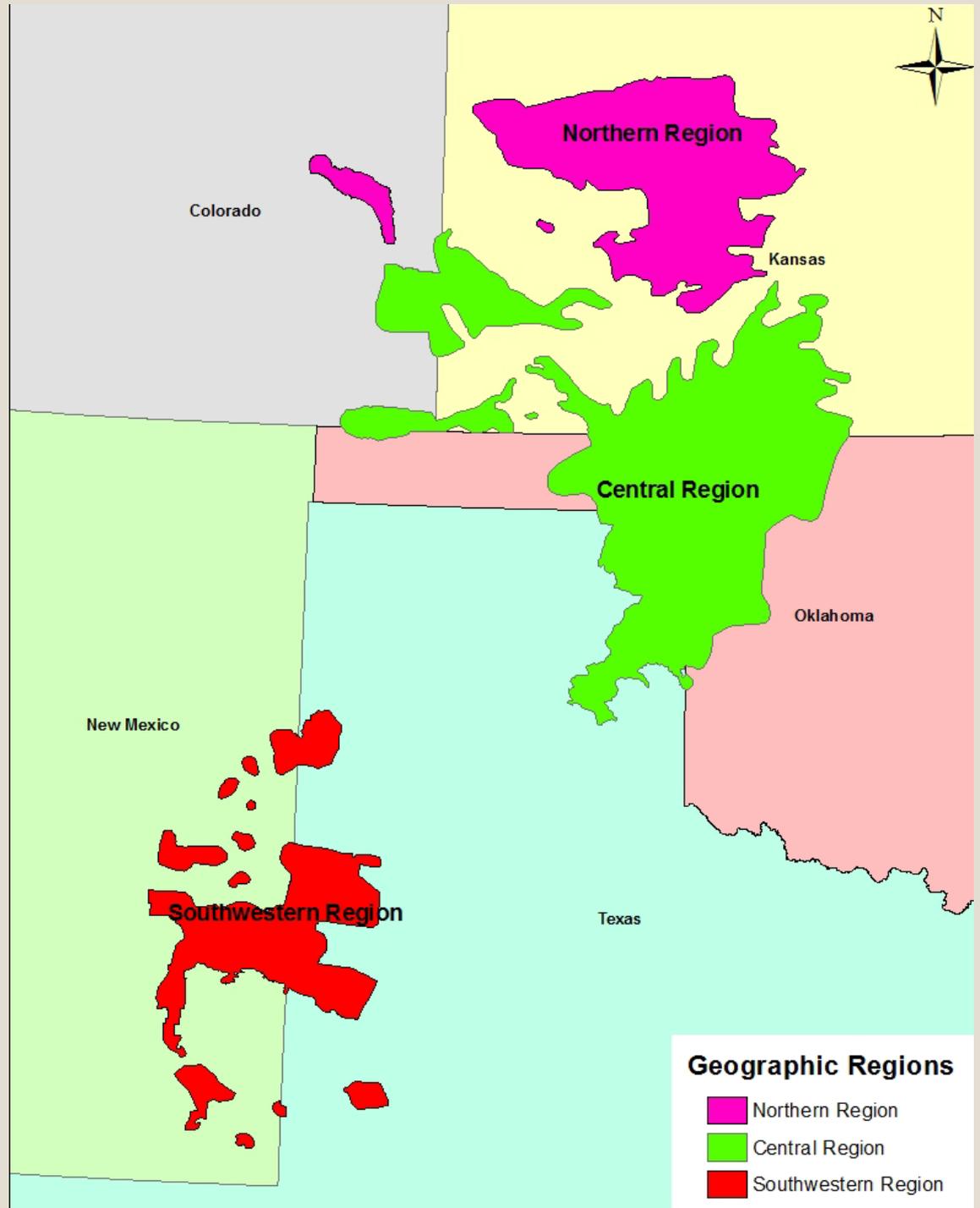
Development of HQT

- Simplicity is key
- Standardized to ensure repeatability
- Incorporate adaptive management
- Function within framework of Endangered Species Act (ESA) and meet Service regulations

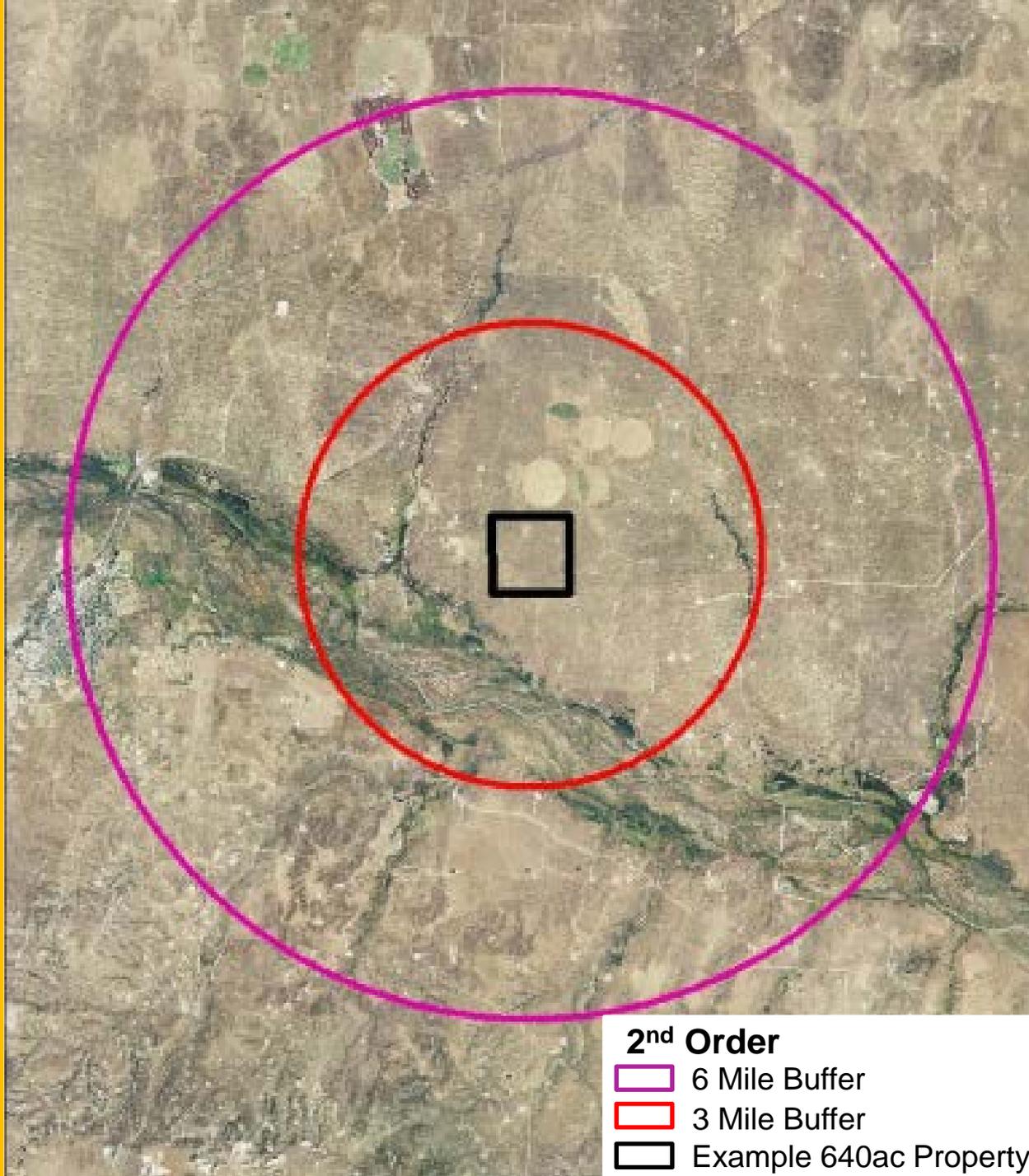
Scale Order Approach



Geographic Regions (1st Order)



Landscape Context (2nd Order)



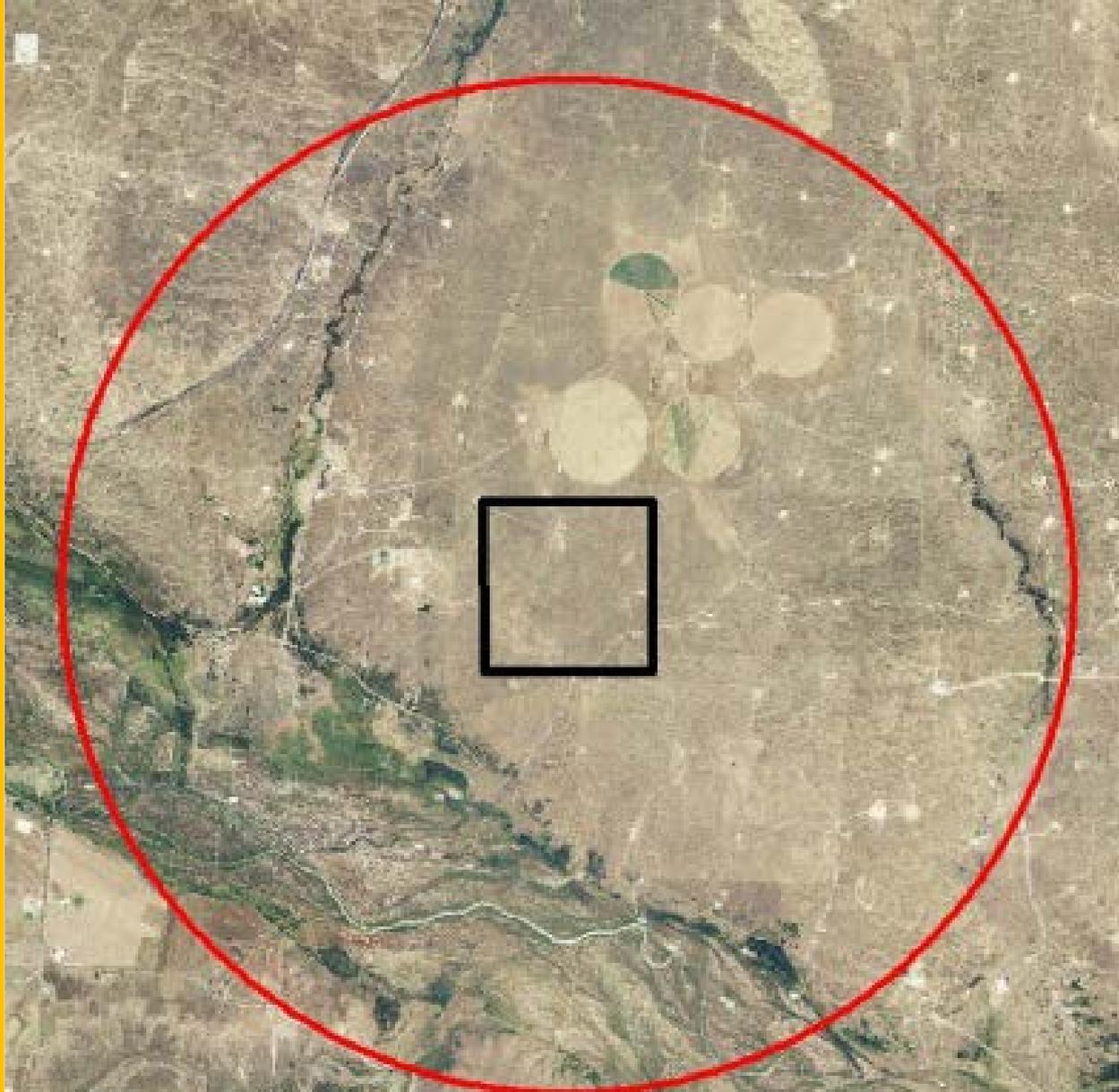
2nd Order

 6 Mile Buffer

 3 Mile Buffer

 Example 640ac Property

Local Context (3rd Order)



3rd Order

 3 Mile Buffer

 Example 640ac Property

Site (4th Order)



4th Order

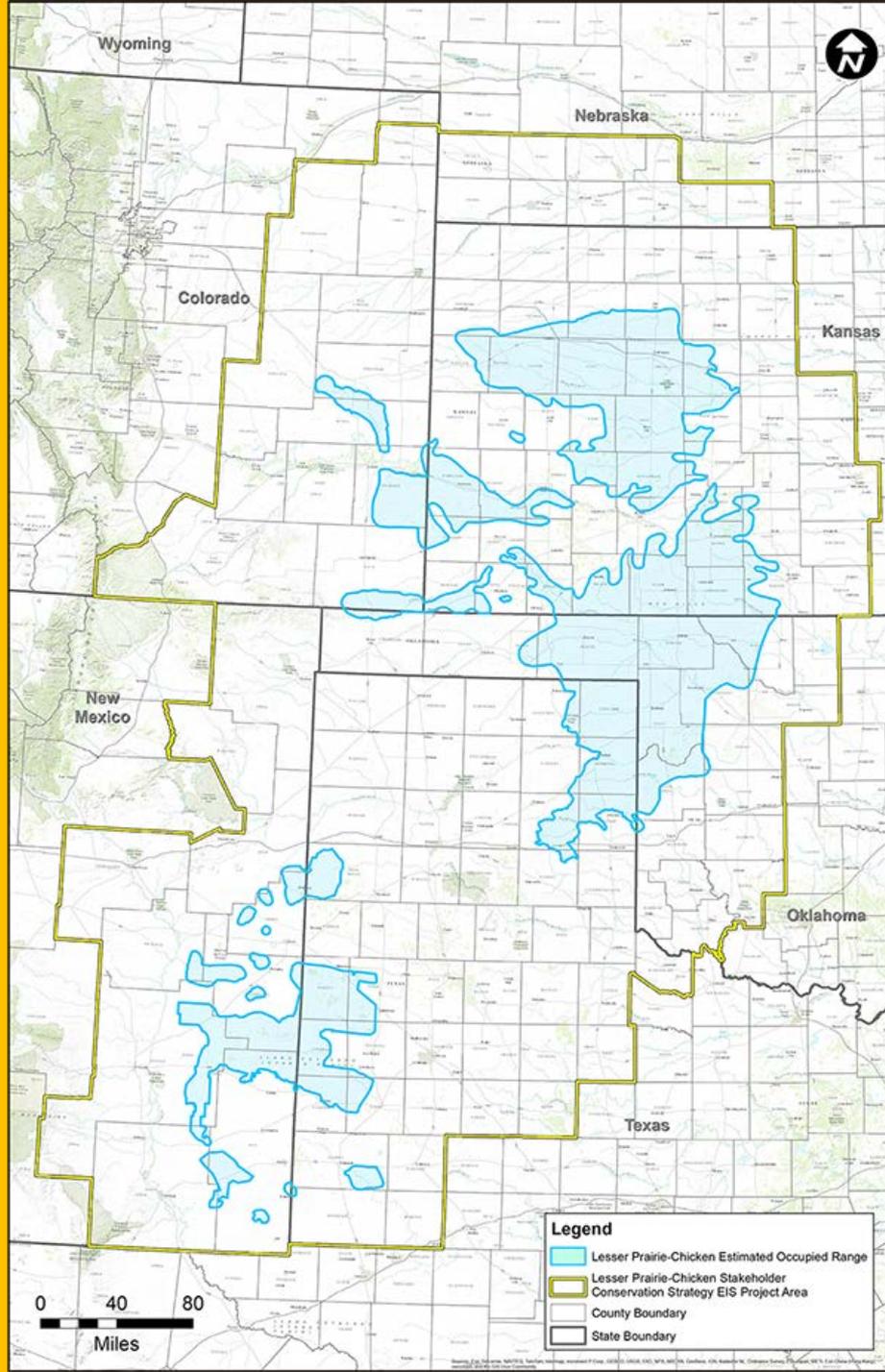
 Example 640ac Property

Habitat Conservation Plan

Conservation Plan for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken



Area to be Analyzed Under NEPA



Plan Administration

- American Habitat Center
 - Regional non-profit with field offices
- Implementing Agreement
- Committee driven decision-making process
- Enrollment
 - Commitment to avoidance and minimization measures in Conservation Plan
 - Project specific mitigation assessments

Incidental Take

- Calculated incidental take for 30 years
- 3 categories of take
 - Oil and gas
 - Agriculture
 - General
- Accounts for impacts
 - Estimates of future development
 - Estimates of direct and indirect impact

Funding

- Support from companies with almost 4 million acres of LPC habitat (20% of acreage)
- Cost per year of \$1.5 million in Year 3
 - \$500,000 annually dedicated to research
- Fees
 - Participation, Assessments, Verification
- Funding assurances
 - Cost per well (~\$80)
 - Cost per acre (~\$0.75)

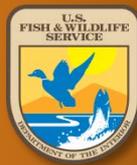
Consistent Components of Exchange and HCP

- Use of the Habitat Quantification Tool
- Third-party verification of credit generation and impact assessments
- Monitoring of credit generation and impacts over time to ensure sufficiency of offsets

What Now?

- The Service, NRS and ARCADIS are available to help you
- Posters present additional details
- Ask questions
- Provide written comments

**Thank you for taking the
time to join us tonight!**



Websites

- All 3 components of the Stakeholder Conservation Strategy are posted and available for downloading at: lepcstakeholderstrategy.com
- Posters will be available on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website at: www.fws.gov/southwest