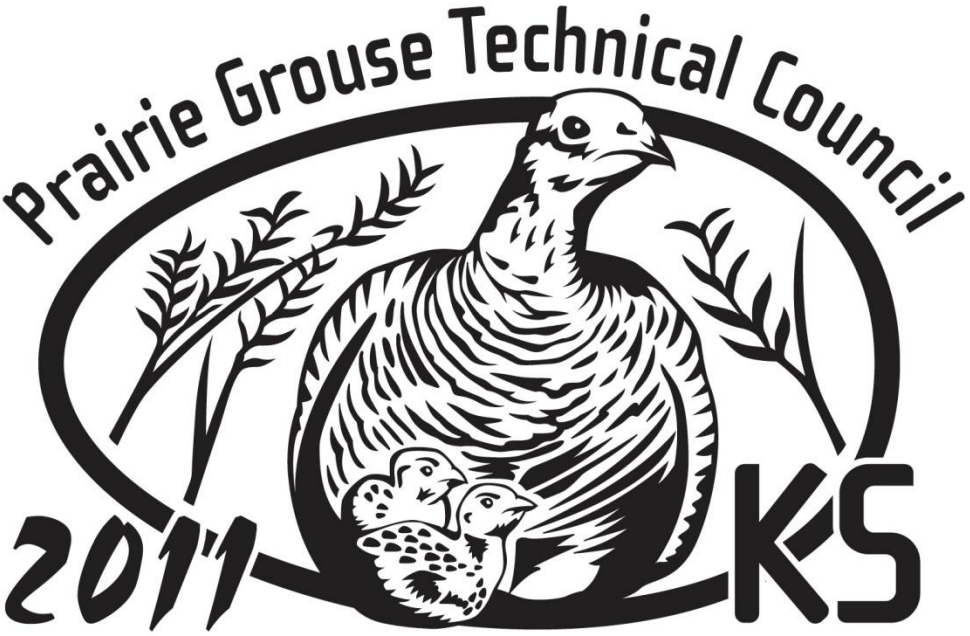
AGENDA FOR THE 29TH MEETING OF THE



Robbins Center
Fort Hays State University
Hays, Kansas
October 3-6, 2011

Meeting Agenda

Monday, October 3

5:00 – 7:00 PM	Registration (Main Hall)
5:00 – 7:00 PM	Business Meeting (Board Room)
7:00 – 9:00 PM	Welcome Reception (Main Hall)
	- Drinks & Appetizers

Tuesday, October 4

7:00 – 12:00 PM	Conference Registration (Main Hall)
8:00 – 8:20 AM	Welcome and Opening Remarks
8:20 – 12:00 PM	Contributed Papers (Posters on display during breaks)
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch (Provided)
1:00 – 4:00 PM	Contributed Papers (Posters on display during breaks)
4:00 – 4:30 PM	Group Discussion
	Dinner (On Your Own)

Wednesday, October 5

8:00 – 5:00 PM	Gove County Field Trip (Transportation & Lunch Provided)
6:30 – 10:00 PM	Banquet (Provided)

Thursday, October 6

8:00 – 12:20 AM	Contributed Papers
12:20 – 1:00 PM	Lunch (Provided)
1:00	Meeting Adjourned

***All activities will be held at the Robbins Center on the campus of Fort Hays State University**

Program

Tuesday, October 4

Opening Remarks and Welcome

8:00 – 8:05 Opening Remarks – Jim Pitman, KS Dept. of Wild., Parks, & Tourism (KDWPT)
8:05 – 8:20 Welcome – Keith Sexson, Assistant Secretary, KDWPT

Population and Habitat Monitoring

(Moderator: Jim Pitman)

8:20 – 8:40 Prairie grouse distribution and status in Kansas. J. C. Pitman, KDWPT.

8:40 – 9:00 Distribution and lek locations of greater prairie-chickens and sharp-tailed grouse outside of their traditional range in South Dakota. M. Orth, South Dakota State University.

9:00 – 9:20 A spring without moisture, how did it effect lesser prairie chickens and their habitat in Eastern New Mexico. C. E. Dixon, Wildlife Plus Consulting.

9:20 – 9:40 Insect abundance and Attwater's prairie-chicken brood survival. M. E. Morrow, Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge.

9:40 – 10:00 Lesser prairie-chicken in Oklahoma and New Mexico – Summary of 12 years of research. D. H. Wolfe, Sutton Avian Research Center.

10:00 – 10:20 Break (Refreshments provided)

Conservation Genetics and Population Modeling

(Moderator: Dave Dahlgren)

10:20 – 10:40 Effective population size in lesser prairie-chicken. L. C. Larsson, Sutton Avian Research Center.

10:40 – 11:00 Dispersal, gene flow, and population genetic structure in greater sage-grouse: implications for connectivity and natural recolonization in declining populations. T. R. Thompson, University of Idaho - Moscow.

11:00 – 11:20 Effects of different management strategies on lesser prairie-chicken growth rate: results from a population viability analysis. R. D. Holt, Texas Tech University (TTU).

11:20 – 11:40 Limiting factors affecting population persistence of lesser prairie-chicken populations in shinnery-oak communities on the southern high plains of Texas. B. Grisham, TTU.

11:40 – 12:00 Demography of greater prairie-chickens: regional variation in vital rates, sensitivity values, and population dynamics. L. B. McNew, Kansas State University (KSU).

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (Provided)

Habitat Use and Behavior

(Moderator: Matt Bain)

1:00 – 1:20 Variation in nest and brood survival of greater-prairie chickens in the Nebraska sandhills. L. Anderson, University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

1:20 – 1:40 Regional variation in nest success of lesser prairie-chickens. E. K. Lyons, Texas A&M University – College Station.

1:40 – 2:00 Response of greater sage-grouse to the conservation reserve program in Washington state. M. A. Schroeder, Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife.

2:00 – 2:20 Current prairie grouse research in Idaho. J. M. Knetter, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game.

2:20 – 2:40 Behavior, vocalizations and management implications of hybrid prairie grouse (Tympanuchus *spp*.) in west-central Minnesota. J. K. Augustine, Ohio State University at Lima.

2:40 – 3:00 Break

3:00 – 3:20 Thermal ecology of nesting lesser prairie-chickens and the potential implications of climate change. B. Grisham, TTU.

3:20 – 3:40 Assessment of the distribution of lesser prairie-chickens in relation to potential wind energy development in Texas. J. M. Timmer, TTU.

3:40 – 4:00 Greater prairie-chicken nest survival in relation to habitat characteristics and anthropogenic disturbance in north central Kansas. L. M. Hunt, KSU.

4:00 – 4:20 Prairie grouse display ground and nest distribution relative to man-made structures with emphasis on the wind tower complex in northwestern Minnesota, 2001-2011. J. E. Topfer, Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus.

4:20 – 4:40 Break

Group Discussion

4:40 – 5:00 Captive breeding facilities for Attwaters and Lesser prairie-chickens. S. K. Sherrod, Sutton Avian Research Center.

5:00 Dinner (on your own)

Wednesday, October 5

Gove County Field Trip (see attached itinerary and map)

7:30 – 8:00 Assemble and load bus in Best Western parking lot

8:00 Buses depart

5:00 Return to Best Western parking lot

Banquet

6:30 – 10:00 Announce silent auction winners

Hamerstrom Award presentation

Live Auction

Western music by Jeff Davidson (http://www.jeffdavidsonmusic.com/)

Thursday, October 6

Population Restoration
(Moderator: Elmer Finck)

8:00 – 8:20 Greater prairie-chicken recovery and perceptions regarding cattle grazing as a management tool for tallgrass remnants in Missouri. M. Alleger, Missouri Dept. of Conservation (MDC).

8:20 – 8:40 Preliminary evaluations of habitat preferences of resident and translocated greater prairie-chickens in Missouri: implications for management on the eastern edge of the species range. S. E. Clubine, Retired MDC.

8:40 – 9:00 Missouri greater prairie-chickens: demography and movement. K. M. Kemink, University of Missouri – Columbia.

9:00 – 9:20 Break (Refreshments Provided)

Habitat Management Techniques

(Moderator: Dwayne Elmore)

9:20 – 9:40 Burned out: does fire frequency across the Flint Hills explain regional greater prairie-chicken population declines. A. J. Gregory, Northern Arizona University.

9:40 – 10:00 Greater prairie-chicken survival in grasslands managed for heterogeneity. T. J. Hovick, Oklahoma State University.

10:00 – 10:20 Use of grazing management to restore lesser prairie-chicken habitat in Eastern New Mexico. D. A. Haukos, KSU.

10:20 – 10:40 A ten year assessment of herbicide treatment and grazing on nest site selection and daily nest survival of lesser prairie-chickens in New Mexico. B. Grisham, TTU.

10:40 – 11:00 Break (Refreshments provided)

Conservation Planning

(Moderator: Tony Ifland)

11:00 – 11:20 Landscape resistance and connectivity for sharp-tailed grouse in Washington. L. A. Robb, Independent researcher.

11:20 – 11:40 Mitigation for prairie grouse: considerations for the new reality. S. Manes, Ranchland Trust of Kansas.

11:40 – 12:00 Lesser prairie-chicken listing and conservation update. H. A. Whitlaw, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

12:00 – 12:20 United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Lesser prairie-chicken initiative. R. D. Krehbiel, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

12:20 – 12:40 Lesser prairie-chicken conservation: initiatives and listings, how do we move forward? C. A. Hagen, Lesser prairie-chicken conservation initiative science advisor.

12:40 – 2:00 Lunch (Provided)

2:00 Meeting Adjourned

Prairie Grouse Technical Council Field Tour – Gove County, Kansas October 5, 2011

We will be traveling to southwestern Gove County (2 hours from Hays) where prairie-chicken populations have responded dramatically to the abundance of Conservation Reserve Program stands added to the landscape since the late 1980's. Both lesser and greater prairie-chicken are present in the area and, not only do their ranges overlap, many leks have both species. As you travel through the area, note the mosaic of unbroken prairie and CRP stands of varying composition. This area is within a CRP Conservation Priority Area and has also been targeted for special SAFE (CP38E) CRP enrollment. Up until 4 years ago, there was almost no oil development in the area, but the increase in crude prices and new technology which more accurately locates oil-bearing formations has significantly changed this landscape.

Due in part to the increased oil-field road traffic, we will be staying on the bus for some short stops. Only at stops so noted (stop numbers also circled on the map), will we exit the bus for field discussions.

- **Stop 1:** To the south, you'll see a typical example of the condition of much of the unbroken prairie in this region. Dominant grasses are blue grama, buffalo grass, and sideoats grama with lesser amounts of little bluestem. Taken alone, these rangelands supported only a very-scant population of prairie-chickens prior to the implementation of the CRP. Prairie grouse were rarely seen in the area. To the north, you'll see a CRP stand and be able to compare the differences in height and structure. A significant portion of this CRP stand was recently broken to be put back into crop production.

- **Stop 2:** This is a CP25 (Rare and Declining Habitat) stand 5-6 years old. When this stand was first seeded, it provided some of the finest pheasant habitat you'd ever see as it was full of head-high annual sunflowers, kochia, and other weeds. It typically takes 4-5 years in this region for grasses to completely establish. This "shortgrass" version of CP25 is heavily dominated by sideoats grama and, while it now offers some value to prairie chickens, it would have been better had it contained more little bluestem.

- **Stop 3 (Exit the vehicles):** Here is a 1997 alfalfa interseeding done in a long block along the north edge of this CRP stand (most later interseeding was done in alternating strips). During the extreme drought of 2002, virtually nothing in this landscape was green except for the interseeded alfalfa. This interseeded strip and the adjacent pasture edge was the only place where lesser prairie-chicken broods successfully fledged during the first summer of CSU graduate student Tammy Fields' study. This field also contains a lek near its center. The interseeding appears to have changed the composition of the stand over time and this should make for some interesting discussion.

- **Stop 4 (Exit the vehicles):** This 600-acre tract (479 in 2010 re-enrolled CP4D CRP) is owned by prairie-grouser Randy Rodgers and his wife Helen Hands. Roughly the NW ¼ of the property was burned on August 18th. We will discuss the reasons for doing

this, look at the regrowth, and discuss how this and other practices fit into Randy's long-term plans for the property. Some of you may have been by this tract on earlier tours and will note that Randy's management plans have changed, primarily due to recent and expected additional oil development on the property.

- **Stop 5:** Here we can view 4 different tracts of current or former CRP ranging from the youngest (SW of stop) which has had 6-7 growing seasons and has been burned twice to an expired tract (SE of stop) which has been fenced and is now being grazed. If it has recently rained, you may also be able to see the aggressive nature of ungrazed western wheatgrass which has invaded the CRP to the NE from an old 2-track trail to the east of the stop. Recent fall and spring drought has suppressed the growth of cool-season grasses in the area, so this phenomenon may be less visible than normal.

- **Stop 6 (Exit the vehicles):** The monument rocks (also known as the chalk pyramids) will be our lunch site, weather permitting. These outcrops are remnants of the shallow sea that once covered what is now the High Plains. The area is fossil rich, being well known for ancient sharks teeth and producing many skeletons of aquatic dinosaurs, and ancient fish. You may wish to visit the Sternberg Museum in Hays to get a sampling of the region's fossil record. If it can be arranged, we may get a local expert to talk about fossils in the area and/or a range conservationist to discuss the unique chalk prairie which surrounds the site.

- **Stop 7 (Exit the vehicles):** This is an overlook where you can see the general landscape that fosters so many lesser prairie-chickens (currently a denser population than elsewhere in Kansas). The landscape to the south was, until recently almost completely grassland (unbroken or CRP), but a significant proportion has been broken for cropping in the last 2 years. A map of KDWPT CRP enhancement projects in relation to Stop 7 will be provided. You'll be able to see that many of the CRP stands in the area have been interseeded with forbs and legumes, but they have become less conspicuous over time owing to some disappearance of alfalfa from these stands and, at least this year, defoliation of established alfalfa by grasshoppers.

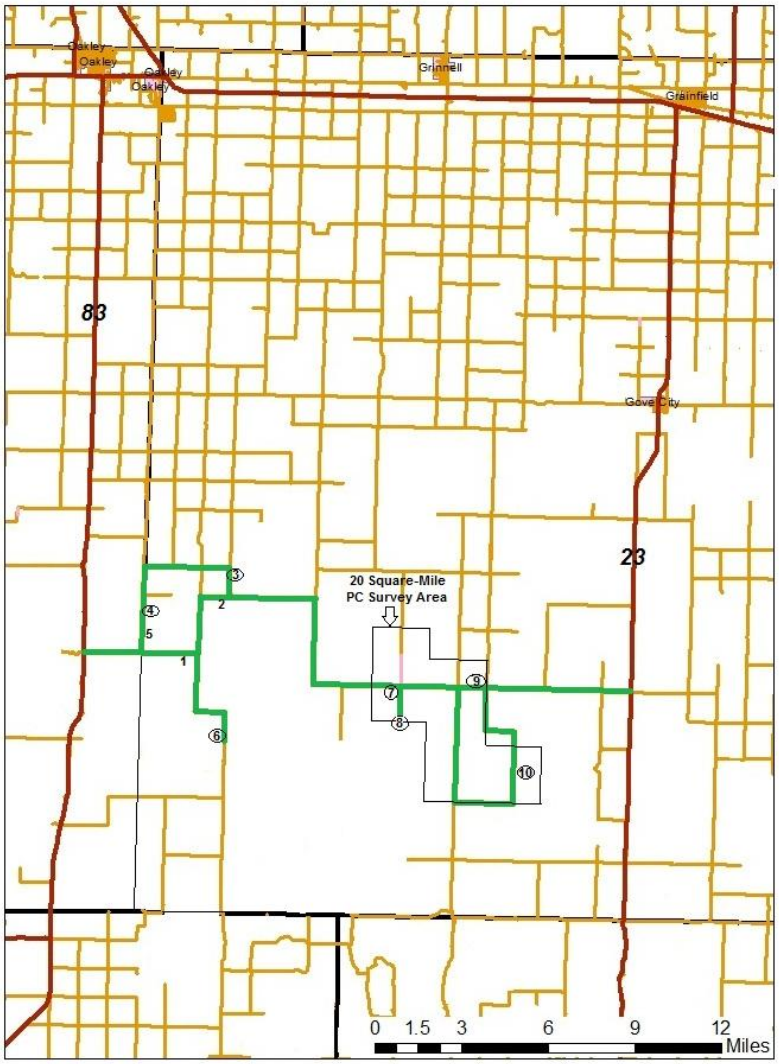
- **Stop 8 (Exit the vehicles):** Here we have two things to look at. The CRP stand to our NW was disked (multiple passes) and interseeded with alfalfa and a little sweet clover in 2008. You'll see that the grass has fully recovered. Probably owing to the very dry fall and spring, and perhaps abundant grasshoppers, much less of the interseeded legumes are visible this year than last. Also, the fence extending directly to our south was built using USFWS Landowner Incentive Program cost-share. This prevented the former CRP stand to our SE from being converted to cropland and, instead, allowed it to be used as grazing land. Unfortunately, the former CRP to the SW was broken. Biologists will discuss the fencing options used in Kansas to convert expired CRP to pasture.

- **Stop 9 (Exit the vehicles):** This is an unusual situation that allows a unique comparison of seeding mixtures. The terraces on the north side of the road were originally enrolled in CRP as grassed terraces (CP15B) and several years later, the

remainder of the field was allowed to be enrolled as CP25 (rare and declining). The group can discuss relative value of the two mixtures for prairie grouse. On the south side of the road, you'll see another CP25 stand that is heavily dominated by sideoats grama. Note also the effect of the firebreak that was disked multiple times in March 2008 prior to a burn of the stand.

- **Stop 10 (Exit the vehicles):** If there remains enough time, we will drive through some additional CRP/range mosaic and perhaps stop to have District Wildlife Biologist Matt Bain give us some idea of what it's like conducting lek surveys in this area where two species overlap. This is also an area where western wheatgrass encroachment on the native warm-season grasses has been significant. Matt can discuss his recent attempts to set back this wheatgrass encroachment using the post-hard-freeze spraying of glyphosate that Nebraska Game and Parks developed to control smooth brome.

Once we start heading back, the return trip to Hays will take about 90 minutes.



Map of Hays, KS