

COMMITTEE REPORTS

SPECIES, HABITAT, OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Karen Sinard, Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation

Dunes Sagebrush Lizard (DSL)

- Following the publication of the Draft Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) and comments submitted by PBPA on August 17, 2020, a small group of PBPA member companies began working on revisions to the CCAA with sand mining industry representatives.
- A revised, draft 2020 DSL Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) and the associated draft Environmental Assessment were published in the Federal Register (FR) on November 20, 2020 with a 30-day comment period. Comments are due on/before December 21, 2020.
- The published 2020 DSL CCAA did not include all of the requested revisions made in PBPA's original comment letter nor some of the revisions discussed with sand mining representatives.
- SHOC reconvened the original sub-workgroup to review the CCAA and EA to prepare written comments. Comments will be a continuation and expansion of the previous comments.
- The 2020 DSL CCAA is expected to be finalized by mid-January 2021, which should help inform FWS as they conduct their review to determine whether the DSL should be listed.
- The Texas Conservation Plan and associated permit, which is the original conservation agreement that was rescinded by the Comptroller of Texas in November 2018, has been transferred to American Conservation Foundation with an effective date of October 19, 2020.
- The TCP is limited to Participants in the TCP that were active on November 10, 2018 and were in good standing, and that have a Certificate of Inclusion that is consistent with the TCP.

Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC)

- Some Committee members continue to meet with State Directors, WAFWA, and FWS via webinars to work through the realignment process in response to the audit conducted last July.
- ICF, WAFWA's consultant for the realignment process, completed a draft report that was available for review by the end of September with comments due by October 9th.
- PBPA letter sent to WAFWA's Consultant and the State Directors on October 14th. The letter highlighted several concerns about the report, with one of the concerns being the mischaracterization of the success of the CCAA by portraying excess conservation as a deficiency. Another concern was whether the CCAA may face defensibility issues.
- ICF declined a meeting, but WAFWA and ICF agreed to redraft the report to address the concerns noted and provide a more balanced view of the CCAA and realignment needs.
- The revised draft report was made available for review on November 20th with comments due by December 2nd. The final report is expected to be completed by mid-December.
- WAFWA has created an Implementation Team with representatives from industry, WAFWA, the States, and FWS. The focus of this team is how best to realign the CCAA. Two Implementation Team meetings have been held to date.
- PBPA has been encouraging WAFWA to develop a White Paper to highlight the success of the CCAA, describe the progress to date on the issues identified in the July 2019 audit, and detail the next steps and proposed deadlines to realign the CCAA. The White Paper would be submitted to FWS-DC and Region 2. PBPA has drafted a White Paper to assist WAFWA and continues to have conversations to the State Directors and WAFWA on the importance of this effort.
- PBPA encourages additional industry partners to get involved in this CCAA realignment process.

The most recent SHOC meeting was December 9th and the next scheduled meeting is February 10, 2021.