

COMMITTEE REPORTS

SPECIES, HABITAT, OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Karen Sinard, Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation

The SHOC submits the following Committee Report detailing significant issues that are being followed and worked by SHOC member companies.

Dunes Sagebrush Lizard (DSL)

- Draft Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) was published in the Federal Register (FR) on July 16, 2020 with a 30-day comment period.
- During the August 4, 2020 committee meeting, attendees unanimously agreed that PBPA should form a sub-workgroup to review CCAA and prepare written comments.
- PBPA electronically submitted written comments on August 17, 2020. The comments included general comments, areas of analysis to be included in the Environmental Assessment (EA), and general and specific comments on the Draft CCAA.
- Per the FR notice, a second opportunity to review the EA, CCAA and Enhancement of Survival permit will occur.
- Additionally, a positive 90-day finding on the petition to list the DSL was published in the FR on July 16, 2020. FWS will begin in-depth review to determine whether the DSL should be listed.

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.
- Financial model developed to help WAFWA evaluate proposed changes to help make CCAA more financially durable. Industry provided feedback on the model after which changes were made.
- Two workgroups were formed with a focus on financial durability and CCAA defensibility. Several workshops held and proposals from each workgroup were developed and presented at a joint webinar on August 17, 2020.
- During August 17th meeting, FWS personnel indicated that the CCAA was no longer viable or legally defensible and realignment was not a realistic option. FWS suggested that the CCAA be converted to a new Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).
- PBPA submitted a letter on August 27, 2020 to Regional Director Amy Lueders outlining industry concerns with FWS personnel's comments.
- Some Committee members had a virtual meeting with several State Directors on September 4, 2020 to discuss FWS' comments. State Directors support CCAA and they are working on some suggestions to counter some FWS recommendations.
- A follow-up, virtual meeting was held with Director Lueders on September 8, 2020 to discuss our concerns and seek clarification on the realignment process.
- LPC Initiative Council met virtually during the annual AFWA meeting on September 10, 2020. ICF, WAFWA's consultant for the realignment process, presented their recommendations, which were categorized into three main risks: process, financial stability, and defensibility. ICF plans to have a draft report available for review by the end of September and a final report by the end of October.
- PBPA encourages additional industry partners to get involved in this CCAA realignment process.

The most recent SHOC meeting was August 4th and the next scheduled meeting is October 14th.