

Lesser Prairie-Chicken

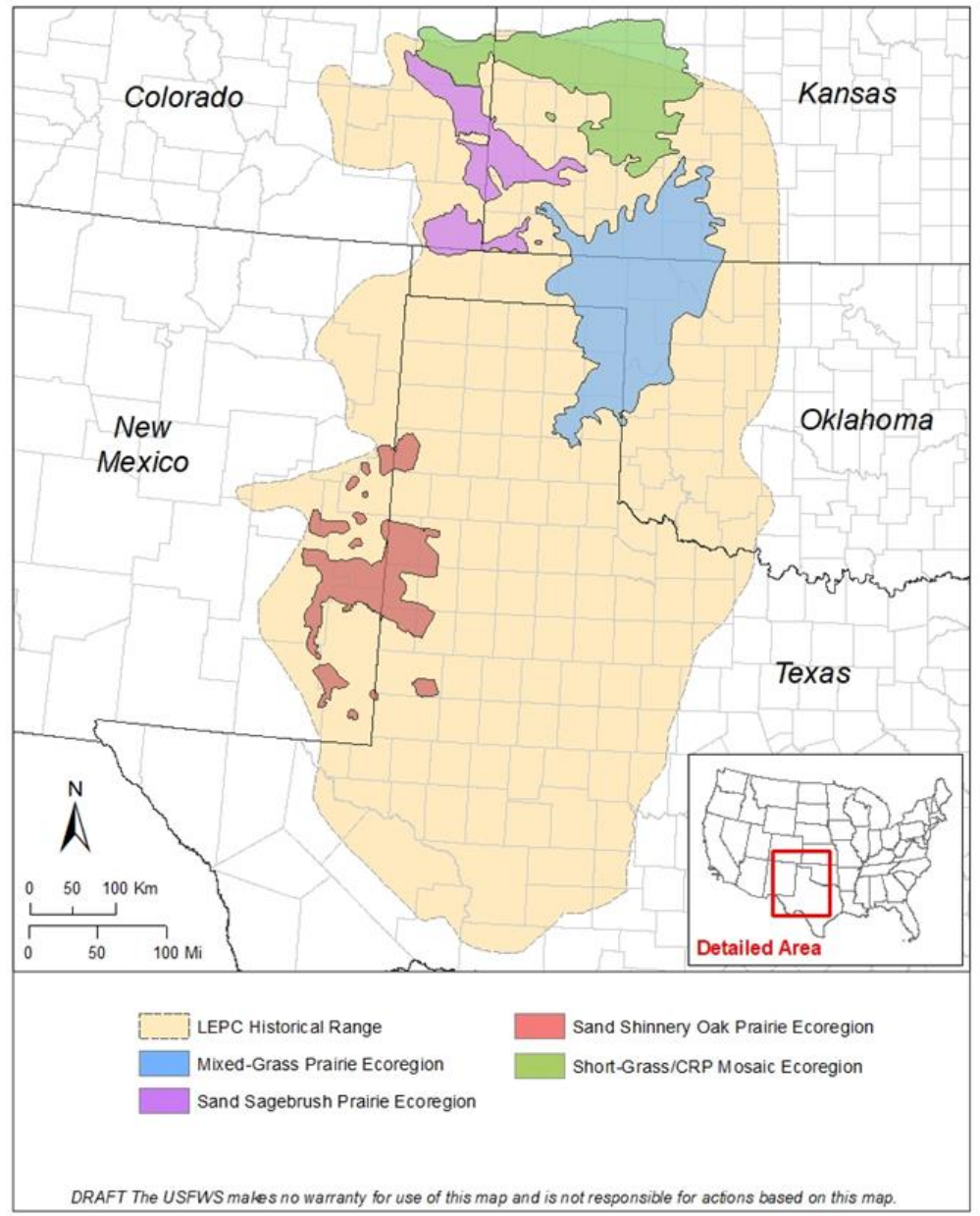


U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
October 13, 2021

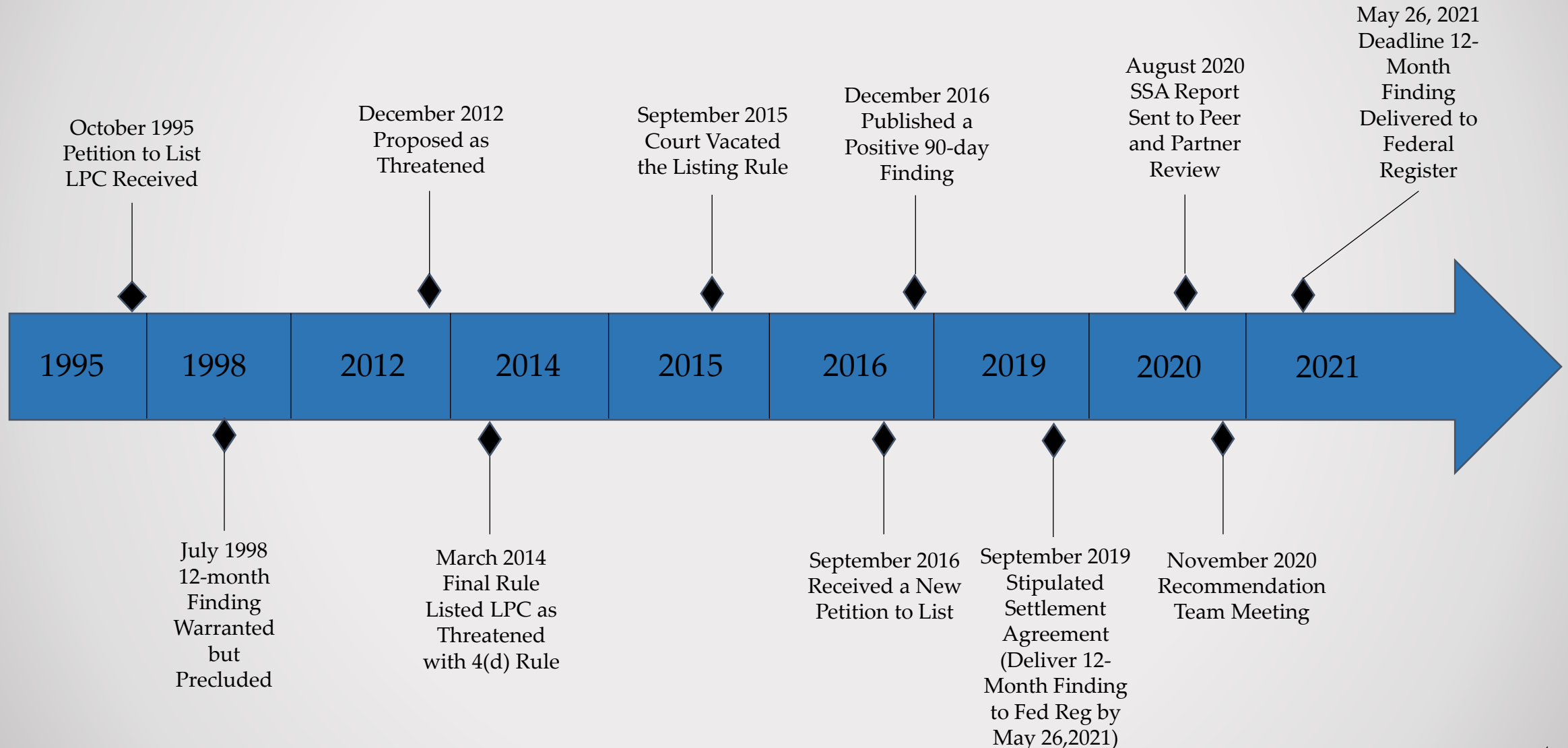
Species Overview

- A species of prairie grouse occurring in portions of New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Kansas.
- Requires large tracts of contiguous grassland and shrubland.
- Boom-Bust species with annual reproductive success driven by precipitation.
- Primary threat is habitat loss and fragmentation.

Ecoregions



Lesser Prairie-Chicken ESA Timeline



LPC Species Status Assessment

- Provides the scientific information needed to inform the 12-month finding.
- Developed in close coordination with the State Fish & Wildlife Agencies.
- Underwent 60-day peer and partner review.

- Species Needs – large contiguous landscapes.
- Primary Threat – habitat loss and fragmentation.
- Current Condition – 80-90% reduction of populations and available habitat.
- Future Condition – Habitat loss and fragmentation expected to continue, as well as additional impacts from threats like climate change.

Primary Conservation Efforts

- Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Range-Wide Conservation Plan and CCAA
- Natural Resources Conservation Service Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative
- Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Program
- Oklahoma Ag CCAA
- Texas Ag CCAA
- New Mexico Ag and Oil & Gas CCA/CCAA
- Bureau of Land Management
- Each of the 5 States has a Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Program
- The Nature Conservancy Owns Lands Managed for the lesser prairie-chicken
- USFWS Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program
- U.S. Forrest Service National Grasslands

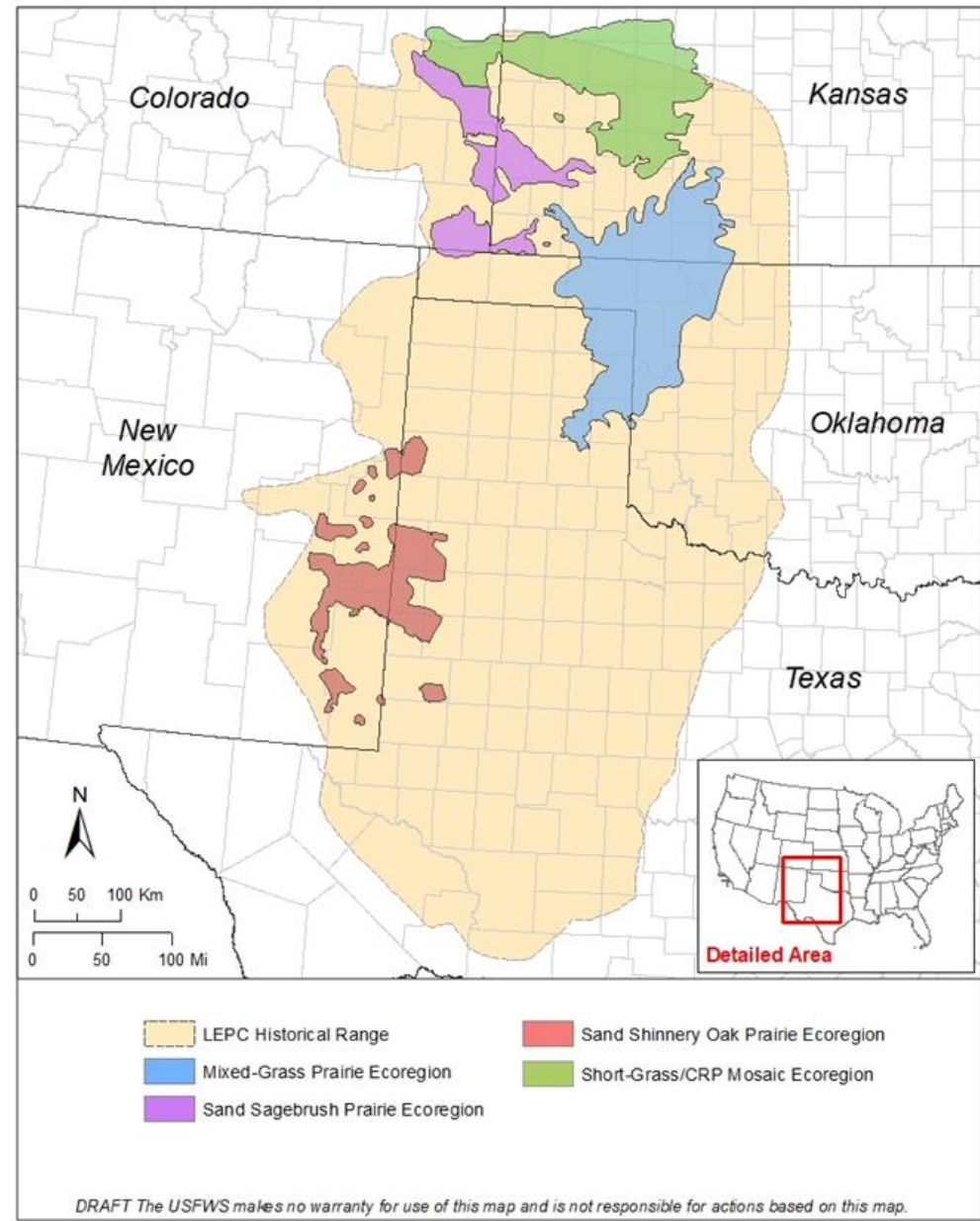
Distinct Population Segments

- Section 4 of ESA - “...determine whether any species is an endangered species or a threatened species...”
 - The term species includes any subspecies of fish or wildlife or plants, and any distinct population segment of any species of vertebrate fish or wildlife which interbreeds when mature.
- Criteria to determine if a DPS exists
 - Separate or discrete from other populations.
 - Has significant biological or ecological value.
- If it is determined that a population meets the criteria to be considered a DPS then the specific population can be evaluated to determine if it meets the definition of either threatened or endangered under the ESA.

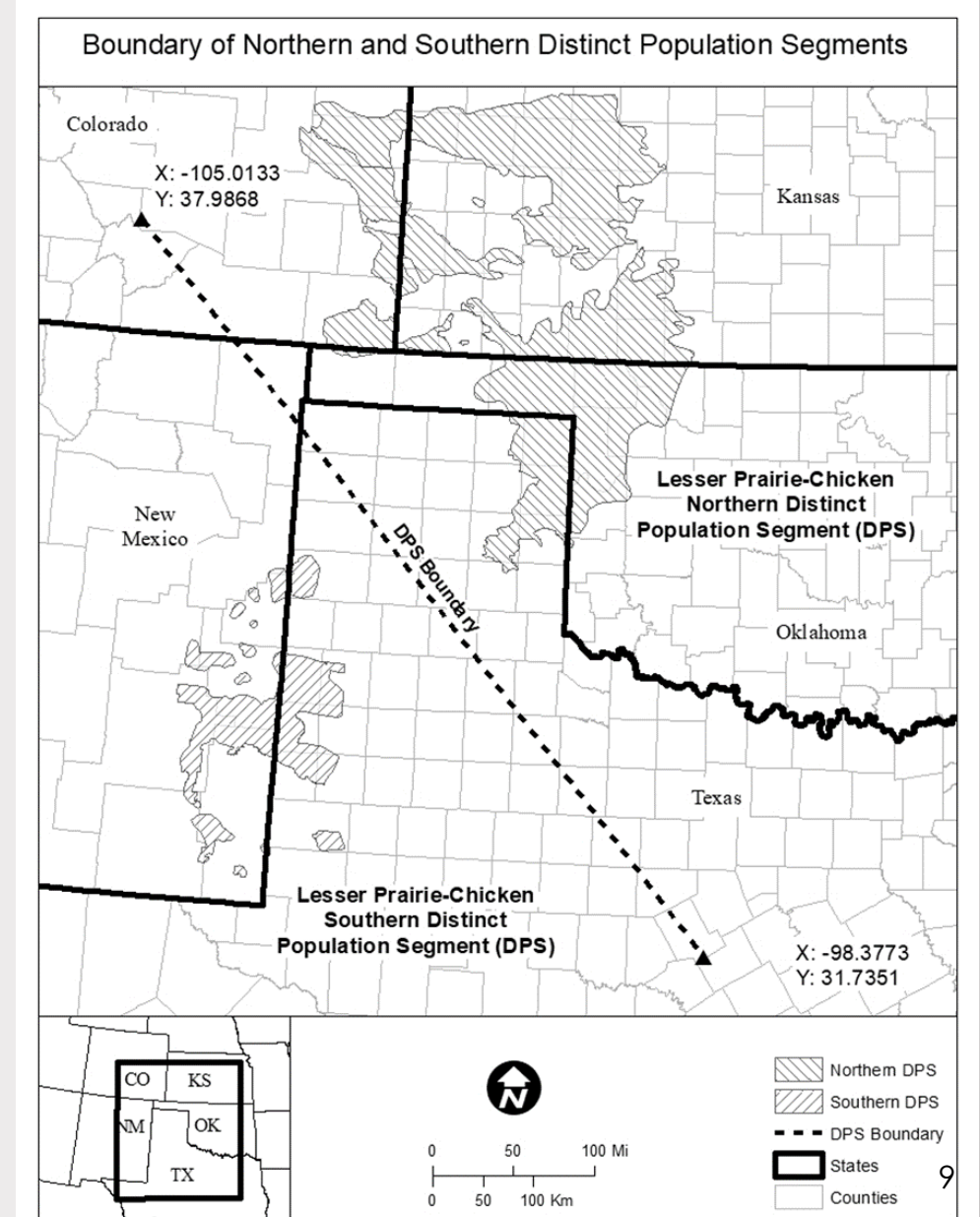
12-Month Finding

- The lesser prairie-chicken warrants listing
- Proposing to list 2 distinct population segments
 - Northern DPS – Threatened with 4(d) Rule
 - Short Grass, Sand Sagebrush, and Mixed Grass Ecoregions
 - Proposed 4(d) rule would apply all section 9 prohibitions with exceptions for continuation of routine agricultural activities on existing cultivated lands and application of prescribed fire.
 - Southern DPS – Endangered
 - Consists of the Shinnery Oak Ecoregion

Ecoregions



DPS Boundary



Next Steps

- Processing of comments
 - Reconsideration of policy decisions
 - Publication of final determination
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- Enhance existing conservation programs
 - Create new conservation programs