

Implementing Working Lands For Wildlife:

A Fish and Wildlife Service Perspective

Tyler Abbott

Deputy Field Supervisor

Wyoming Field Office, Cheyenne



- **WLFW is a national level partnership between NRCS and USFWS**
- **Through WLFW, landowners can receive technical and financial support for voluntarily implementing conservation practices for species on their land**

Species included: Greater sage-grouse (GSG), as well as bog turtle, golden-winged warbler, gopher tortoise, lesser prairie chicken, New England cottontail, and southwest willow flycatcher



WLFW provides regulatory predictability for landowners in the context of the ESA about the use of conservation practices implemented for the benefit of species on the ground:

- Some practices may have “incidental” impacts to GSG in the short-term, although beneficial in the long-term

→ Landowners participating in WLFW are exempted from “incidental take” caused by implementing conservation practices



Regulatory Predictability

Letter of August 03, 2012: USFWS Dir.
Dan Ashe to NRCS Chief Dave White:

- USFWS completed Conference Opinions for several species, including the greater sage-grouse
- If GSG is listed, Conf. Opinion → Biological Opinion for NRCS under Sec. 7 of ESA exempting any incidental take as described in BO associated with implementing specified WLFW conservation practices for 30 years



Regulatory Predictability

- The Incidental Take Permit is issued as part of the national BO issued to NRCS
 - Individual landowners are all covered by this Incidental Take Permit, but do not receive anything themselves
- ** Exemption of incidental take covers only those actions which are implemented as part of WLFW- any other form of incidental take would not be covered**



Regulatory Predictability:

WLFW vs. CCAA

- Exemption of incidental take covers only those actions which are implemented as part of WLFW- any other form of incidental take would not be covered
- In contrast, for landowners who participate in Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs) for Ranch Management, incidental take coverage would apply to all ranch management operations (e.g., moving livestock, cutting hay, building fence, etc.) that may lead to incidental take of the GSG

