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PLAYA POST

Volume 9 / Issue 5 / August 2011

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Private Lands Biologists Provide Critical Link Between Landowners and Conservation Programs

In the Southern Great Plains, private lands biologists (also called Farm Bill biologists and technical assistance providers) play a critical role in habitat conservation by matching landowners with suitable conservation programs that best fit the landowners' personal habitat and land-use goals. Since 97 percent of the land in the Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) region is privately owned, conservation must happen on private lands, making ranchers and farmers important conservation partners in restoring habitat and maintaining large blocks of unbroken prairie.



Biologists from Pheasants Forever (PF) and the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO)—two organizations that have been pioneers in supporting these types of positions—meet with landowners one-on-one, listen to their needs and concerns, and find the best program for each situation. They inform ranchers and farmers about the benefits of conservation programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and assist landowners after the programs have been implemented. [READ MORE >>](#)

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge Begins Restoring 760 Acres of Wetland Habitat

This year, with help from a \$25,000 PLJV ConocoPhillips grant, Quivira National Wildlife Refuge embarked on a project to restore and enhance 760 acres of wetland habitat. The first unit of 34 acres was completed in February; restoration work is scheduled to resume in August or September and continue through the fall.



The refuge, located in south central Kansas, is a sand prairie-wetland complex with various types of wetlands supporting a diversity of wildlife, including migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. It is one of the few migration “stepping stones” in the southern Great Plains and is recognized as an Audubon Important Bird Area and a site of importance to shorebirds by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, as well as a Ramsar wetland of international importance. Many of these birds—such as the Northern Pintail, Mallard, Greater White-fronted Goose, Snowy Plover, American Avocet, Long-billed Dowitcher, Whooping and Sandhill Cranes, and American White Pelican—are PLJV priority species. [READ MORE >>](#)

Climate and Vegetation Models Can Help Resource Managers Target Conservation Efforts for Maximum Benefit

In 2011, Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV), in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), completed a Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) to model projected changes in vegetation structure as the climate changes in the PLJV region and relate them to potential changes in Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LEPC) numbers. Climate change and dynamic vegetation models were used to project future climate and grassland habitat conditions within the region, including the current LEPC range. These models provide insight as to where and what kind of changes are most likely to occur and help resource managers target conservation efforts for maximum long-range benefits.

"This report shows the differences between our current and projected landscape and highlights those areas that may remain similar," says TNC's Duane Pool, a CEAP author and landscape ecologist currently at Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory. "If we target our conservation efforts in those areas, we may be able to provide a climate resistant refuge for animals that depend on this landscape and time for birds to potentially adapt to the changing environment." [READ MORE >>](#)

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IDEAS FOR
A STORY?

We are looking for stories, events or people that present something new, important and interesting about Playa Lakes Joint Venture. Please give us as much information as possible about the story idea, including relevant people, dates, descriptions, etc. [SUBMIT HERE >>](#)

