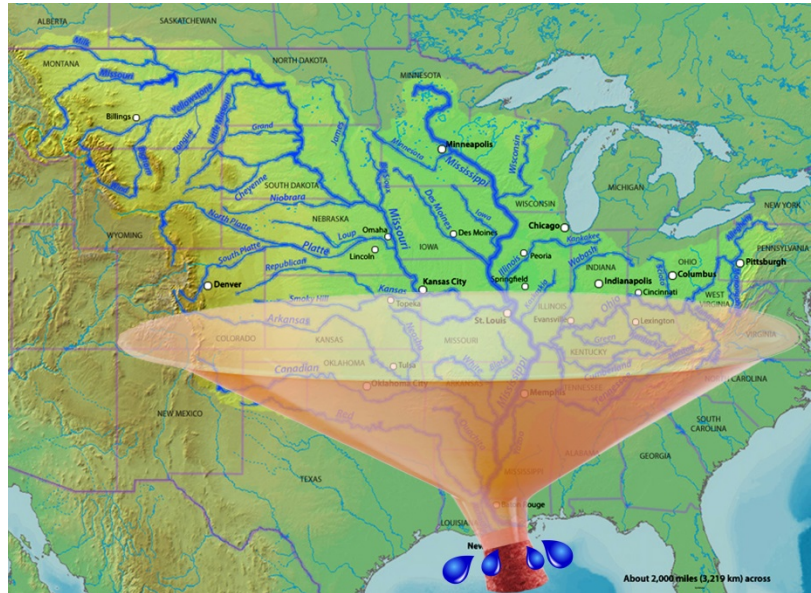


Tara Talks 2013, Vicksburg, Mississippi

Introduction:

1. I made the first map for a presentation I gave on 2 May 2013 for America's Wetlands Foundation in Baton Rouge. In simplistic terms, restoring Louisiana's wetlands requires two very different approaches for ecological restoration. The first involves re-engineering the spout of Mississippi's funnel to replenish the marshes. This has been recognized, debated and implemented half-heartedly for 30 plus years. The more interesting equation involves the 34 states upstream. How do you encourage broadscale conservation practices across the heartland farmbelt encompassing 34 states?



2. The second map I used for a presentation to the board of the Permian Basin Petroleum Association in Midland, Texas last month. What is pretty astonishing is the correlation of 95% of the North American Shale Plays with private lands, particularly in the Mississippi drainage.



3. Against this backdrop, you have a truly significant decline – the largest in my lifetime – of both federal and state funding for traditional conservation programs. And this administration has pushed for 5 years for fully funding Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which obviously is not going to happen in our current and projected fiscal environment.

4. The times they are a-changin'. So they are. Do you remember Dylan's lyrics (1963)?

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside and it is ragin'
It'll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'

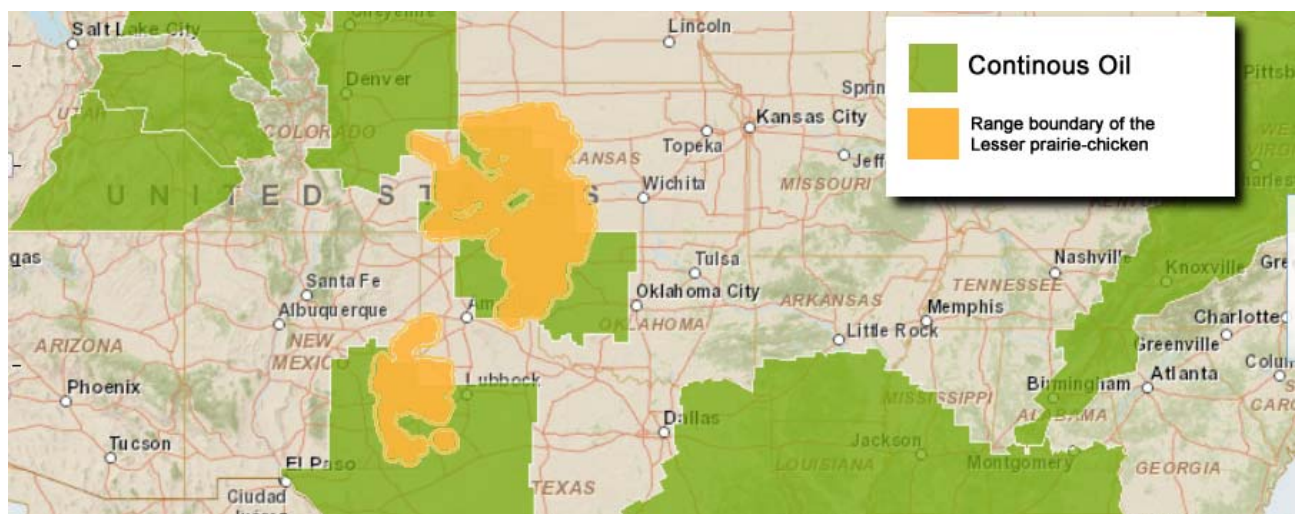
Or this verse:

The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is rapidly fadin'
And the first one **now** will later be **last**
For the times they are a-changin'

Well, we have had our windows and walls rattled for two weeks by Congressional machinations, but the second verse is a pretty good metaphor for what is happening in conservation and Congressional policy today. The 'slow one' now is private landowners, and I am certain they hold the key to this country's conservation equation, and they are coming on fast. The 'present now' is public acquisition funding that will soon be a thing of the **past**, and now first will soon be **last**, in terms of public policy.

Yessiree, the times they are a-changin'!

5. Let's look at just one of the battles outside that is raging: the fight over whether or not to list the lesser prairie chicken (LPC) as a threatened species. This little grouse is the latest wildlife critter elevated to iconic status by environmental groups proposing to put it on the



Endangered Species List. The chicken's habitat comprises parts of 5 states: Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma, and it is 95% habitat dependent on private farm and ranch lands. It also happens to overlay some of the richest oil and gas deposits in the U.S. Hence the battle that is raging from the halls of Congress to the halls of Tucumcari (NM), and Midland (TX), where I was 3 weeks ago.

In response, the 5 state fish and game agencies have put together a LPC recovery program, the WAFWA Range-Wide Plan. It is probably better than anything produced by the US FWS over the past 40 years in terms of comprehensiveness and multi-sector outreach and coordination. The scale of outreach involved here is unprecedented, and the prospect of scaling LPC conservation activities over 5 states is a daunting challenge, as will be the complicated efforts with the oil/gas and wind industries to enlist their cooperation and investment in LPC conservation.

RFF is in the process of designing an LPC conservation site to help implement the WAFWA plan. We already host the largest web-based platform of conservation information (www.privatelandownernetwork.org) designed specifically for the market of private landowners dispersed across rural America. RFF has the best resume and product portfolio for aggregating and presenting online conservation information to help landowners on a scalable basis to achieve their conservation objectives. Our platform is readily adaptable to hosting the LPC Range-Wide Plan and providing easy to use and local geographic information aggregations of services for private landowners. RFF has designed a conservation dashboard specifically for LPC conservation programs and multi-service providers across all 5 states.

6. Why does it make common sense to keep LPC off the endangered species list? In the first instance, because the recovery of listed species has a deplorable record of success; ESA has a 1% success rate. Only 58 of the 2,794 species ever listed have been delisted (and some (10) were delisted due to extinction). Second, I support and believe in both the primacy and the efficacy of state management of wildlife, and particularly in western and Midwestern states where the primary LPC habitat is on farm and ranch lands, where landowners really do not cotton to someone from Washington, or the federal government telling them how to manage their land. Thirdly, from a social, economic and national security point of view, I think it is important to keep our oil and gas industry productive as it currently is the largest producer of jobs in America; it is solidifying our national security away from the narco- and klepto-petroleum states which have held us hostage for the past 40 years. Finally, I think private land owners will be better stewards of LPC habitat than any public agency.

Keep the Bird off the List

RFF supports:

- Keeping the LPC off the ESA
- State primacy for wildlife management
- Regards landowner rights as sanctity

The Endangered Species Act has a **less than 1%** success rate: only 56 of the 2,105 species *ever* listed have been delisted (some were delisted due to extinction).

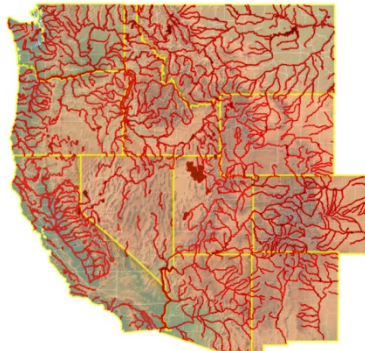
Why Private Landowners Matter

- Approximately 95% of LPC habitat is on private lands.
(U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2012)
- Over 3/4 of threatened and endangered species rely upon private land for some or all of their habitat.
(U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994)
- Approximately 1/3 of species listed as endangered or threatened may be found only on private lands.
(ABA-ALI ESA Conference, 2009)

In the next 6 years FWS will add 250 species for listing

emphasize again, 95% of LPC habitat is on private lands. There are some 250 other species in the pipeline for endangered species listing, many of them, like LPC's conspecific neighbors the sage grouse and Gunnison sage grouse are largely dependent upon private lands.

This is, ironically, particularly true in western states even though most of their lands, often 60% or more, are owned by the federal government, because private landowners control the water rights and stream beds.

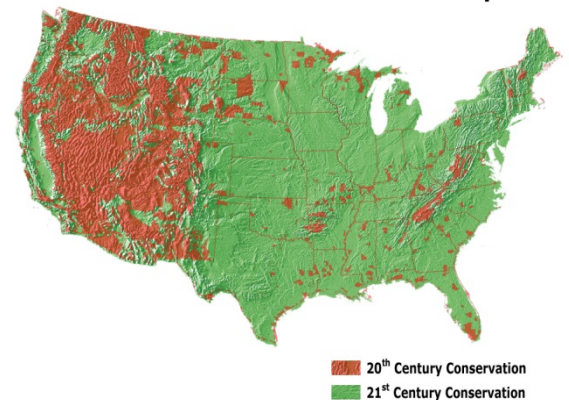


Federal land is mostly over 3,000 ft. altitude and is largely rock, ice, pine forests and high altitude deserts with low biodiversity quotients as demonstrated by Michael Scott's GIS-GAP analysis of Idaho.

7. I think the importance of private landowners to endangered species has been completely missed by the environmental community.

Why do I believe private landowners will be the 21st century's guardians of endangered species? Simply put: they host the majority of the habitat and sources of water, particularly in the western states. Let me

Federal vs. Private Land Ownership



These private lands hold most of the riparian areas which are our harbors of biodiversity. These private lands also provide the water that supplies our metro areas, irrigation water for agriculture, and the corridors for energy infrastructure build-out.

8. Approximately 1/3 of species listed as endangered or threatened may be found only on private lands (ABA-ALI ESA Conference 2009).

As of today, nobody has designed a comprehensive, nationwide approach for engaging private landowners in stewardship for recovery of endangered species. RFF is designing an internet platform for aggressive private land stewardship implementation, not only for the LPC, but also for species that may be listed in the future.

Texas Two Step

- 1. Preclude Listing the LPC**
- 2. Create A Platform for Preventing Future Listings**

- 3. LPC will only be precluded from listing by broad scale conservation enrollments (CCAAs and WCAs) by private landowners**
- 4. The EDF Plan is dependent on listing and HCP implementation**

RFF provides an internet platform for aggressive private land stewardship implementation, not only for the LPC, but also for species that may be listed in the future.

The way we intend to approach this task is to build a website specifically for LPC conservation to assist with the WAFWA Range-Wide Plan and provide a solid platform for landowner engagement and participation. This in turn will be incorporated in a state-wide conservation center for Texas, which we will call the Lonestar Conservation Center, and similarly we will build one for each of the other four range states: New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma. These comprehensive conservation information aggregators will be designed to absorb and be updated with future endangered species listings and will host the full spectrum of federal, state, nonprofit and for-profit service providers that can be of assistance to private landowners.

Range-wide Plan

Western Assn. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) created the Lesser Prairie Chicken Range-wide Conservation Plan

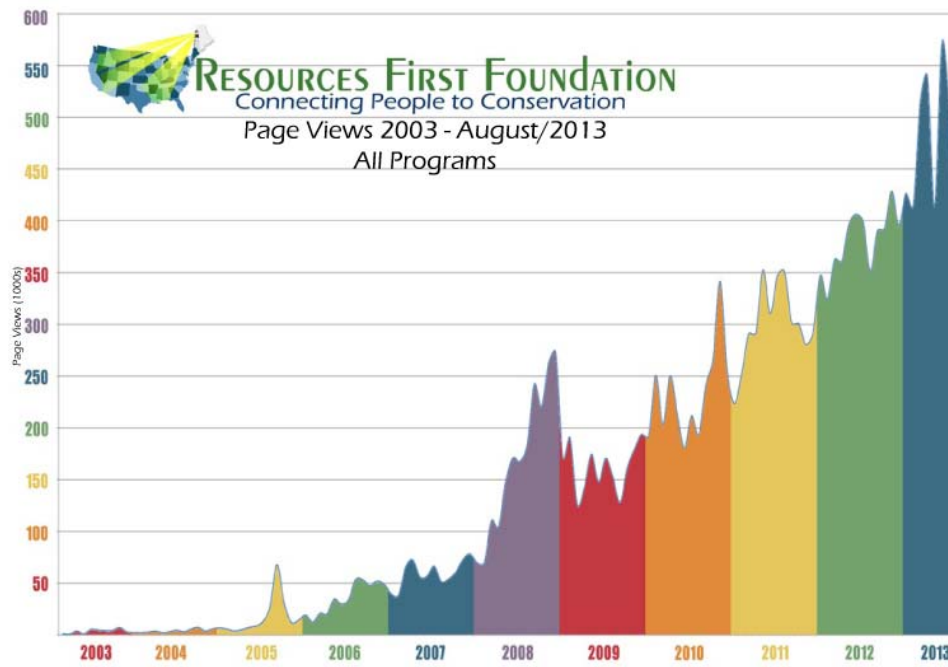
- The Range-wide Plan contains:
 - o Research findings on the LPC, their habitat, range, and threats
 - o Existing Conservation Programs
 - o WAFWA Conservation Agreements
- The Range-wide Plan promotes:
 - o State management of LPC
 - o Stronghold concept
 - o Private landowners role in habitat conservation (NRCS enrollment and FWS Partners enrollment)
 - o Broad scale enrollment in WAFWA CCAAs

9. It is time for coalition building and partnering in rural America. In other speeches I have talked about the metropolitan bias that currently drives policy in dictatorial fashion across rural America. Urban, suburban America now dictates the laws of Congress and federal agencies. A metropolitan constituency that does not know how to cut a tree has made our forests sacrosanct, views grazing cattle with skepticism once reserved for locusts, and believes that oil and gas drilling is giving climate gods indigestion. Farmers, ranchers, forest owners and the oil and gas industry need to make common cause to help preserve each of their respective independences and economic sustainability. In today's world each of these constituencies is fractured into multiple silos, which leads to political ineffectiveness. The oil and gas industry in particular needs to position itself as an integral community player supporting the vitality of sustainable, farm, ranch and forest communities. Think about George Mitchell and his impact on the petroleum industry; because of him we are in the midst of an energy renaissance. However, in the world we live in today, the social/political milieu is as important as innovation in engineering and technology. We need to upgrade our conservation skills to design methods of extracting cooperation from private landowners to meet the challenge of endangered species listings and other environmental challenges, such as the loss of Louisiana's wetlands.



10. RFF can play a significant role in helping private landowners understand the stakes, responsibilities and rewards of involvement. Although we don't have all the answers, we do have ten years of 30% plus annual growth in website usage and an ever increasing array of goods and services to help private landowners manage their lands and estates and to engage in conservation practices.

With our proven track record and decade of experience, I think we can host an ideal platform for engaging private landowners at scale to increase the level of participation in WAFWA's Range-Wide Plan, as well as future endangered species conservation efforts.



We also have a nationally robust conservation information service and as of November 6, six state Conservation Sites on-line.

Our latest State Conservation site, Louisiana:

http://wolf/louisiana/ Louisiana Conservation Co... x

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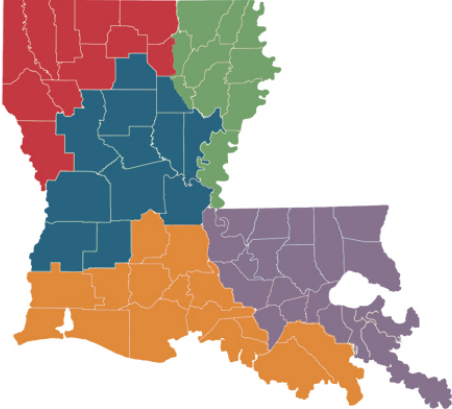
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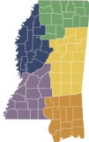



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- Invasive and Native Species Resources**
- Natural Heritage Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Resources**
- Tax and Estate Planning Resources**
- Water Resources**
- Wildlife Resources**

100%

RESOURCES FIRST FOUNDATION

Web-Based Resources for Conservation Action

	<p>www.PrivateLandownerNetwork.org A nationwide directory of more than 27,000 conservation resources, articles, and professionals providing a simple means for landowners to navigate the complex choices of good land stewardship and conservation.</p>
	<p>www.ConservationTaxCenter.org Making a wise choice when it comes to conservation easements, good land stewardship or legacy land requires in-depth research on a very complicated subject. Using this single, comprehensive, on-line database can be a valuable time saver for every landowner interested in good land stewardship.</p>
	<p>www.StateConservation.org/Arkansas Arkansas Conservation Center, our most current site, delivers a rich menu of conservation resources and information to Arkansas landowners, outdoor enthusiasts, and conservation minded individuals, as well as providing recreational information about Arkansas to “eco-tourists” worldwide</p>
	<p>www.StateConservation.org/California The California Conservation Center provides conservation resources for over 38 counties of northern and central California including information on wildfire, invasive species, water resources and agriculture.</p>
	<p>www.StateConservation.org/Maine Maine, the way life should be...this site contains a clearinghouse of information for Maine’s conservation and energy services and resources.</p>
	<p>www.StateConservation.org/Mississippi Mississippi landowners will find this resource full of conservation resources and information for Mississippi landowners and outdoor enthusiasts.</p>
	<p>www.stateconservation.org/Houston This newly redesigned site serving Houston, in Harris county, and the surrounding seven counties, is a hands-on resource for landowners, farmers, and ranchers. Visit this site to connect with local professional advisors to explore options for the future of your land.</p>
	<p>www.PrivateLandownerNetwork.org/plnBLOG For those who would like to “Keep Working Lands Working” check out this BLOG posted weekly by Amos Eno and guest bloggers. Short, newsworthy items, and links to innovative programs, organizations, and some of our best articles.</p>
	<p>www.ResourcesFirstFoundation.org/aea The Alternative Enterprise and Agritourism Resource Evaluation Guide. Landowners can click their way through a series of evaluations for their resources, as well as a series of worksheets that will help them develop possible new revenue streams for their land</p>