

# KNRC News Release

Kansas Natural Resource Coalition  
PO Box 93  
Garden City, KS 67846  
KNRC.counties@gmail.com

**For Immediate Release**  
*March 28, 2014*

**Contacts:** Ken Klemm - President  
785-899-9274  
J. R. Carlson - Executive Director  
620-260-9169

## Prairie Chicken Threatened Listing Does Great Harm

Garden City, KS - The 32 Western Kansas Counties that comprise the Kansas Natural Resource Coalition are greatly saddened and disappointed by the recent revelation that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has determined to list the lesser prairie-chicken as a Threatened Specie under the Endangered Species Act.

Our Coalition's detailed and exhaustive review of the technical, procedural and scientific facts surrounding the lesser prairie-chicken clearly point to the opposite determination. Specifically, the lesser prairie-chicken is not threatened with extinction but is merely suffering from prolonged drought – as are all species here on the High Plains. The heavy hand of the Endangered Species Act will not make it rain.

Our region is comprised of many farmers and ranchers who, through wise land stewardship practices, have maintained and created ever-increasing amounts of lesser prairie-chicken habitat. We have first hand experience with the effects of this great drought. If this ruling stands, landowners will be saddled with the regulatory burden of deciphering hundreds of pages of new regulations that, if misunderstood, will result in fines as great as \$10,000 or five years in prison.

Our Western Kansas home is a refuge for 75% of the lesser prairie-chickens in the five-state region and provides for over 45% of its **habitat**. We also have choice oil and gas fields, ideal wind energy sites, valuable electrical power generation facilities and a diverse mix of industrial enterprises that, when coupled with our huge agricultural base, form the backbone of our small communities. As these entities suffer the severe economic fallout of this listing decision they will pass on the increased expenses to their customers in the form of higher electricity rates, or worse yet, they will pack up and move their valuable employment and economic activities elsewhere. We have determined that the implementation of the Service's only endorsed plan, the Range-Wide Conservation Plan, will result in a \$2.1 billion reduction in property values while it extracts greater than \$220 million of fees from our local industries. Incredibly, only \$10 million will go back to landowners to create habitat. Our small towns and fragile economies certainly will suffer from this misguided federal action.

Additionally, we are saddened by the lack of respect for the rule of law that the USFWS has exhibited leading up to this decision. Our investigations have uncovered serious deficiencies with regards to their adherence to established environmental regulations and a wanton disregard to align their actions with congressional mandates.

Liberty can be defined as the respect for the rule of law that preserves freedom. All American's deserve better from our civil servants.

Kansans are a hardy lot that Mother Nature herself has forged and we do not intend to let the fox run loose in the chicken house. We appeal to legislators, jurists and concerned citizens alike to press for a repeal of this determination and the Endangered Species Act as presently constituted. It has been forty years since the Endangered Species Act was adopted and this latest wayward action has undoubtedly demonstrated that it has grown into a leviathan that swallows vast swaths of land, endangers the livelihoods of millions and shows a species recovery success rate of less than 2%.

*Ken Klemm is President of the Kansas Natural Resource Coalition, Sherman County Kansas Commissioner, rancher and nationwide purveyor of buffalo and grass fed beef.*

*The Kansas Natural Resource Coalition (KNRC) is an association of counties who maintain collective and participatory involvement in administrative government on behalf of its citizenry. The Coalition serves as a conduit between local, state and federal governments to promote balanced, necessary and effective administrative policymaking through the mechanism of government-to-government coordination. Our mission is to monitor, analyze, understand, communicate, and participate in those initiatives that materially affect the natural or human systems governed by individual member counties.*