

News Release

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KNRC Responds to 5-State Plan Endorsement by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*Plan Preempts Local Conservation;
Implementation Costs Burden Agriculture, Industry and Communities;
Plan Administration Creates Multi-state, NGO Bureaucracy*

Garden City, KS - The Kansas Natural Resource Coalition (KNRC) believes endorsement of the 5-State Lesser Prairie Chicken Rangeland Conservation Plan (RWCP) by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) is premature, as the RWCP circumvents local government, proposes costs that pose economic hardship, and it by-passes studies that safeguard human systems and disadvantaged populations.

“At its core, the RWCP is a land-use plan administered by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that imposes massive tariffs on local utilities, energy transmission, regional road-construction, wind development and even private landholders” remarks Ken Klemm, KNRC President. “The Service is using a 2011 court order to justify violating 4 Acts of Congress, 6 Executive Orders and Regulations from the Council on Environmental Quality. KNRC does not believe a court order trumps congressional mandates.”

Longstanding Federal laws, executive orders and the Endangered Species Act itself mandate the Service consider local alternatives or evaluate the socioeconomic, cultural and human impacts of such a sweeping proposal. “The worst part of the USFWS endorsement is Federal statutes require agencies to attempt consistency with Conservation Plans by local government,” says Jim Carlson, KNRC Executive Director. “The Service is attempting to ignore a viable, low-cost, 32-county Conservation Plan we personally handed to senior USFWS leadership.”

When asked about the mitigation cost structure imposed by the WAFWA RWCP, President Klemm states, “The upfront costs of the RWCP raise the cost of new development by 30% or more, and those monies flow to an out-of-state NGO comprised of unelected board members from other regions and countries. By endorsing the WAFWA Plan this Administration is systematically ignoring economic impacts to local migrant, Hispanic, Somali and other potentially economically-disadvantaged populations that work at feedlots, beef-processing plants, and agricultural facilities. Our plan achieves the same conservation objective but with local control and at a very low cost.”

When asked what may be done about the endorsement, Executive Director Carlson quips, “Plenty; KNRC has invoked Coordination status with USFWS, and the Coalition is taking testimony on the economic impacts at a November 7 and 8 Public Hearing.” Then smiling Carlson concludes, “KNRC understands environmental law; we know local government has equal standing – through coordination - to address environmental issues in our area. I’m not sure USFWS has dealt with a regional group like KNRC before – we are resolved that they do the right thing for the right reason.”

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.