

Vision of Success

FOR SENSITIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT



In early 2014 Partners for Conservation convened a small group of landowners joined by staff from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, state wildlife agencies and a few nonprofit conservation organizations to hold our first sensitive species forum.

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The forum had the following goals:

- Identify major sensitive species challenges western agricultural producers face in keeping farming and ranching viable;
- Develop a better understanding among landowners regarding Endangered Species Act legislation, rule-making, administration and funding;
- Identify specific successful implementation approaches and those that could be made more effective at producing species conservation results;
- Identify and discuss opportunities for cooperative, incentive and communication-based approaches which could benefit agencies, landowners, communities and species within current law and regulation;
- Transfer lessons learned from existing landscape-level collaborations;
- Strengthen proactive private landowner engagement in managing declining species programs and build trust through improved communication and broader understanding.

Heather Johnson/USFWS



Vision of Success for Sensitive Species Management

Successful management of sensitive species occurs when threats are addressed allowing **species to thrive, local economies to be sustained, and communities to remain viable** throughout the landscapes which all three share.

Common elements or attributes of successful sensitive species management:



Arctic Grayling from the Big Hole River in western Montana. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently decided that federal protection was not warranted due to the voluntary conservation efforts of private landowners. Illustration by Paul Vecsei.



The gopher tortoise is listed as threatened in a part of its range and is a candidate for listing in the rest of its range across the southeast. A range-wide voluntary conservation strategy is being implemented by federal agencies, state fish and wildlife agencies, private landowners, industry and many other public and private partners to proactively conserve the species. Credit: Chris Potin, Mississippi Army National Guard.

- Working landscapes are working to provide multiple benefits to species, economies and communities;
- Trends in species population and habitat condition are improving regardless of regulatory status;
- Inclusive, collaborative approaches are the preferred method of addressing challenges;
- Landowners, communities and other relevant stakeholders are both knowledgeable of species status and actively engaged in collaborative problem-solving;
- Barriers to active, open and productive communication around historically difficult issues are overcome and all landscape stakeholders are welcome at the same table.



What Next?

Partners for Conservation and the other participants agreed to work together to promote this vision of success and to increase understanding and effective communication between agencies, landowners and communities.



Diane Tanner