Colorado Habitat Exchange

ENVIRONMENTAL INCENTIVES THAT WORK

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Coloradoans and the nation face a challenge: Can we move toward energy security without doing irreparable damage to wildlife and the landscapes on which they depend? It's a huge challenge, especially since state and federal funds for land and wildlife conservation are being cut. The Colorado Habitat Exchange creates the incentives needed for all parties to act now and avoid the need to list the species. The Exchange creates an outcome-based approach, enabling net-positive outcomes for wildlife. While the current focus is on the greater sage grouse, the Colorado Habitat Exchange will serve as a model for how to effectively conserve a wide variety of species, both listed and unlisted, and other natural resources such as clean air and water, by focusing on incentives for generating quantifiable conservation outcomes.

Creating a win-win-win for people, wildlife and the economy

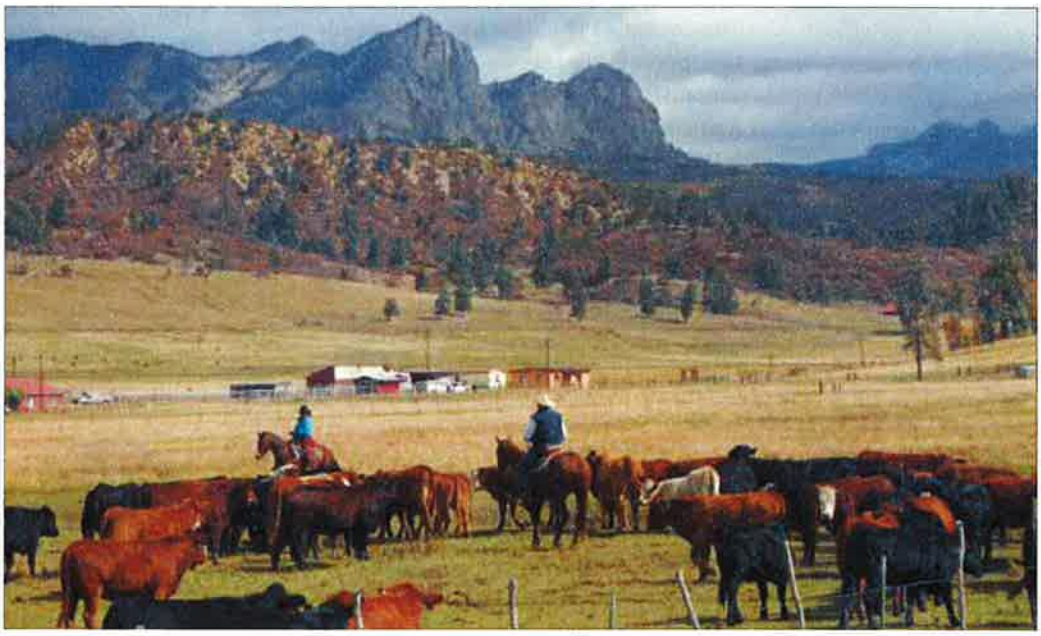
The Colorado Habitat Exchange is a pro-active, collaborative solution that can help push the greater sage grouse toward recovery so that listing is not necessary, while enabling energy development and agriculture, both vital to the Colorado economy, to continue. The Colorado Habitat Exchange will provide positive new incentives to energy companies to minimize and mitigate their impacts and to private landowners to improve and expand habitat for the species. In addition, the program will help energy companies and agriculture to comply with current and future regulations. By emphasizing quantifiable conservation outcomes, the Colorado Habitat Exchange will significantly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of conservation investments, and result in more meaningful and longer-lasting benefits.

How it works

The Colorado Habitat Exchange enables those who impact habitat to create financial opportunities for those who can provide or improve habitat. For example, in order to meet a

"The Colorado Habitat Exchange gives ranchers a new return on investment for stewarding wildlife and land resources."

–Terry R. Fankhauser, Executive Vice President, Colorado Cattlemen's Association



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The Colorado Habitat Exchange creates regulatory assurances and gives ranchers more dollars for more conservation.

"The Exchange provides incentives for the quantified outcomes we all want—improved greater sage grouse habitat."

–Ted Toombs, Regional Director, Center for Conservation Incentives, Environmental Defense Fund

mitigation obligation, an energy company could buy habitat benefits created by a rancher. The Colorado Habitat Exchange establishes a structured, transparent infrastructure for these types of habitat exchanges to occur. The basic parts of the infrastructure are: the protocol (the rules and procedures to facilitate exchanges), the quantification tools (methods and processes to consistently measure impacts and benefits), and regulatory assurances (agreements with regulators that the conservation activities satisfy regulatory requirements).

This unique infrastructure will enable companies to more efficiently fulfill their mitigation and sustainability objectives while providing a financial incentive to agriculture to improve stewardship. In this way, the Colorado Habitat Exchange creates the incentives needed for all parties to act now and avoid the need to list the species.

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Status of program development

The Colorado Habitat Exchange is being designed to support initial transactions in 2013. Representatives from the Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA), Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife, Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Colorado Oil & Gas Association (COGA), Colorado State Land Board, Environmental Defense Fund and Partners for Western Conservation are leading the conceptual development of the Exchange. If you are interested in learning more about the Colorado Habitat Exchange, please contact:

- **Ted Toombs,** Environmental Defense Fund, ttoombs@edf.org
- **Terry Fankhauser,** Colorado Cattlemen's Association, terry@coloradocattle.org
- **Ginny Brannon or Lisa Dale,** Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Ginny.Brannon@state.co.us, Lisa.Dale@state.co.us

Objectives of The Colorado Habitat Exchange

- Standardize a set of tools and protocols to quantify habitat and species' benefits from restoration activities
- Provide a registry that tracks benefits and reports on progress towards achieving permit requirements and conservation goals
- Establish clear operation protocols to validate projects and quantify, register, certify, and transfer associated credits
- Establish a trading platform for credits
- Begin credit exchange transactions in the summer of 2013
- Facilitate an adaptive management process to improve tools and protocols as new information becomes available
- Provide regulatory assurances for participating private landowners and development interests

For additional information, please contact:

EDF Environmental Defense Fund — Finding the ways that work

Partners for Western Conservation

Colorado Cattlemen's Association

Colorado Parks & Wildlife

Colorado Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Incentives

Colorado Oil & Gas Association