Notes from 2nd Panel on Day 2

Dana Varner, *"RWBJV and Setting Regional Targets"*

- Went with yellow to reverse declines and stabilize declines; from PIF landbird plan
- 10-year goal to slow rate of decline by different %, 30 year goal of stable.
- Reverse decline –GRPC, RHWP, DICK, RNPH- current populations and trends for our geography and trend estimates at PIF database
- Taken our geography and broken into specific geographic areas
- Dickcissel reverse decline- add up pixels with relative abundance by geographic areas then have population estimate for RWBJV. Take current trend, 10-year trend objective, current population and 30-year population objective. Central and NP River current population 75k to 85k. Need to get to positive 3.1 trend to reach our 30 year population objective.
- Translating our population objectives to grassland habitat objectives. If we want to increase population by 15% then increase habitat available by 15%. Need 95,813 acres of grassland to support birds in Central and North Platte River. About 1.5 million acres short of habitat if we don't do anything.

Sean Fields, *"Joint Venture Priority Species: What is the JV8 metrics team doing to create continuity across JVs as targets and metrics are set?"*

- JV8 Central Grasslands Initiative in full swing for about a year,
- Conservation synopsis: priority species, direct/indirect threats, conservation targets, conservation planning tools, core conservation programs, strategies, capacity
    - ag transition, agricultural sustainability, grassland restoration/enhancement, grazing management, invasive shrub removal, prescribed fire, land protection, monitoring, wetland restoration/enhancement
- Metrics committee of JV8:
    - Add our current conservation goals for grassland restoration and protection: 2.6 million protection, 9.8 million perpetual restoration, 12 million enhancement perpetual, then term-limited protection 288k, restoration 10.4 million, 3.8 million enhancement.
    - Need to address different timing of goals, different definitions and getting to talking the same language
    - Social science and addressing grassland targets. Understanding private landowners and perceptions of landowners and economics.
- PPJV has 3 strategies enhancement, restoration, protection.
    - Enhancement: nest islands, predator fences, nest structures, predator control, veg management, cover crops
    - Restoration: CRP, EQIP, WRE
    - Protection

John Quinn, "*Agriculture Land Modeling: How might ag land modeling inform setting targets?"*

- Ag intensification expanding in scope
- Not a homogenous space

- Each farm is distinct and unique and so is each farmer
- Collecting field data across the year in 10-minute increments
    - Tied in some IMBCR sampling sites deliberately placed in cultivated fields. Hoping to use and model under different scenarios. What about adoption of 2 million acres or regenerative ag compared to 2 million acres of grass?
    - Encouraging that many species increase from 5-30% in response to regenerative ag.
    - As chemical use increases, species decrease from Bobolink to killdeer to eastern meadowlark, bobwhite, lark bunting.
- Core grasslands and protecting, work with farmers around these lands- they want to contribute in meaningful way (birds are a good gateway species). Some space intense farmland of corn and soybean will not completely abandon this. Think about partners and landscapes outside of grass.
    - Polasky et al 2008 and tradeoffs of scenarios.

Considerations:

- Lots of ag landscapes are not protecting as many birds or making as much revenue as possible
- Integrate cultivated lands into models: can we live with a few less species with ag in the mix
- Heterogeneity needs to be the goal- smaller field sizes, margins with grass, diversify their operations
- Relational values, payment for ecosystem services, bird friendly coffee to bird friendly popcorn.
- Farmers that talked to each other about birds were more likely to adopt bird friendly practices
- Take landowners birding

Drew Bennett, *"Considering Human Dimensions: What are the social dimensions and economic challenges to consider when setting metrics for conservation delivery?"*

- Looking at Human Dimensions side to take a giant step back, pros and cons of metrics:
    - What is the intended use? What do we envision using this metrics or modeling approaches for? How do we communicate these to different stakeholder groups?
- Setting habitat metrics and targets: people don't like these and view as land grab; who are the right messengers that can carry these ideas forward?
- How do we link conservation delivery and programs with habitat and acreage goals?
    - Acres under easement, regenerative ag, easements and track progress over time.
    - Wide range of interventions or conservation actions
    - Understanding differences across the landscape.
- Observation on ecological data to share, track funding that is going into conservation efforts on the landscape … ***Example:*** MT and CO and robust easement programs and tracking funding sources and application on the landscape; link conservation actions to the modeling.
- Coarse metrics to look at: human well being over time, tracking livestock numbers over time, # of farms and ranches and average size over time, commodity prices and influence on landscape
    - Cultural metrics: culturally relevant species- bison herds, total # in biome
    - Livelihood and well being metrics: landowner satisfaction with livelihood and community health
    - Outcomes based on conservation actions: how are landowners responding to different programs, helped or hurt bottom lines when participating in conservation?
- US census of Ag as a resource, happens every five years- next census in 2022
- Let's have a longer conversation to have on social/economic goals and linking with habitat and bird population goals

Martha Kauffman, "*Overview of Metrics Working Group: Is it possible to set an acreage target at the biome level?"*

- Acreage we all talk about is a common metric for understanding what is happening on the landscape: Roadmap needs a strong destination and measure 10 years from now if we are making progress
- Biggest threats biome experiencing- grassland conversion and woody encroachment (5% encroachment of woody as ceiling)
- 600 Million Acres in the Biome:
    - Cores (98 million)
    - At risk of conversion (131 million acres)
    - Plowed or encroached (394 million acres)
- Can't work on every acre- take work of Barry and key habitats to protect or restore for grassland birds and overlay on JV by JV basis
    - Get to how much land to protect, improved, or restored in each JV
    - Roll up to a biome scale #
- Monitor how we are doing and draw the resources to the landscape that are inspiration, actionable and defensible
- Also thinking about water metric and future of biome

Participant Reactions to All Panelists

- Market in MX pushes landowners to grow specific crop: understand the market's power
- Examine USDA policy and for each country: incentives that lead to corn and soybeans
- Lots of potential for complementary approach in cropland and grassland: tradeoffs for the two landscapes in conversion
- Example of GM and building resilience in soil health, careful to not allow wheat farming to move further west since no-till principles allow expansion
    - It's helpful to understand habitat requirements for grassland obligates that don't use cropland at all in whole consideration of bird conservation.
- Emphasis on restoration and protection will vary by landscape and maybe at JV scale and level of emphasis becomes clearer
- Additional Human Dimensions Considerations
    - There will always be greed element, individuals care about personal profit
    - Need to increase broader public interest in conservation and sustainability, people care about sustainability for the long-term.
- Bring in early and middle adopters focused on profits <u>and</u> protecting key areas.