



United States Department of Agriculture

# Proactively Responding to Biome Threats

(Strategies for Green/Yellow Areas on the Map)



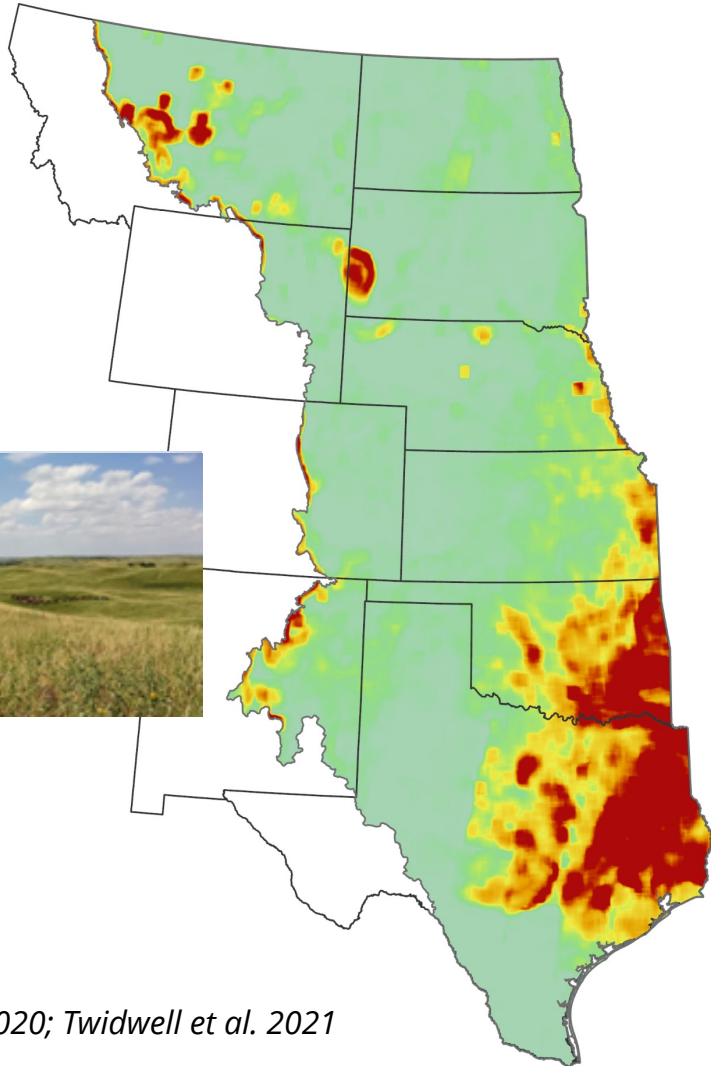
Dirac Twidwell

University of Nebraska



# The Great Plains Biome is Collapsing

1990



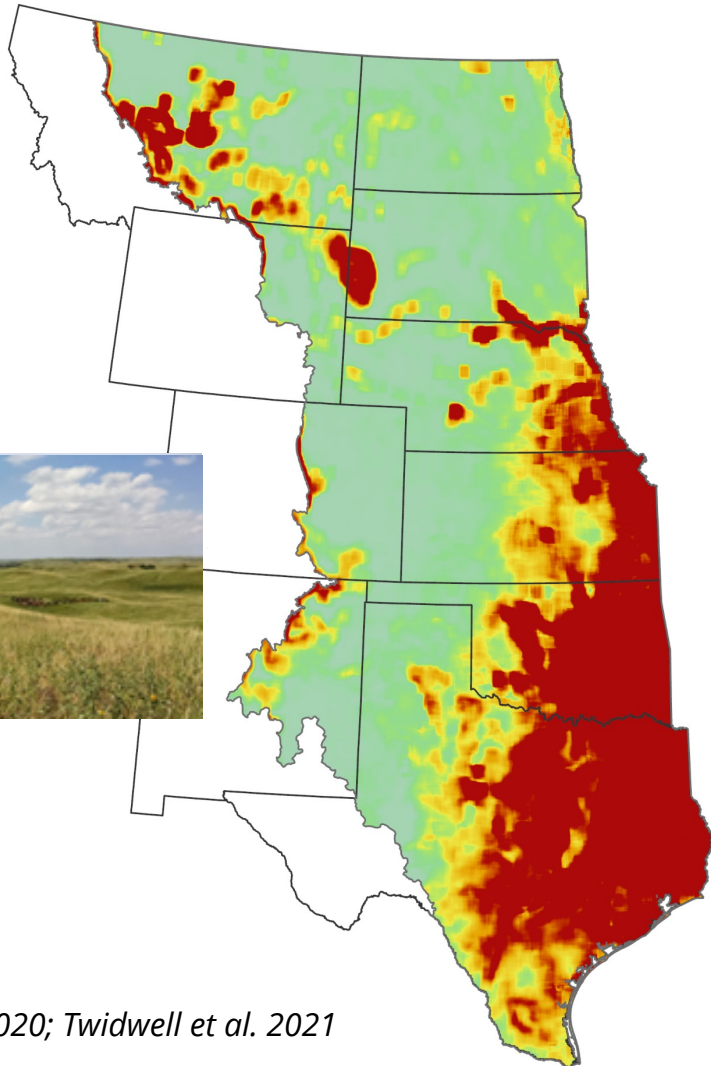
**\$177M spent in last Farm Bill**



Southern Plains:	\$164.5 M
Southern Mountain:	\$59.6 M
Pacific:	\$25.9 M
Northern Plains:	\$12.5 M
Northern Mountain:	\$8.5 M

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2020

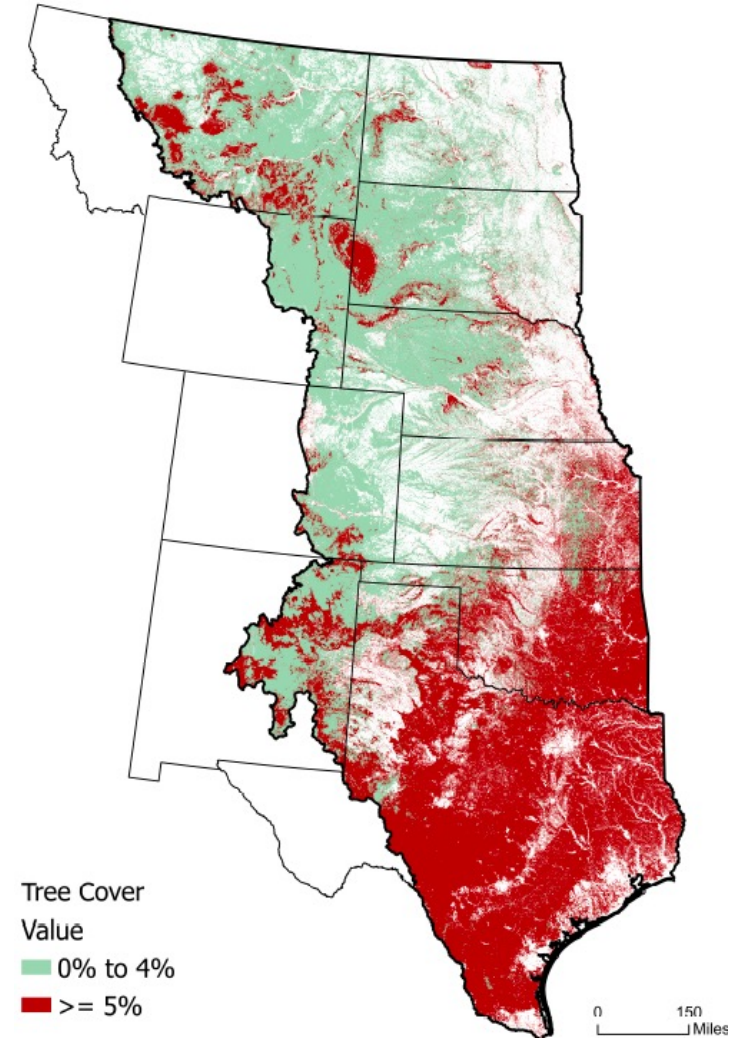
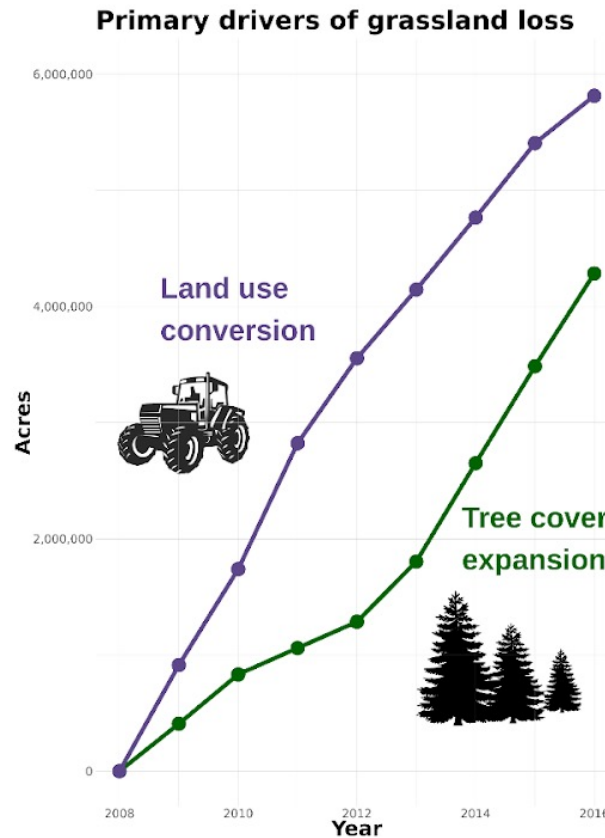
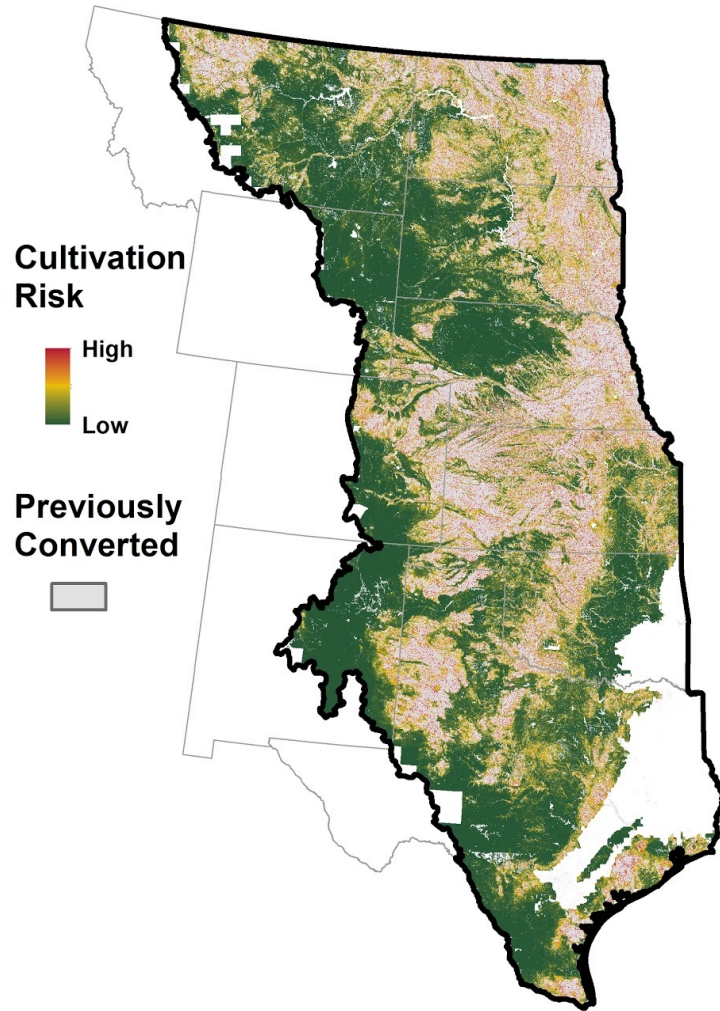


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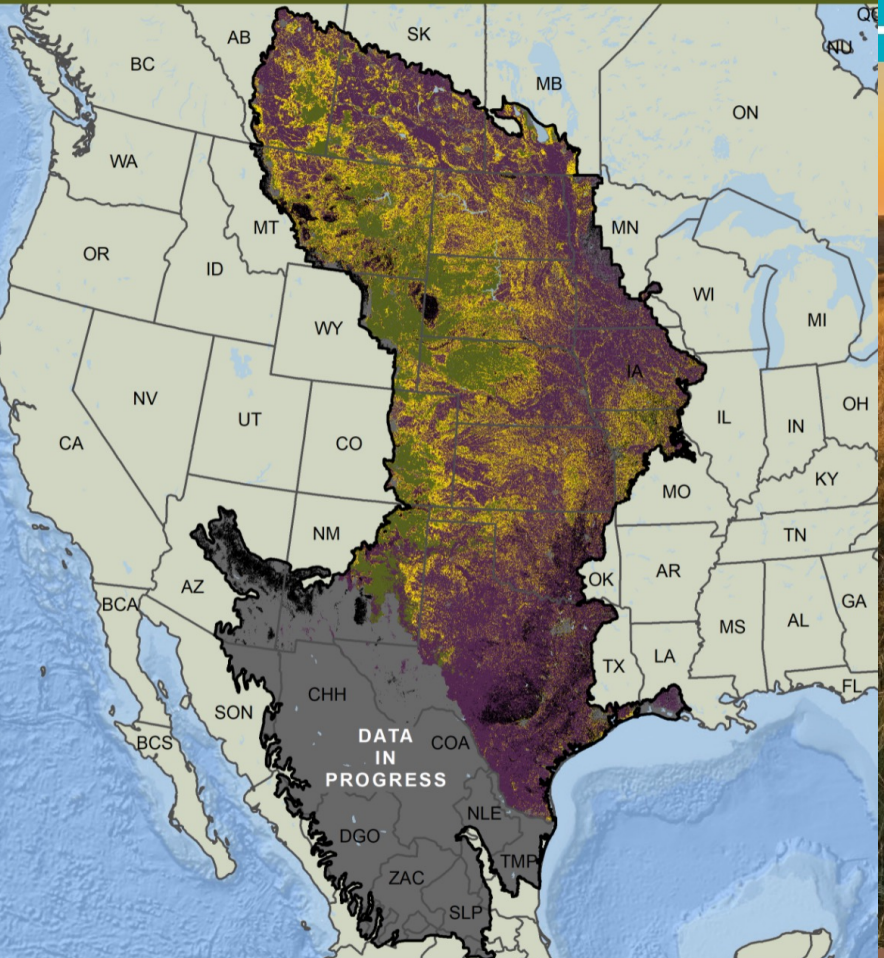
# The Top Threats to the Great Plains Grassland Biome: Land Use Conversion & Woody Encroachment





# For the first time, local to international priorities are aligned to solve biome threats

## CENTRAL GRASSLANDS ROADMAP GRASSLANDS RISK MAP



**CONSERVATION CATEGORIZATION\***

<b>CORES</b>	<b>AT RISK</b>	<b>PLOWED/ENCROACHED/FOREST</b>
DEFEND (98,162,883 acres)	MANAGEMENT (130,649,139 acres)	PIE/F (394,969,841 acres)

\*Based on currently available data. Plowed land consists of any area converted as of and since 2009 (see Plowprint.com). Encroached area is >5% woody vegetation (see Rangelands.app).



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
WORKING LANDS FOR WILDLIFE

# GREAT PLAINS GRASSLANDS BIOME

**A FRAMEWORK FOR  
CONSERVATION ACTION**

2021-2025

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

### CONSERVING THE LEGACY OF NEBRASKA'S GRASSLANDS

NEBRASKA GREAT PLAINS GRASSLAND INITIATIVE

# Reducing Woody Encroachment in Grasslands

A Guide for Risk and Vulnerability

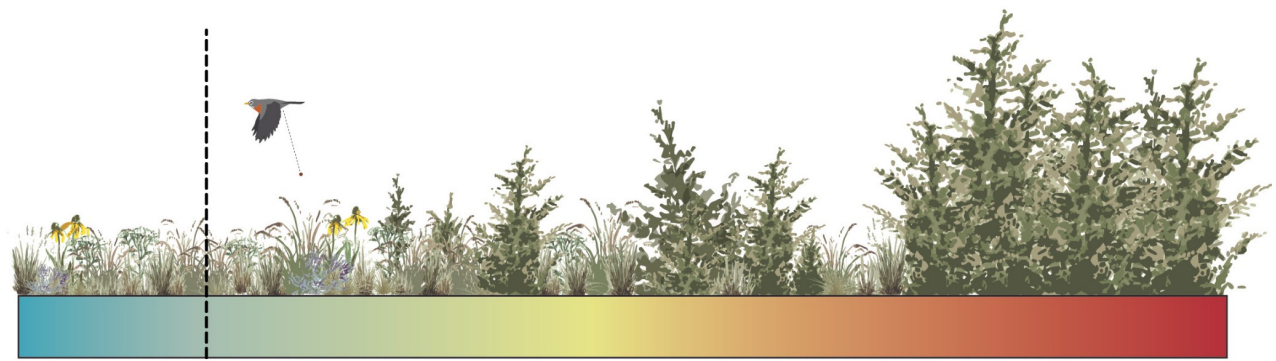
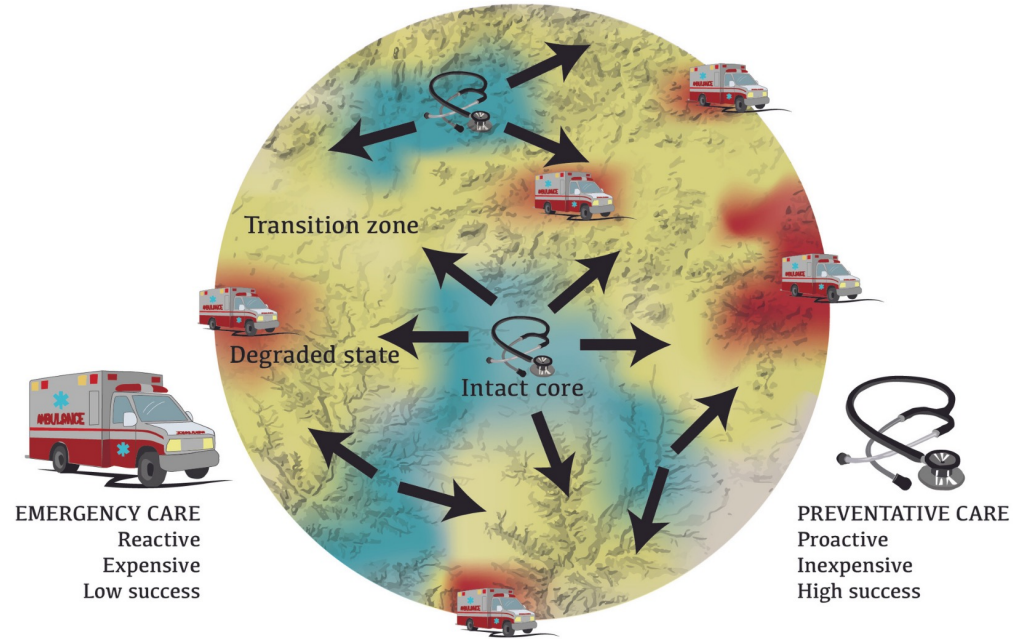
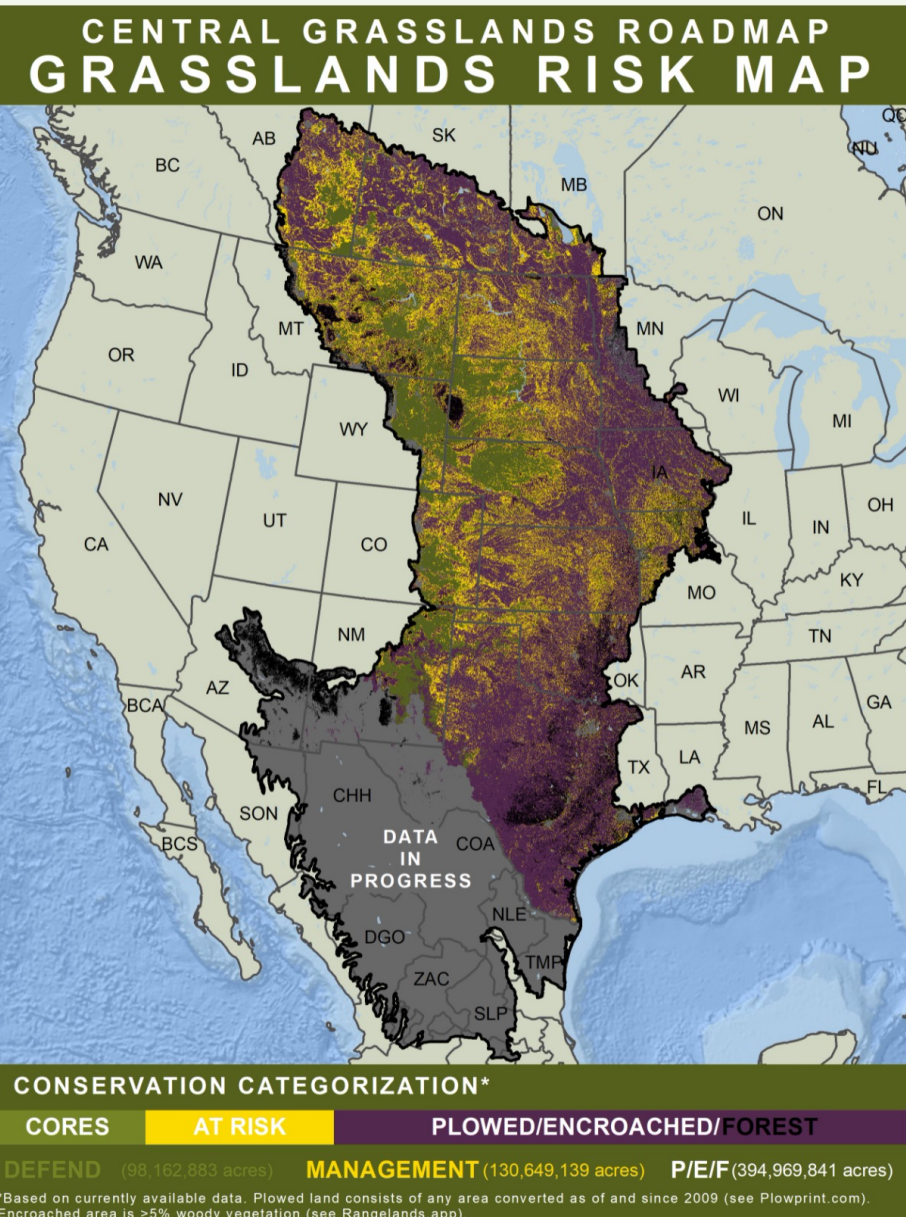
E-1054

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service  
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources  
Oklahoma State University



# A New Mantra has Emerged:

**Defend the Core → Grow the Core → Mitigate Impacts**



Intact grassland core

— Increasing severity of woodland transition —→

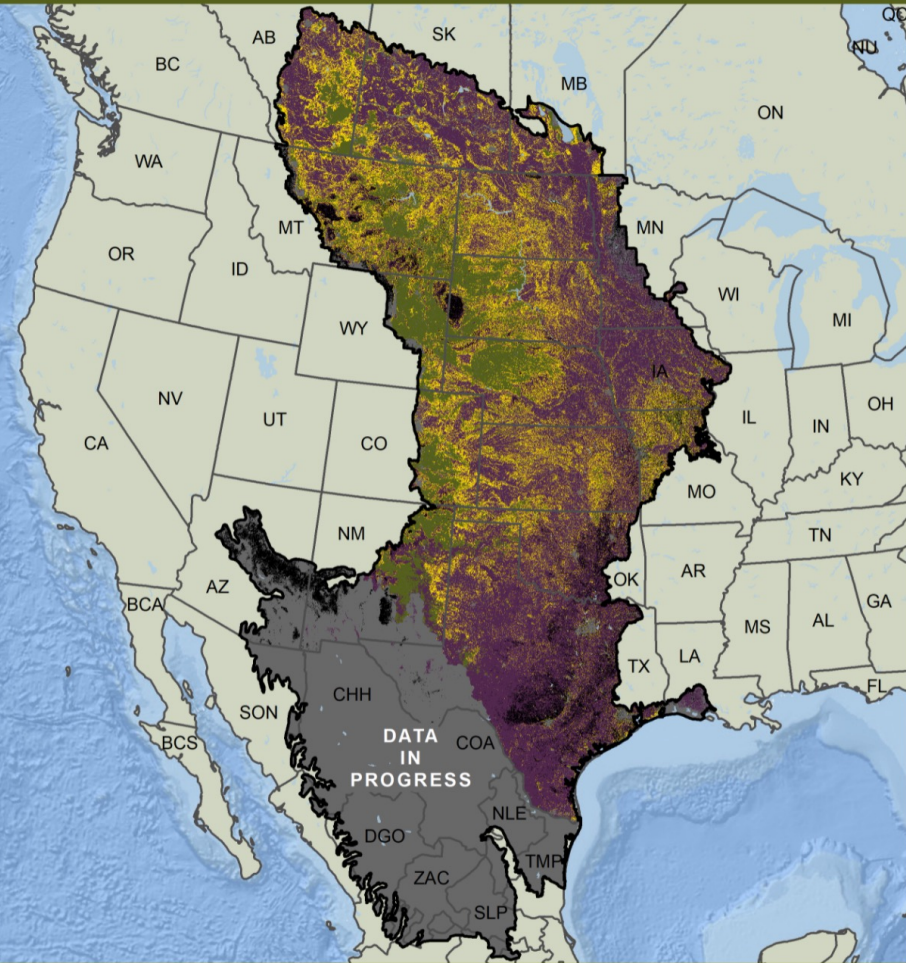
Credit: USDA-NRCS, Working Lands for Wildlife



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## CENTRAL GRASSLANDS ROADMAP GRASSLANDS RISK MAP

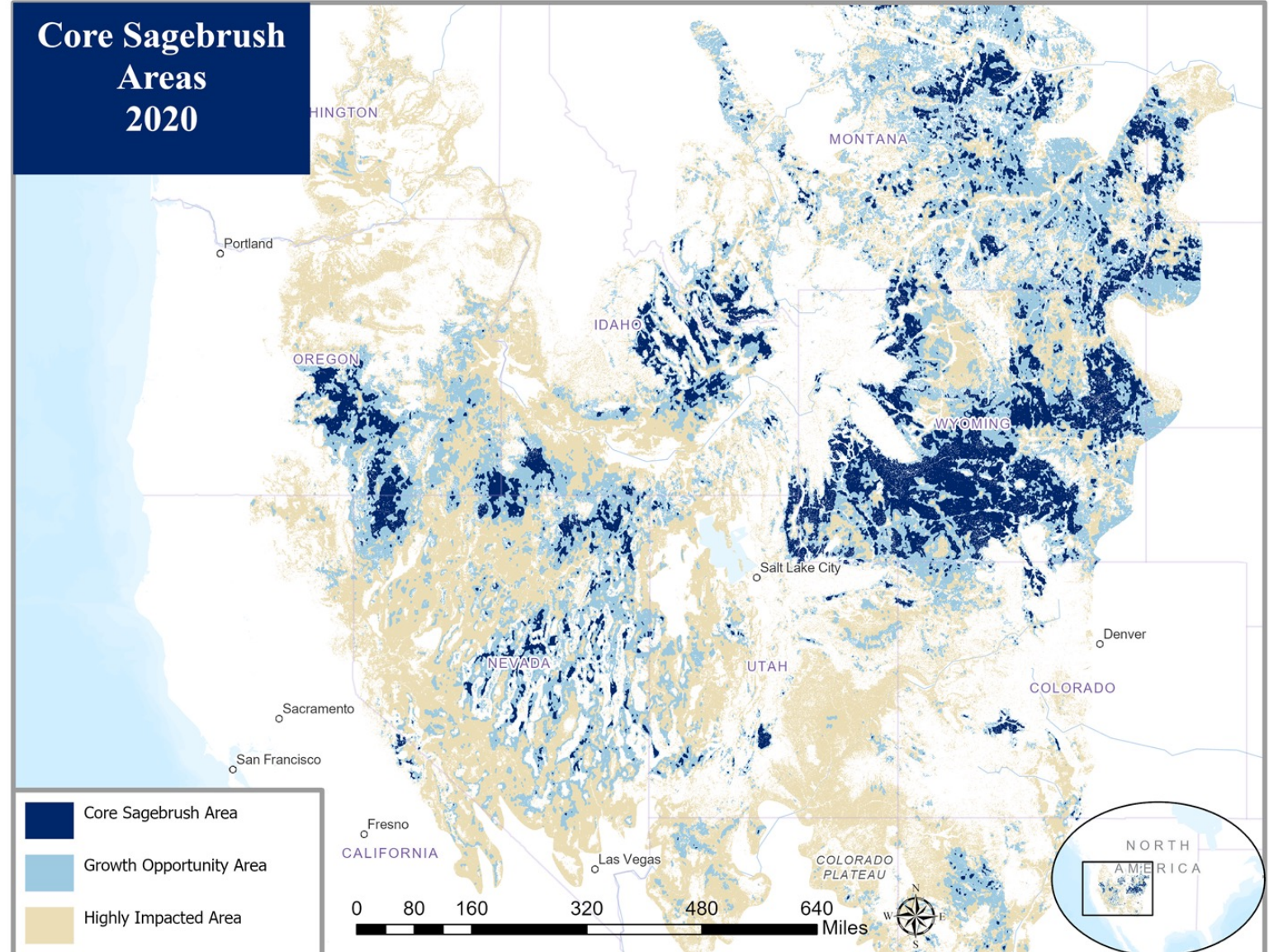


### CONSERVATION CATEGORIZATION\*

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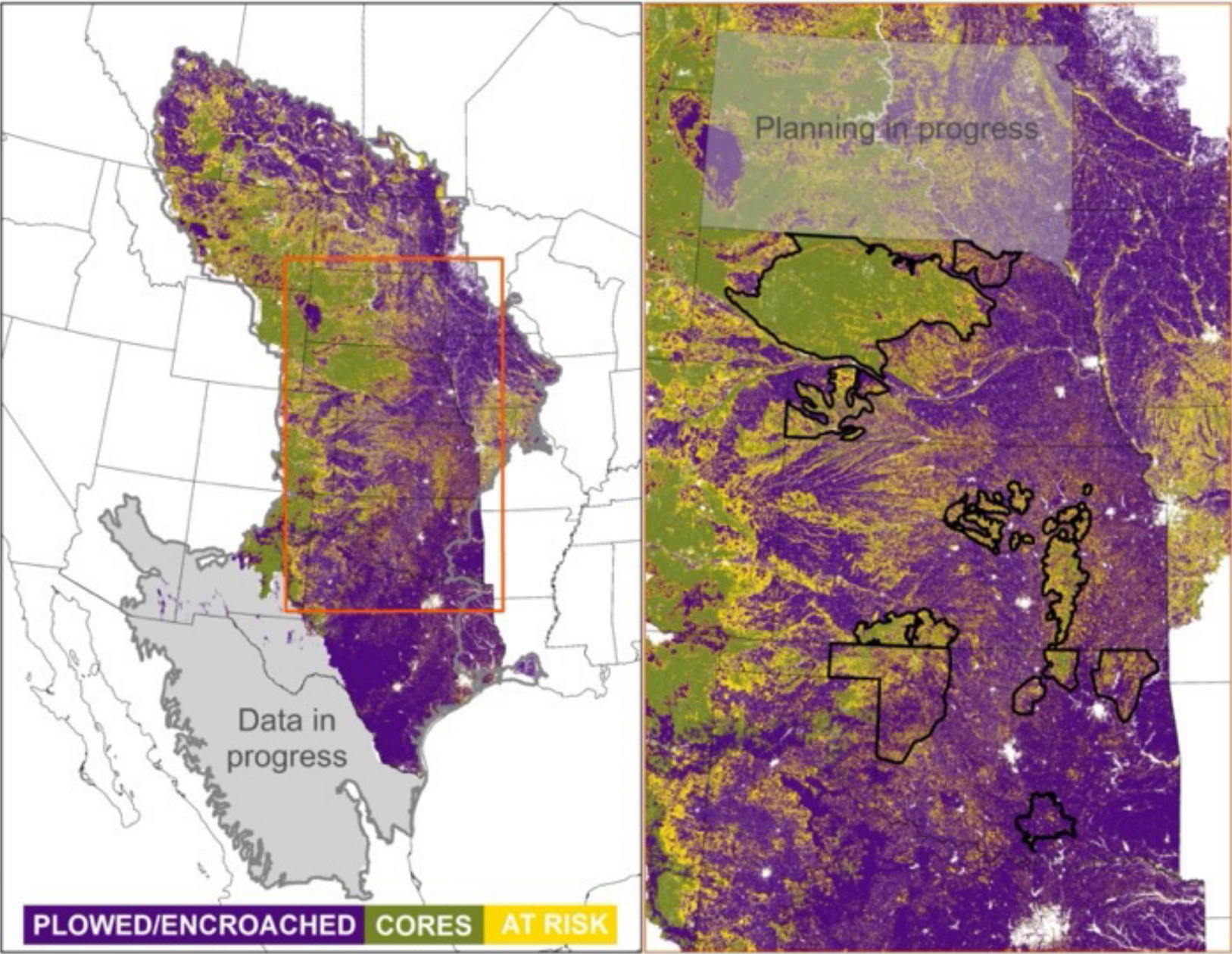
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# The Call to Action: Phase I - Defend the Core



USDA United States Department of Agriculture

## CONSERVING THE LEGACY OF NEBRASKA'S GRASSLANDS

NEBRASKA GREAT PLAINS GRASSLAND INITIATIVE

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

### CONSERVING RESILIENT RANGELANDS FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE KANSAS GREAT PLAINS GRASSLAND INITIATIVE

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

### CONSERVING THE LAST GRASSLAND REGIONS OF OKLAHOMA

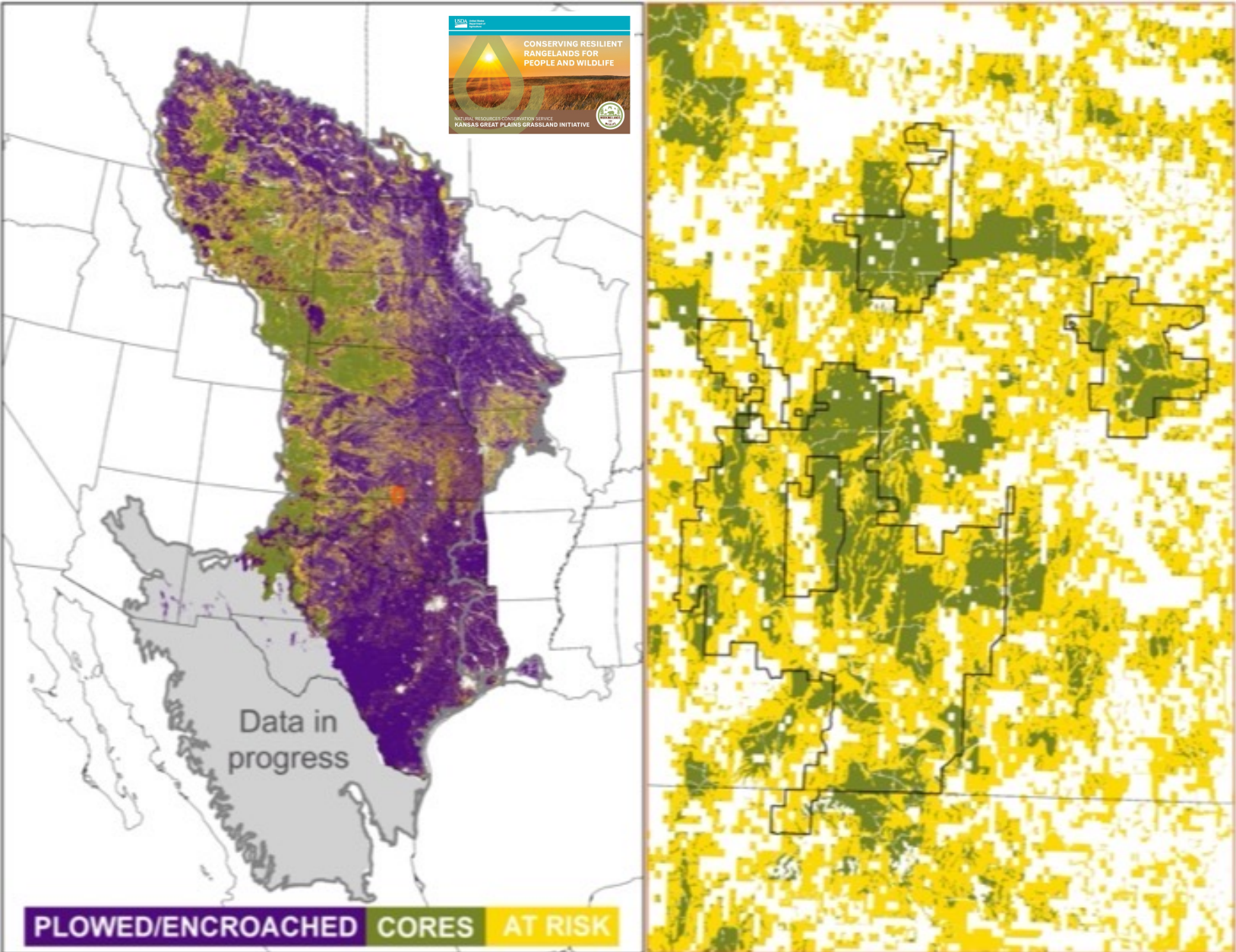
OKLAHOMA GREAT PLAINS GRASSLAND INITIATIVE



**Over 30 Initiative Partnerships across multiple states**



# The Call to Action: Phase I - Defend the Core

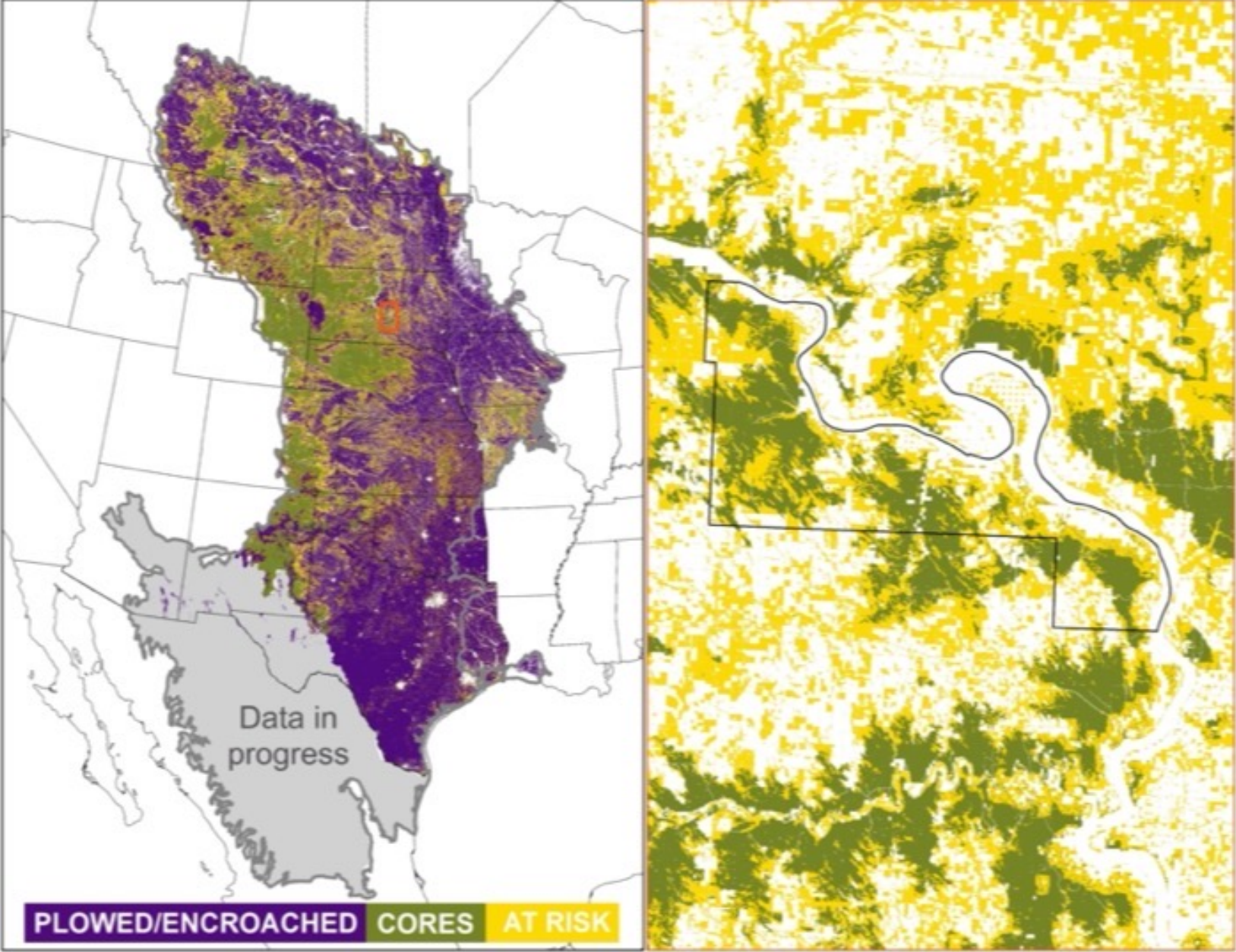


**“Defend the Core”**

**Landowner Vision  
for Phase I  
91K acres and growing**



# The Call to Action: Phase I - Defend the Core

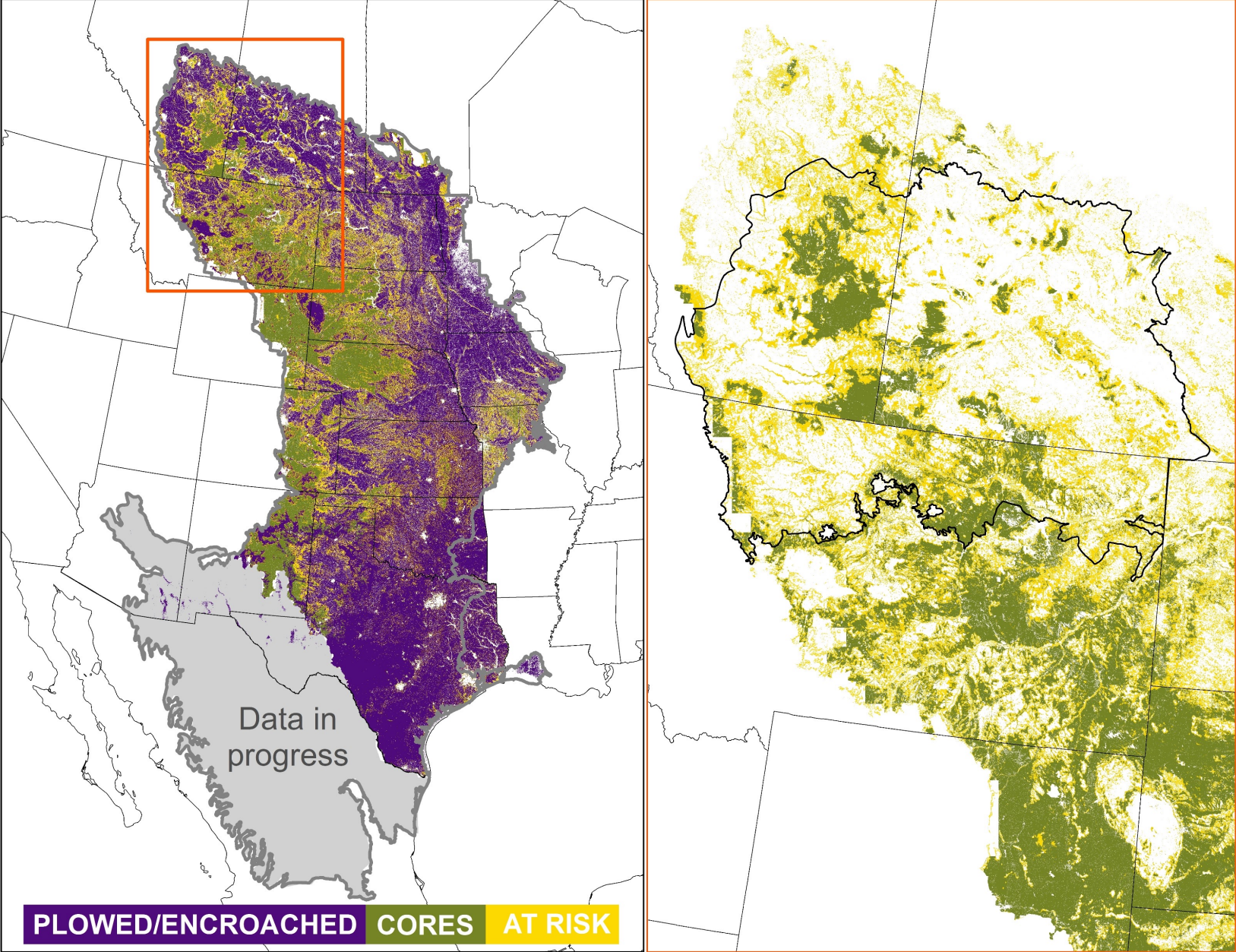


**“Defend the Core”**

**Lower Brule Strategy  
Workshop held  
23 February 2022**



# The Call to Action: Phase I - Defend the Core



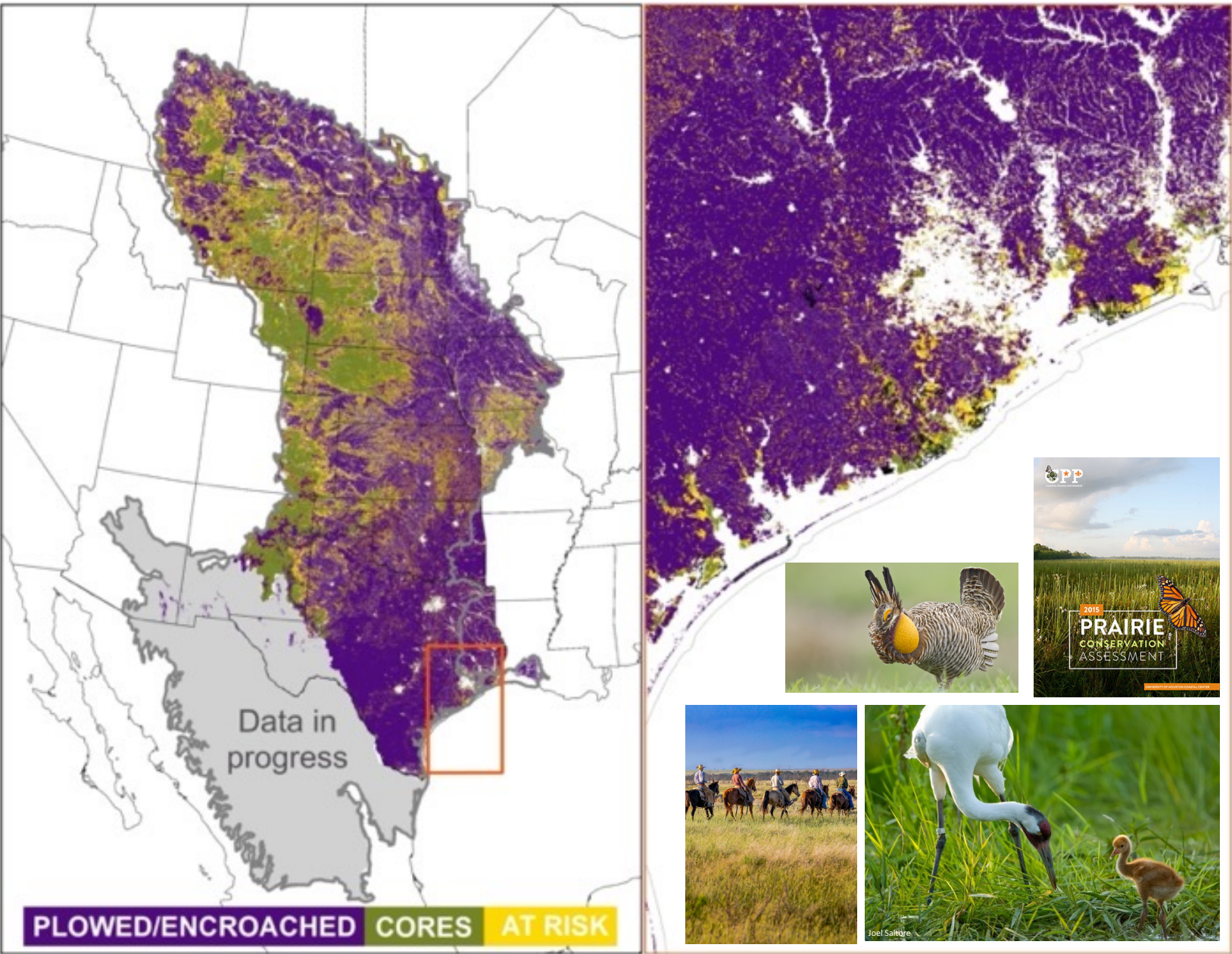
**“Defend the Core”**

**Established in 2016 by the  
Alberta Prairie  
Conservation Forum**

**“Enhance, Create, Connect”**



# The Call to Action: Phase II – Grow the Core and Mitigate Impacts

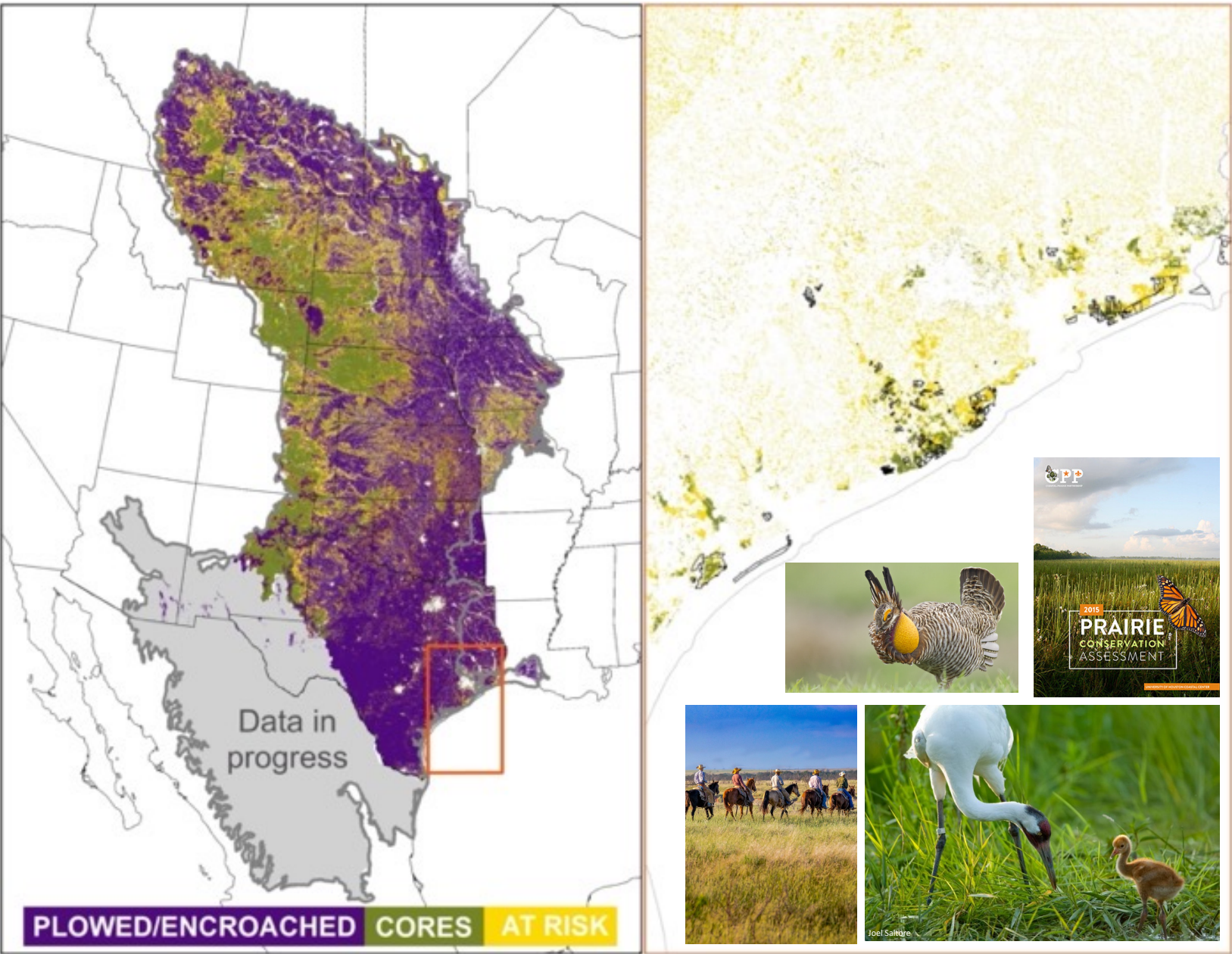


## TEXAS COASTAL PRAIRIE INITIATIVE

- Strategy to “Work in the Purple”
1. Defend remaining core areas (keep the green, green)
  2. Strategically grow and connect cores over time (turn purple to green/yellow at scales that matter)
  3. Mitigate undesirable impacts to humans and nature in transitioned landscapes (create realistic expectations; much of the purple will remain purple)



# The Call to Action: Phase II – Grow the Core and Mitigate Impacts



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***“It is time to come together as a diverse community to...”***

***- Central Grasslands Roadmap 2022 Summit***

