

# The Endangered Species Act & The Power of Partnerships

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# ESA and the Power of Partnerships

- Endangered Species Act
- Mono County's Approach
- Case Study: Bi-State Sage Grouse Cooperative Conservation
- Questions and Discussion



# Purpose of the ESA



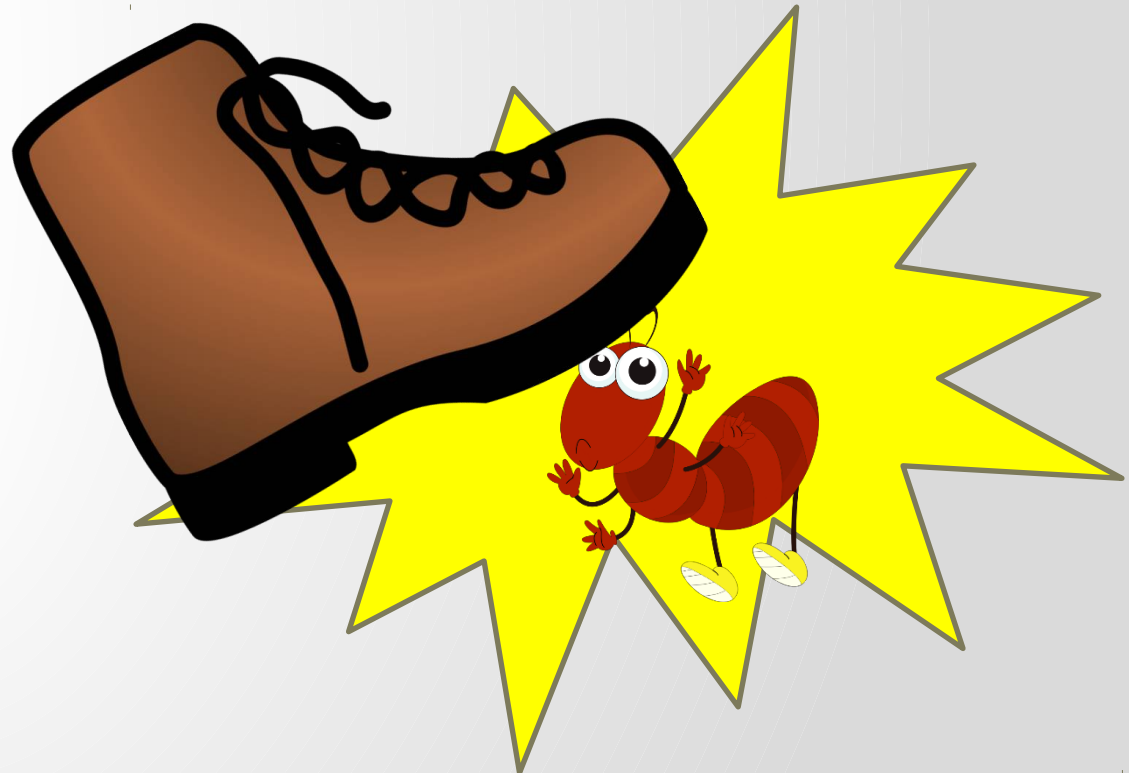
# Purpose of the ESA



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*To protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend*

- *Section 4: Listing & Critical Habitat*
- *Section 6: Cooperation with States*
- *Section 7: Agency Consultations*
- *Section 9: Private Take*
- *Section 10: Tools for Incidental Take*



# Purpose of the ESA



*UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better. It's not.*

*The Lorax, by Dr. Seuss*



# Mono County & the ESA

## Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep



Photo credit: [www.Flickrriver.com](http://www.Flickrriver.com)

# Mono County & the ESA

Sierra Nevada Yellow Legged Frog and Yosemite Toad, 2013-14



Photo: [www.californiaherps.com](http://www.californiaherps.com)

Photo: CDFW

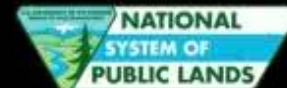


# Mono County & the ESA

- Best Available Science
- CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife High Mountain Lakes Project
- Instead of saying “No,” Focused on “How”
- Example: Sierra Nevada yellow legged frog
  - Supported listing
  - Supported critical habitat where: it’s possible to permanently eradicate non-native fish, and chytrid fungus is not present
  - Potential lakes identified by CDFW are in the backcountry
  - Front country lakes should be excluded from Critical Habitat

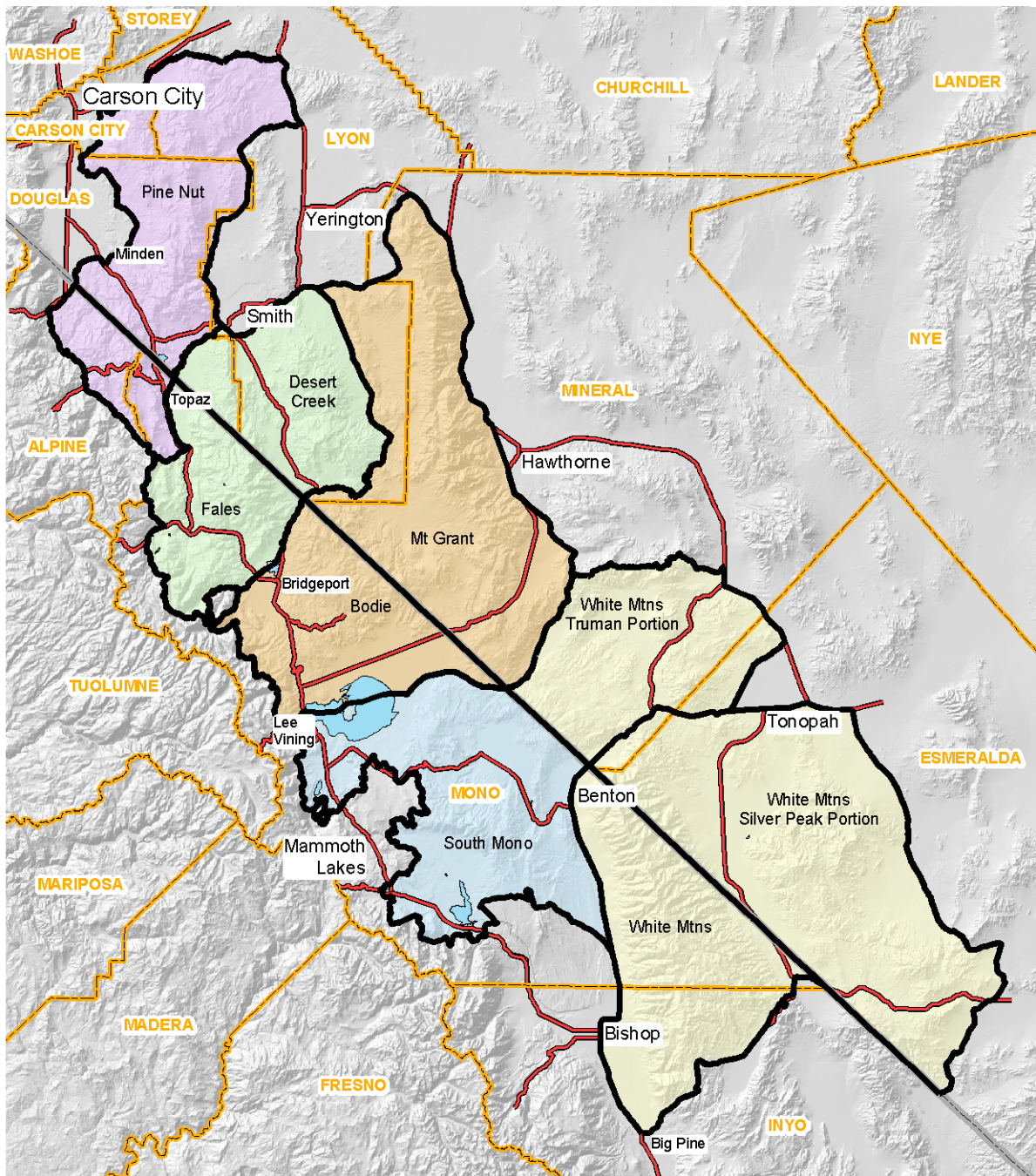
Sage Grouse Males Strut Their Stuff  
Spring 2012  
Mt. Biedeman Wilderness Study Area  
in the Bodie Hills

Video by Bob Wick



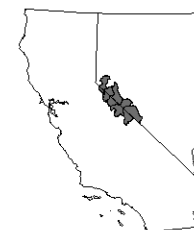
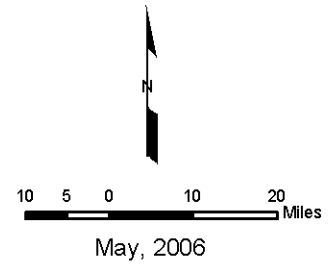
**Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of Greater Sage Grouse**





### Sage Grouse PMUs

- Pine Nut PMU
- Desert Creek-Fales PMU
- Bodie/Mount Grant PMUs
- South Mono PMU
- White Mountains PMU
- PMU Boundary
- County Line
- State Line
- Highways



Vicinity Map

# Bi-State Local Area Working Group

- Created in 2002 (CDFW, NDOW, BLM, USFS, NRCS, stakeholders)
- Consists of six PMU working groups, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and an Executive Oversight Committee (EOC)
- 2004 Conservation Plan
- 2012 Bi-State Action Plan (BSAP) for Conservation of the Greater Sage-grouse Bi-State Distinct Population Segment

*“It’s time to build conservation partnerships between the federal government and state governments, local communities and private landowners. In all these efforts, we see the future of conservation.”*

George W. Bush

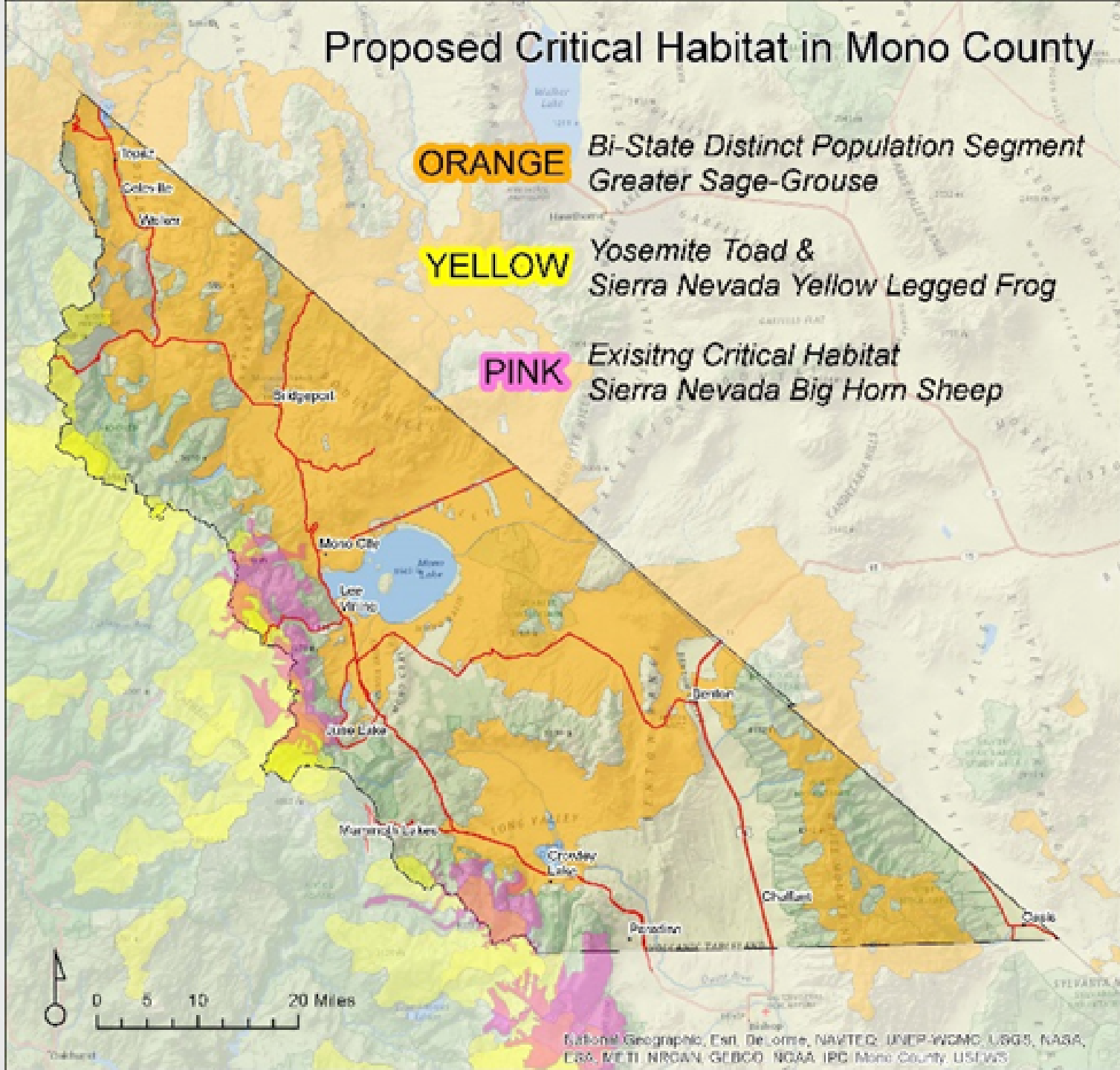


# Proposed Critical Habitat in Mono County

**ORANGE** *Bi-State Distinct Population Segment  
Greater Sage-Grouse*

**YELLOW** *Yosemite Toad &  
Sierra Nevada Yellow Legged Frog*

**PINK** *Existing Critical Habitat  
Sierra Nevada Big Horn Sheep*



# Bi-State Sage Grouse

- At the table since the Local Area Working Group formed, but on periphery
- Embraced science-based, applied conservation through Bi-State Action Plan
- Proposed listing in 2013 was a key moment in time

*The proposed critical habitat blanketed **82% of private lands** in Mono County, and would have been a very real and perceived **regulatory burden** that could have **crashed** our **land values** and **shattered** our fragile rural **economy**.*

# What Do We Do?



- AH HA! We have common ground with the agencies
  - We value our vast expanses of pristine land and diverse wildlife, and believe our small intimate communities can co-exist with a healthy landscape.
- AH HA!: Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts (PECE)
  1. Certainty of effectiveness: specific projects
  2. Certainty of implementation: funding \$\$\$\$
- We can help with that!
  - Political lobbying for funding with local reps and in D.C.
  - Identified/committed to specific County projects & funding
  - Reporting and summaries of actions and commitments
  - Outreach and education, interagency coordination
  - Impacts of development on private lands
  - Lek counting for population monitoring

# BSAP Accomplishments 2012-15

- Pinyon Juniper Expansion: 15,319 acres
- Wildfire: 11,639 acres
- Urbanization: 10,208 acres
- Habitat-based Threats: 1,187 acres
- Infrastructure: 425.7 miles of linear features
- Grazing: 441 acres + 10 sites/areas
- Invasive and Noxious Species: 103 acres
- Long list of collaborative efforts & programs, including research & data, outreach & education, multi-agency coordination, changes to regulatory mechanisms, refinement of conservation & monitoring tools, etc.
- Project List = \$38 million price tag





# BSAP Commitments



- \$41.9 million committed by agencies
- Commitment of specific projects and programs, subject to refinement via adaptive management
- Commitment letters available at [http://www.ndow.org/Nevada\\_Wildlife/Sage\\_Grouse/Bi-State\\_FWS/](http://www.ndow.org/Nevada_Wildlife/Sage_Grouse/Bi-State_FWS/)



# Key Components

- Foundation of engaged stakeholders (LAWG)
- Science-based and adaptive (TAC)
- Coordinated interagency approach (EOC)
- Sustained collaborative effort, mature
- “Roadmap to Conservation” – FWS 2013





# Key Components

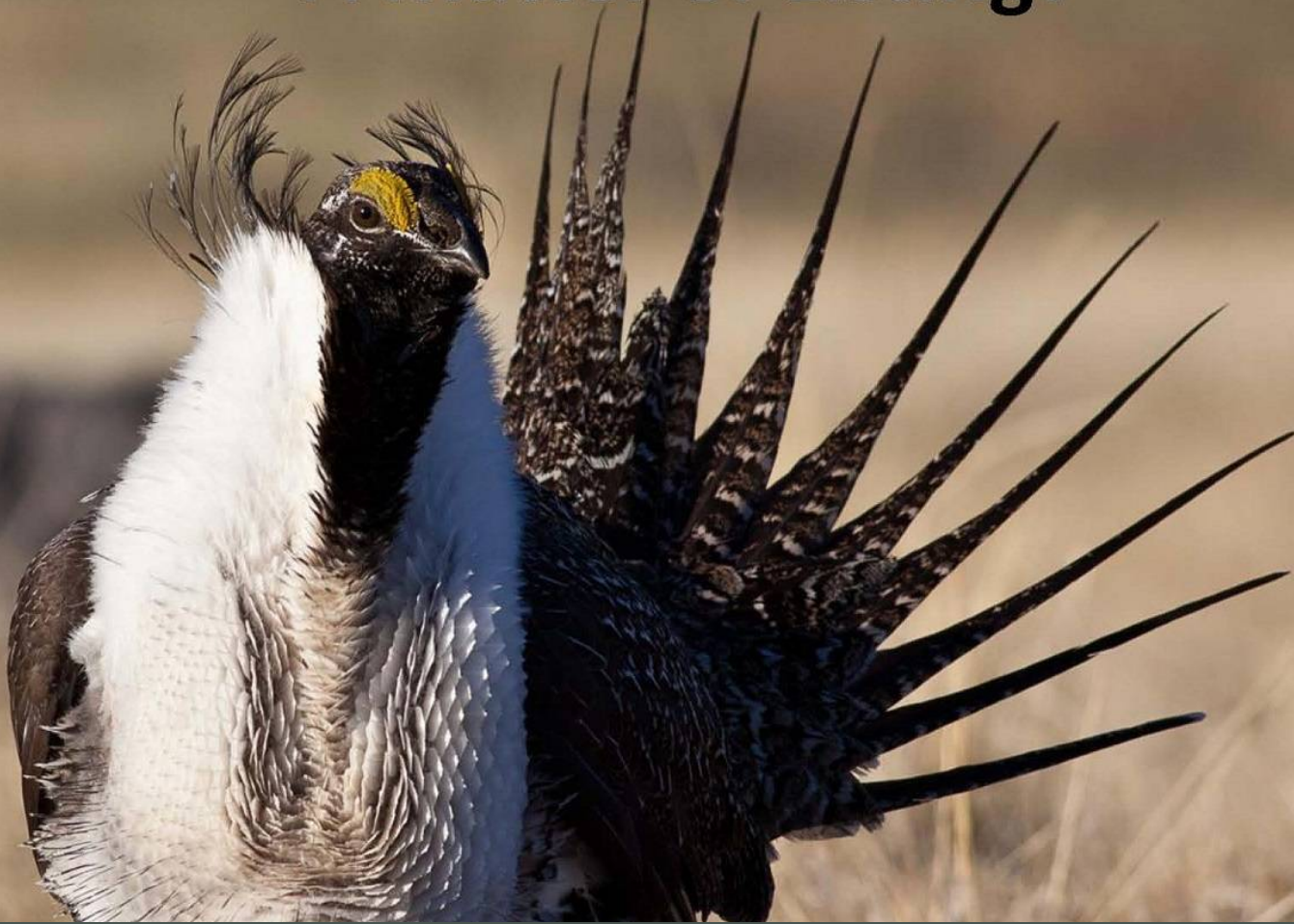


- Science provides the underpinnings, but
- Applied Conservation is an Art
- Implemented in a social & regulatory context
- Hard on the problem, easy on the people
- Shared Vision, Common Ground



“A conservationist is one who is humbly aware that with each stroke [of the axe] he is writing his signature on the face of the land.” Aldo Leopold

# A Matter of Listing?



*“Conservation and rural-life policies are really two sides of the same policy; and down at the bottom this policy rests upon the fundamental law that neither man nor nation can prosper unless, in dealing with the present, thought is steadily given for the future.”* Theodore Roosevelt

# The Local Perspective

- If the Bi-State DPS had been listed, Mono County would have been forced out of a conservation role and into a regulatory role.
  - Refer landowners to USFWS and other agencies
  - Focus on complying with regulations and avoiding legal exposure
  - Reality of private land regulation





# The Listing Question

- Proposed Rule to list as Threatened – FWS 2013
- Proposed Critical Habitat ~ 1.9 million acres
- Secretary Jewell Announcement – April 21, 2015
- Withdrawal of Proposed Rule to List – April 23, 2015
- Based on PECE Review of Bi-State Action Plan



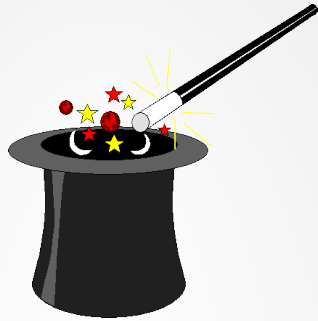
“Conservation is not merely a thing to be enshrined in outdoor museums, but a way of living on land.”

Aldo Leopold

*The voluntary commitment and dedication of agencies and people can be effective without federal regulation.*



NOT



or



# The Power of Partnerships:





# Questions & Discussion

