

Collaborative Partnerships for Long-term Stewardship

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Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association

A wide-angle photograph of a vast, flat grassland landscape under a clear blue sky. The foreground is filled with tall, golden-brown grasses, while the middle ground shows a mix of green and brown patches. In the distance, low mountains are visible on the horizon.

- Association Overview -
- Collaborative Conservation -
- Three Examples -
- Lessons Learned -

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Snapshot

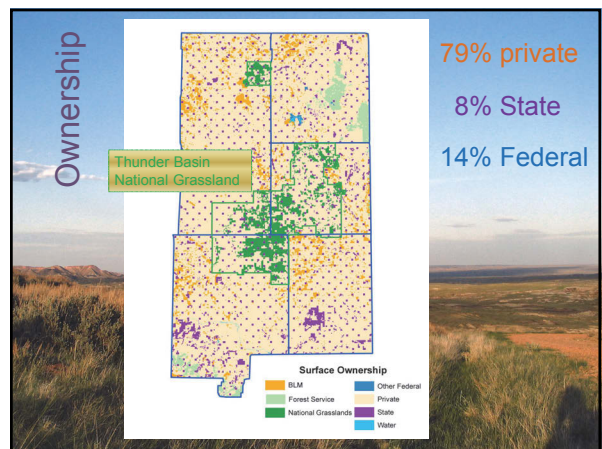
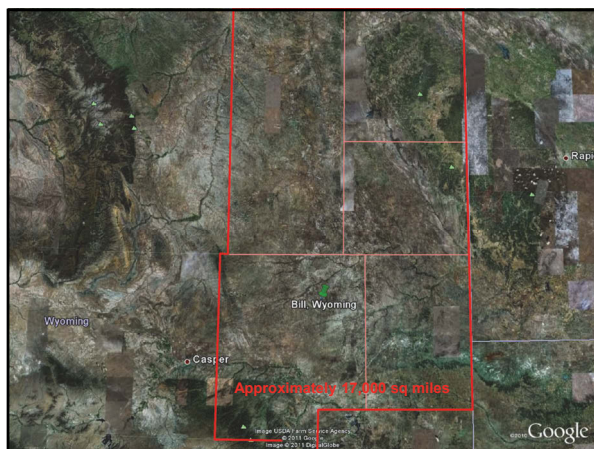
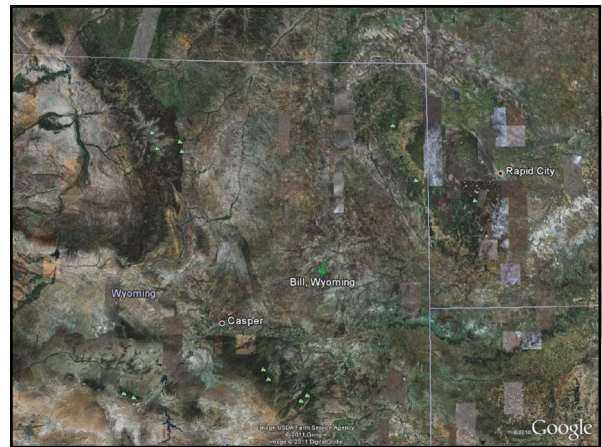
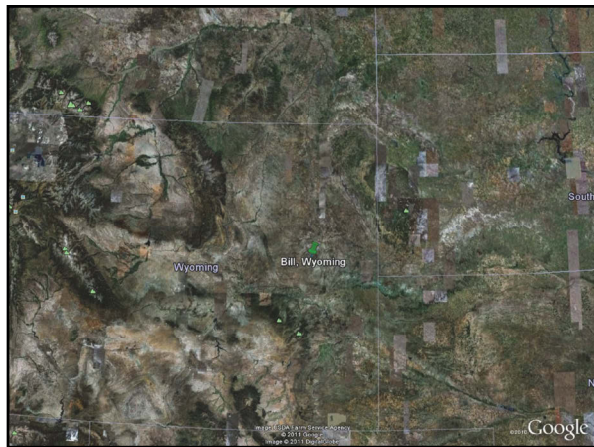
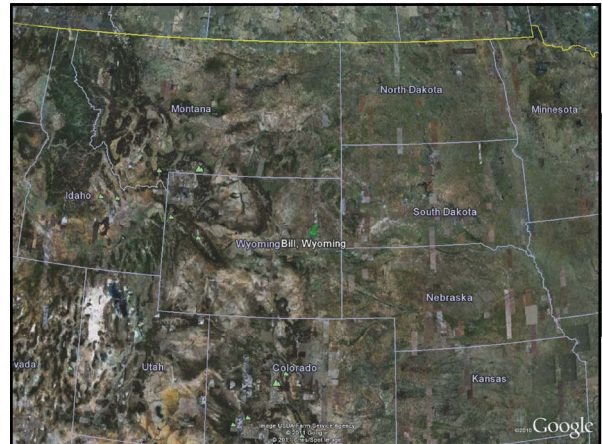
- Private, grass-roots organization
- Formed in 1999
- Incorporated as a non-profit in 2002
- Land-owner (ranching & energy) led
- 27 members: 16 ranches, 8 coal mines, 1 O&G, 2 small acreages

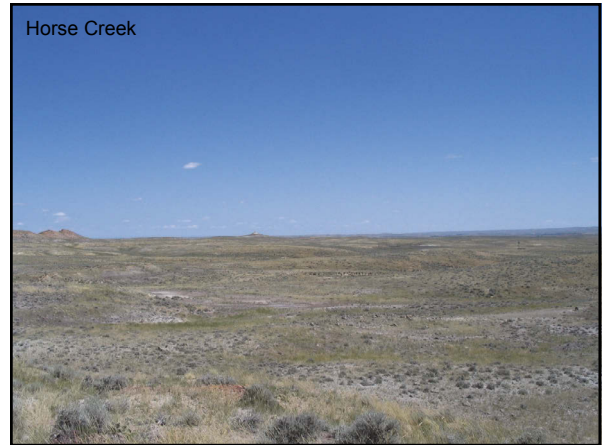
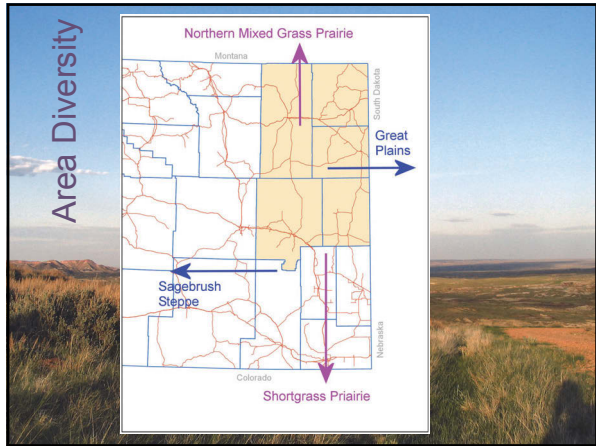
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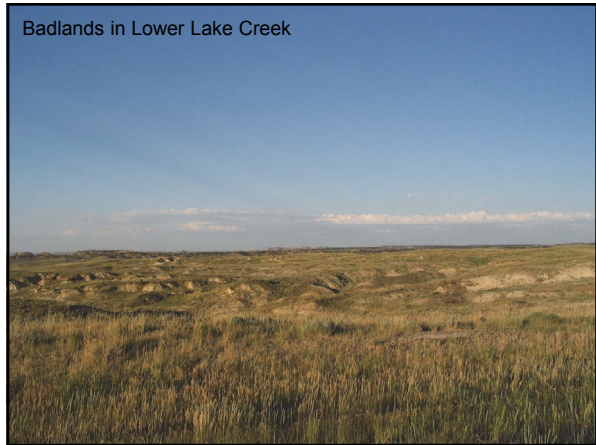
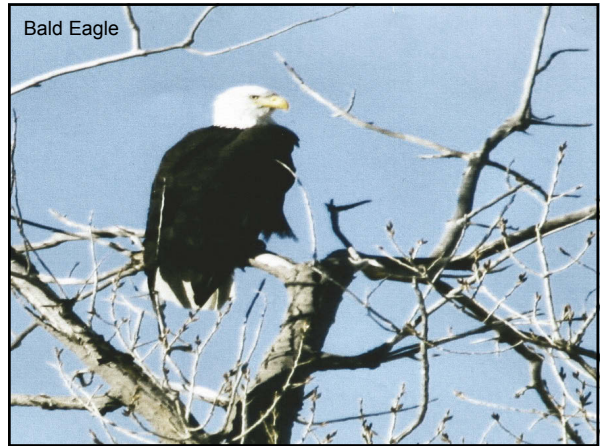
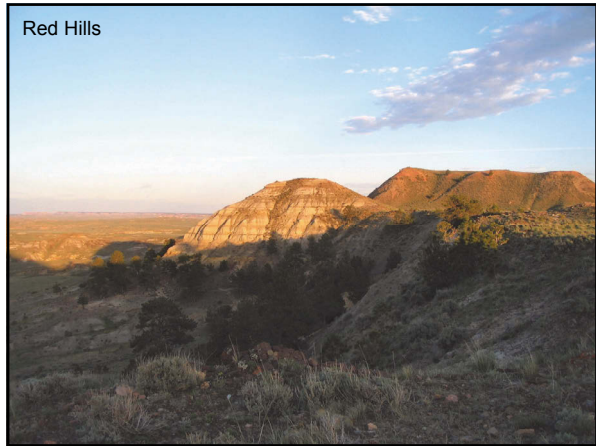
Area Location

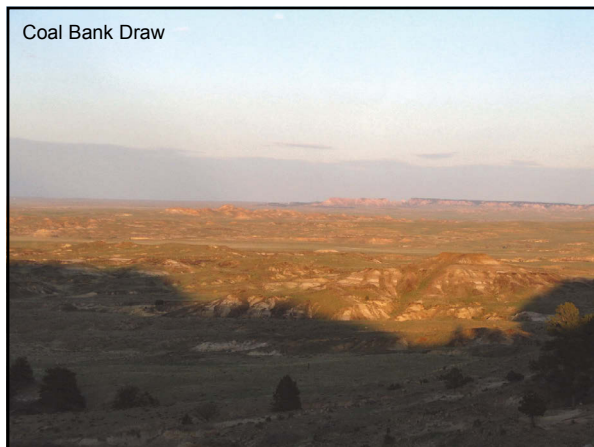
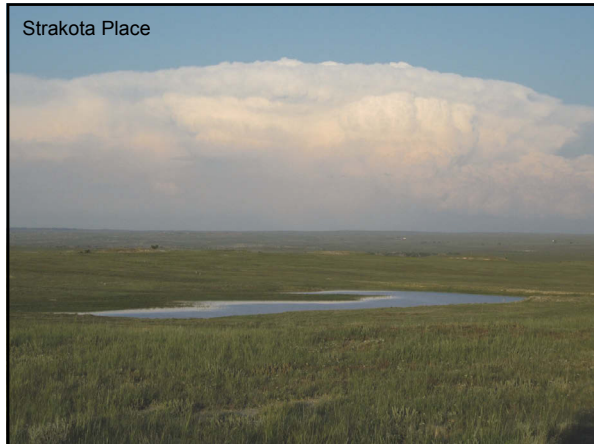
Where in the world is Thunder Basin???

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Association Mission

*Develop a responsible, common sense, science-based approach to **long-term management** of private lands.*

*Provide for the habitat needs of **native species** occurring in this mixed-ownership landscape through the application of an ecosystem-based approach.*

Current Partnership Focus

Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for private lands and Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) for lands with a Federal nexus

Coverage area: 17,000 sq. miles (78% private, 14% Federal, 8% State)
>90% native rangeland
Activities covered: Agricultural production, recreation, coal mining, and oil & gas development

Eight covered species

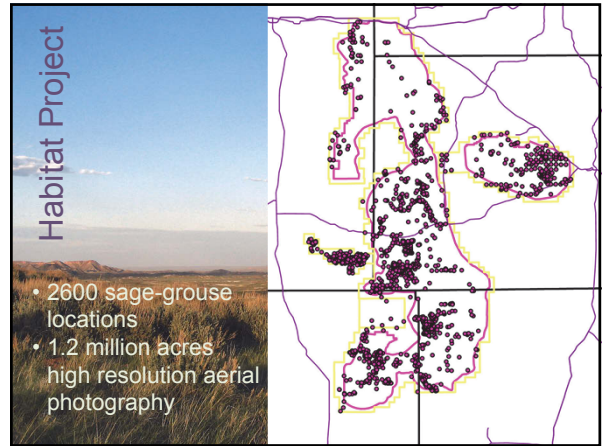
Shortgrass species assemblage – select from 60 conservation measures covering

- ✓ Black-tailed prairie dogs
- ✓ Burrowing owl
- ✓ Mountain plover
- ✓ Ferruginous hawk

Sagebrush obligate assemblage – select from 100 conservation measures covering

- ✓ Greater sage-grouse
- ✓ Brewer's sparrow
- ✓ Sage sparrow
- ✓ Sage thrasher





Past Cooperative Conservation

- ⊙ \$2.2 million invested over the past 10 years to protect or enhance existing habitat
- ⊙ 35,000 acres treated for annual brome control
- ⊙ 3,900 acres of high structure developed in sage-grouse core areas
- ⊙ 760 vegetation transects established and detailed plant information collected
- ⊙ data collection with 68 lek cameras

... a collaborative effort with

- ⊙ land & wildlife management agencies
- ⊙ NGOs and private sector participants
- ⊙ academia & research groups



Land & wildlife management

- ⊙ Bureau of Land Management
- ⊙ Conservation and Weed & Pest Districts
- ⊙ County Commissioners
- ⊙ Natural Resource Conservation Service
- ⊙ US Fish & Wildlife Service
- ⊙ US Forest Service
- ⊙ WY Game & Fish Department
- ⊙ WY Natural Resource Sub-cabinet



NGOs and private sector

- ⊙ Agricultural producer members
- ⊙ Alpha Coal West
- ⊙ Biodiversity Conservation Alliance
- ⊙ Buckskin Mining Company
- ⊙ Cloud Peak Energy
- ⊙ Defenders of Wildlife
- ⊙ Environmental Defense Fund
- ⊙ Humane Society of the United States



NGOs and private sector

- ⊙ Mule Deer Foundation
- ⊙ National Wild Turkey Federation
- ⊙ The Nature Conservancy
- ⊙ Peabody Energy
- ⊙ Private Grazing Lands Council
- ⊙ Thunder Basin Grazing Association
- ⊙ World Wildlife Fund
- ⊙ WY Wildlife Federation



Academia & research

- ⊙ Agricultural Research Service
- ⊙ Audubon Wyoming
- ⊙ National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
- ⊙ Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory
- ⊙ Sand County Foundation
- ⊙ Sonoran Institute
- ⊙ University of Wyoming



Working Definitions

Collaborative
the act of working together with one or more people in order to achieve a shared objective

Partnerships
cooperative relationships between two or more people or organizations that are involved in the same activity



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Collaborative Examples

- USDA - Forest Service
- Environmental Defense Fund
- University of Wyoming



USDA - Forest Service

Shared Objective: Wildlife and livestock management within the commingled Thunder Basin National Grassland

Tools for Collaborative Partnership: Two annual planning meetings, field tours, Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate data sharing, Wyden Authority for shared resources, numerous phone calls & emails

Length: 10+ years

Stability: Total change in personnel at all levels



Environmental Defense Fund

Shared Objective: Development of wildlife and habitat conservation plans appropriate for eastern Wyoming

Tools for Collaborative Partnership: Annual information sharing meeting, occasional phone calls & emails

Length: 10+ years

Stability: Little change in personnel



University of Wyoming

Shared Objective: Wildlife, livestock, and habitat management in eastern Wyoming. Current emphasis on control of invasive species.

Tools for Collaborative Partnership: Annual information sharing meeting, field tours, joint field work, phone calls & emails, one-on-one meetings

Length: 4 years

Stability: No change in personnel to date



TBGPEA membership

Shared Objective: Wildlife, livestock, and habitat management in eastern Wyoming. Ability to continue current operations.

Tools for Collaborative Partnership: Annual meeting, monthly meetings, workshops, field tours, phone calls, one-on-one consultations

Length: 2+ years

Stability: Some change in personnel, especially with energy companies

Lessons Learned



