

Chapter 1. Agricultural Conversion

Issue 1.1	Converted rangelands don't provide adequate GrSG habitat.				
Objective 1.1.1	Develop technologies and share information for establishing native vegetation suitable for GrSG habitat in CRP, cropland, and large monocultural non-native grass plantings. Encourage GrSG habitat restoration on private land.				
Reference Number	Conservation Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Implementation	Effectiveness
1.1.1.1	Evaluate whether past vegetation restoration applications in CRP, cropland, and large monocultural non-native grass plantings serve as suitable GrSG habitat. Produce a report that documents these efforts. [See Research Strategy 21.1.2.1]	Multiple Parties	Begin by 2015		
1.1.1.2	Design, plant, evaluate, and report on field trials for establishing desired vegetation to serve as GrSG habitat in CRP, cropland, and large monocultural non-native grass plantings.	Multiple Parties	Begin by 2010	CPW: General - This strategy is being achieved at a large scale through multiple partnership and individual agency efforts throughout the state. CPW, NRCS, UCEPC, UP, and energy companies have designed and planted many experimental plots and are currently monitoring plant establishment. CPW has completed construction of a native seed warehouse to encourage the development and to store produced native seed stocks. CPW has also hired two Habitat Coordinators that are active in furthering development of native seed trials on the western slope of Colorado. MP, NP, NESR, PPR: Crop land and CRP not issues.	
1.1.1.3	Arrange field trips for land managers to observe the results of different treatment methods in CRP, cropland, and large monocultural non-native grass plantings that may provide GrSG habitat.	NRCS	Begin by 2008	NRCS: 1) Meeker NRCS Field Office participated in Conoco Phillips Wildlife Management Plan meeting with other agencies (July 2012) 2) NRCS staff met with Conoco Phillips, CPW and landowners (August 2012) 3) Districts hosted a tour for state and federal land managers, legislators, NGOs, and landowners to explore impact of wild horses in GSG habitat (July 2012). 4) NRCS range class for new biologist focused on property with summer GSG habitat. 5) District NRCS boards have met with CPW biologists 5 times to discuss GSG issues (June / July 2010, Nov. 2012).	NRCS: 1) 20 land managers attended meetings. Outcome = trial of service berry treatment in Piceance Basin. 2) Veg sampling conducted in preparation for juniper and service berry treatment. 3) 48 people attended tour. 4) Trainees prepared to manage for GSG on 2500 acres. 5) More landowner meetings planned for 2013.
1.1.1.4	Purchase and maintain equipment necessary for restoration of GrSG habitat in CRP, cropland, and large monocultural non-native grass plantings.	NRCS	2010 and ongoing		
1.1.1.5	Work with FSA to ensure CRP program policy supports improvement of enrolled land with developed technologies.	Multiple Parties	2008 and ongoing	CPW: NWCO - CPW has initiated habitat restoration efforts on CRP properties in partnership with FSA, NRCS, and the Routt County Soil Conservation District. Restoration includes tilling and reseeding CRP fields with GrSG suitable seed mixes. Restoration will allow these properties to compete advantageously for re-enrollment in the CRP program. MP, NP, NESR, PPR: Crop land and CRP not issues.	CPW: has initiated habitat restoration efforts on 5 CRP properties in Routt County, in partnership with FSA, NRCS, and the Routt County Soil Conservation District.

Reference Number	Conservation Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Implementation	Effectiveness
1.1.1.6	Help design and fund sagebrush restoration projects (see "Habitat Enhancement" strategy, pg. 349 and CCP Appendix F, "Available Funding Opportunities for GrSG Habitat Conservation").	NRCS	Ongoing	NRCS: field office in Meeker implemented 110 acres of restoration. CPW: CPW has completed a number of habitat enhancement projects, alone and with partners, and has actively participated in designing and funding a number of additional projects. See Appendix A: Habitat Treatments See Appendix B: Summary of Expenditures on GrSG in Colorado 2006-2012	CPW: has secured approximately \$1.4 million of SCTF funds for GrSG habitat enhancement projects. CPW hired a sagebrush steppe habitat coordinator in 2011 who provides additional project coordination, design, and implementation functions for CPW and partners.
ISSUE 1.2 Some CRP lands that are important to GrSG are not eligible for re-enrollment in the program, raising concern that those acres will be lost as GrSG habitat.					
OBJECTIVE 1.2.1 For CRP lands that are important to GrSG, pursue opportunities to keep the habitat intact for GrSG.					
Reference Number	Conservation Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Implementation	Effectiveness
1.2.1.1	CDOW and NRCS will work with FSA to have vacant/unknown, potential, and occupied GrSG habitat in Colorado designated as a priority area in the CRP. This will increase the probability that cropland will remain in CRP and will continue to serve as GrSG habitat.	CPW	2008 and ongoing	CPW: General - CPW has worked with FSA and NRCS to include GrSG habitats as a priority area for distribution of Farm Bill habitat funds. MP, NESR, NP, PPR - Crop land and CRP are not issues. See Appendix C: SAFE Map	CPW: In 2012, NRCS/FSA expanded the enrollment area for the CRP-SAFE program to include nearly all current CRP contracts within GRS range in the NWCO population in Moffat and Rio Blanco counties.
1.2.1.2	When CRP lands become un-enrolled in the program, cooperating agencies will pool resources to offer monetary incentives to maintain those lands in similar condition as CRP and to provide GrSG habitat.	CPW	2008-2015	CPW: NWCO - The CRP enhancement work began in 2010 and will continue until at least 2014. Conducting enhancements increases likelihood of re-enrollment because the re-enrollment evaluation includes "wildlife points" awarded where monocultural or depauperate stands are diversified and seeded with species important for GRS food and/or cover. MP, NP, NESR, PPR: Crop land and CRP not issues.	CPW: has cost-shared to enhance approximately 2,385 acres of sodbound CRP.