



## Endangered Species Act

KFB Issue Engagement

May 2017

*In an effort to enhance engagement on issues that face the farmers and ranchers of Kansas Farm Bureau, the KFB board of directors has implemented an issue engagement project. Approximately once a month, a new topic will be covered by a board member, and our goal is to receive feedback from you, our members.*

*After reviewing the information, members will have an opportunity to provide input, ask questions and further engage on these issues. Your input will go directly to KFB's board of directors.*

Watch an informational video about the Endangered Species Act by [clicking here](#).

During the final weeks of the Obama administration, several key changes to the way the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) deals with Endangered Species were enacted. One key change allows USFWS to ignore private efforts to protect and conserve a species by only recognizing state sponsored efforts. This change means that any private efforts to protect or conserve a species would not be considered when making a listing decision. This rule goes against the very nature of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which is charged with protecting and recovering threatened or endangered species.

The second key change, late in the Obama administration, allowed for critical habitat to be determined to protect a species even if the species isn't currently present on the property or in the area and even if the habitat in the area is unsuited for the species. This means landowners could be required to host a species that has never been present on the property, and does not have the correct habitat for the species. Does this mean private property right holders could be required to host a species never before seen on a property and be required to change the property so it is now habitat for this species? Previously, critical habitat determinations were made in areas of suitable habitat where the species currently live.

The ESA is an extremely powerful law that has devastated industries, ruined lives, closed businesses and left people unemployed and restricted private property rights since its inception in 1973. The law allows USFWS to only consider the benefit of the species when making a listing decision. The impact on the local economy, private citizens or property rights does not have to be considered and currently isn't considered when making a listing decision. Whole regions of the country already have been devastated by species protection. Kansas Farm Bureau has been concerned ESA activities regarding the lesser prairie chicken in Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico and Colorado could devastate the economy and county governments throughout the region.

Since the ESA was enacted, more than 1,652 species have been listed. Of those, less than 2 percent have been removed from protection. The ESA has been terrible at doing the job it was passed to do – protect and recover species. It has, intended or not, been very good at hurting whole industries, regions and people.

The ESA has yet to be changed since it was signed into law in 1973. The time to reform the law has come. Citizens, our rural way of life and our local communities and businesses matter and should be considered.



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We must speak up and let congress know the ESA is beyond time for reform. Please help us by:

- Contacting your Representative and Senators and ask them to support ESA reform.
- Providing Kansas Farm Bureau and your representatives with real-life examples of how this legislation has impacted your life.
- Signing up for Action Alerts from Kansas Farm Bureau by [clicking here](#) to stay connected and informed.

Please [click on this link](#) to provide your input to the Kansas Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

Current KFB Policy:

### ***Threatened and Endangered Species***

### **CNR-11**

*As an alternative to placing species on threatened or endangered lists, we support developing conservation management plans that will increase or maintain the population and make listing unnecessary. Conservation management plans should be the result of a cooperative effort by landowners, agricultural producers, wildlife managers, conservation technicians and the appropriate federal and state agencies. Any conservation management plan should be voluntary and provide incentives to private landowners for protecting or enhancing habitat for species needing protection. Non-participants in voluntary species conservation management plans should not be held to the standards of the plan.*

*Listing a species as threatened, endangered or in need of conservation should require documentation that the species proposed to be protected is actually present in a clearly defined geographic area, and is dependent for survival on habitat in that location. Sound scientific data supporting the inclusion of a species shall receive wide dissemination to landowners and private organizations representing the rights of these landowners.*

*Any agency, organization or person requesting a listing for a species in need of conservation, threatened or endangered, or requesting critical habitat designation, should be required to provide and fund an environmental impact report with emphasis on the economic impact of the action.*

*Before any species is placed on the state or federal threatened and endangered species list, the following criteria must be met:*

- 1. Hold public hearings;*
- 2. Approval by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism;*
- 3. Compliance with federal and state review process and statutory requirements; and*
- 4. Evaluation of any agency program or project that would be impacted by such designation and extent of the impacts.*

*A public hearing should be required in the area affected and an economic impact statement developed before any animal, plant or marine species is permitted to be introduced or reintroduced by any governmental agency or non-governmental organization.*

*Mitigation or acreage replacement measures should take into account cost/benefit ratios, and the economic impact of any proposal for mitigation or acreage replacement. Mitigation or replacement of habitat should be required only in areas where conversion of the habitat is significant in relationship to the total amount of habitat available in the area.*

*We encourage appropriate authorities to allow landowners to remove gravel from gravel bars where such activity does not pose a significant threat to a threatened or endangered species or their habitat.*

*We oppose the addition of prairie dogs to the endangered or protected species list.*