



New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Pronghorn Conservation Recognition Program



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Pronghorn Conservation Recognition Program (PCRP) is designed to incentivize and recognize participating landowners who create and maintain significant habitat enhancements for pronghorn on their private deeded property.

Private landowners who are conducting and maintaining substantial habitat improvements and/or land management practices on their deeded lands that directly and significantly benefit pronghorn may be considered for special recognition. Only those projects as determined by the department to be relevant and beneficial to pronghorn will be considered. Landowners must submit an application and once approved, develop a pronghorn conservation and management plan in cooperation with the department. Upon approval of the plan, the landowner may be granted alternative season dates as approved by the department. Landowners accepted into and participating in the PCRP are required to update their conservation management plan annually to be considered for continued participation.

This document is designed as a guide to participants wishing to apply for the program. It is intended to provide basic information on the types of projects accepted, identify components of a project that are most likely to have a meaningful impact for pronghorn and provide important deadlines.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of this program is to recognize and incentivize landowners who are maintaining and/or creating significant habitat enhancements that will benefit pronghorn habitat in New Mexico as outlined in **19.31.15.10 (A) NMAC**.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, private properties must have submitted an application and be working under an approved conservation management plan. This plan will specify the qualifying habitat improvements for pronghorn that must be ongoing on the property. Properties must also submit annual updates as required by the Department in order to continue participating in the PCRP.

Landowners must sign and abide by program guidelines set forth in the PCRP agreement.

QUALIFYING HABITAT PROJECTS

The following habitat projects have been identified by the Department of Game and Fish (DGF) as relevant and beneficial to pronghorn in New Mexico. This list includes projects that provide benefit to pronghorn.

- **WATER** is of critical importance to all wildlife species. The distribution and availability of water for pronghorn varies from one part of the state to another. The development of

water projects in parts of the state where water is scarce or sparsely distributed will constitute a higher priority than water development where water is more abundant or widely distributed.

Water projects that provide water year round will be of highest value. Multiple water projects on a property will also increase the priority in this category.

- **FENCE MODIFICATIONS** that are wildlife friendly can be important projects that decrease both wildlife mortality and fence damage. While fence modification is not increasing or improving habitat directly, it does enhance habitats by making them more accessible for pronghorn.

Modifications that may be considered include: wire spacing, use of smooth wire in specific areas, removal of net wire fencing, wildlife friendly cross-fencing to facilitate rotational grazing of cattle, and removal of old fencing materials no longer in use.

- **THINNING/REMOVAL OF UNDESIRABLE VEGETATION** can be important for the reestablishment of desirable forage and native plants.

Thinning or removal of undesirable vegetation may be accomplished by mechanical means such as mowing, chemical means or through prescribed burning. By increasing the total number of acres affected the priority of these projects may be increased.

- **AGRICULTURE CROP PRODUCTION** is critical to New Mexico's economy. Due to the free roaming nature of pronghorn, agricultural crops are occasionally utilized as forage. Therefore existing agriculture crop production can be considered for the PCR. This allows landowners who are willing to allow wildlife access to agricultural crops to be recognized.

(Agricultural damage complaints may be better served through the DGF Depredation Program where certain farms may qualify for exclusionary elk fencing.)

- **RIPARIAN DEVELOPMENT/PROTECTION** is important for clean water and erosion control. Many wildlife species thrive in and around healthy riparian areas. Additionally all fish species benefit as healthy riparian areas ensure cleaner water, shade and stability of the river channel.

Riparian improvements for this program will only be considered for permanent streams/rivers with year-round water flow.

Projects considered will include adjacent erosion control projects, livestock exclusionary fencing, bank stabilization plantings or other approved bank stabilization projects.

- **FORAGE IMPROVEMENT/GRAZING MANAGEMENT** can provide many benefits to pronghorn and other wildlife as well as increased productivity for grazing livestock.

Projects considered for forage improvement could include planting, fertilizing and controlled burning. Food plots, while providing some forage benefits, may not be as valuable as a large scale grazing management plan or pasture planting project.

A structured grazing management plan which includes techniques such as seasonal or rotational grazing, or reduced numbers or elimination of livestock would also be considered.

The scope of forage improvement is also important. By increasing the acreage the priority of these projects will increase.

- **PREDATOR CONTROL** prior to fawning season has proven to increase pronghorn survival in some instances. While this practice can be considered, predator control is not a high priority for the PCRCP.
- **MAINTENANCE** of existing pronghorn habitat can be just as important as creating new habitat. The PCRCP recognizes landowners who maintain existing habitat as well as those implementing habitat improvements.

PROJECTS NOT CONSIDERED

Specific projects that will not be considered for the Pronghorn Conservation Recognition Program would include: plantings of exotic or invasive species as listed by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture; projects considered contrary to DGF policy and/or opinion.

AGREEMENT PERIOD AND REAPPLICATION

All approved applications and conservation management plans for the PCRCP will remain in effect for a period of 4 years with a mandatory annual update. Annual audits or on-site visits by DGF personnel may be required to assure expectations are being met. Agreements may be terminated by either party as outlined in the agreement terms.

At the end of the 4 year agreement period the landowner will be required to renew their application and management plans to remain in the PCRCP.

Alternate hunt dates created pursuant to the PCRCP must be included in the management plan and agreement. Changes to the proposed hunt dates may be considered on an annual basis prior to the deadline for application and must be submitted with the management plan annual update.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

All applications must be received or postmarked prior to April 1 of the application period.

The state pronghorn biologist and regional wildlife biologist will review applications and start working with the landowner to develop the conservation and management plan.

May 10, 2019 PCR Program Description