




**Linking  
Landscapes,  
Linking Missions**

*Brian McPeck, Deputy State Director  
New Partners for Smart Growth  
Conference  
Friday, January 27, 2006*

The Nature Conservancy

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The Nature Conservancy **Colorado's  
Changing landscape**

- Population Growth
- Development footprint
- Expansion of large-lot subdivisions
- Rapid turnover of agricultural land

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The Nature Conservancy **Smart Growth**

1. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Acres
2. Strengthen and Direct Development Toward Existing Communities
3. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration





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**Grassland Facts:**

Grasslands once covered more than a quarter of the planet  
Globally, grasslands are the least protected habitat type on Earth  
In North America, less than 1 percent of the tallgrass prairie survives and most of that is in isolated fragments  
Grassland birds that inhabit the prairie have shown steeper, more consistent decline than any other group of vertebrate animals  
Colorado has lost approximately 35% of its grasslands



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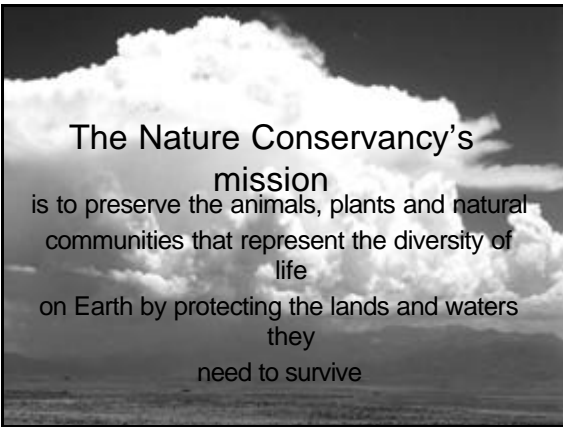
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The Nature Conservancy's  
mission

is to preserve the animals, plants and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive



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The Red-cockaded woodpecker:  
the Bird that stopped the army



"The army needed some incentives, rather than just the threat of noncompliance, and the main incentive here was to reduce or head off restrictions on training. The best way to do that was to find and restore habitat off the base...we figured out together we had more than enough common interest to work out the buffering solution."

Rick Studenmund,  
TNC Coordinator at Fort Bragg

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### Three Levels of Conservation Action



- 1. Local Protection: Buffering Fort Carson
- 2. Landscape-scale Conservation: Peak-to-Prairie
- 3. Regional Planning and Partnership Building: The Shortgrass Prairie Initiative

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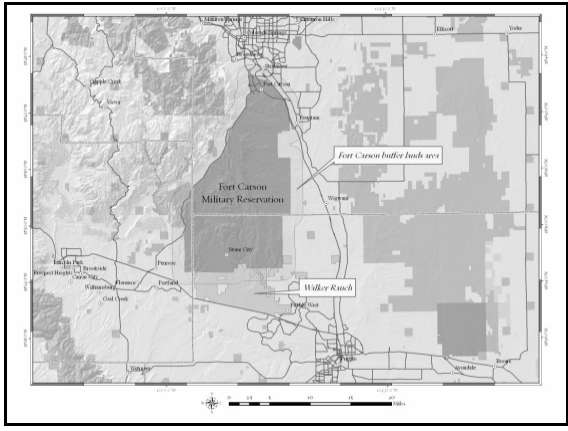
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### Shortgrass Prairie Animal Community



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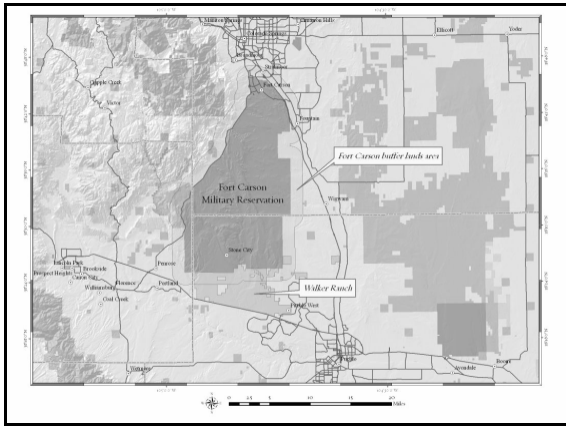
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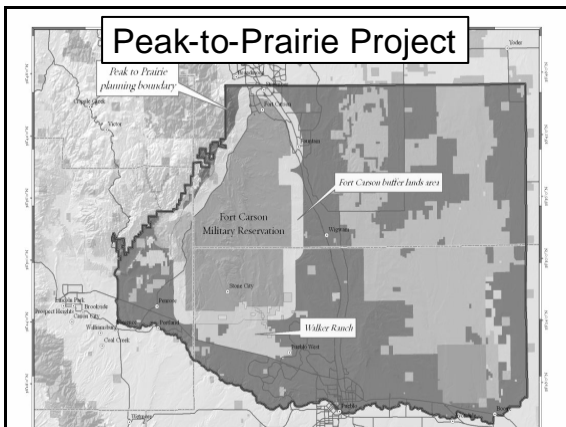
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### Peak-to-Prairie Partners

- U.S. Army
- NRCS
- Great Outdoors Colorado
- CO Dept of Transportation
- El Paso & Pueblo Counties
- State Land Board
- Local Conservation Districts
- Local ranching community
- Colorado Open Lands
- The Nature Conservancy



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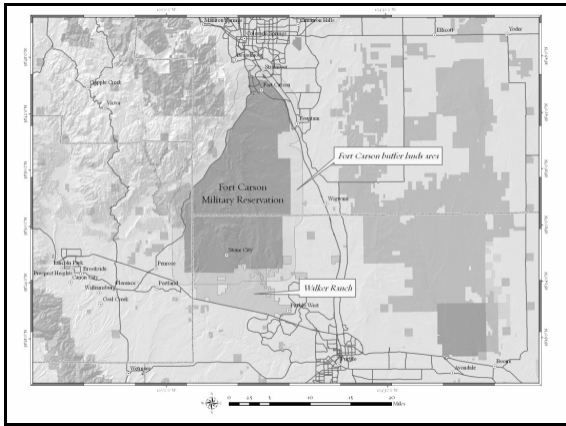
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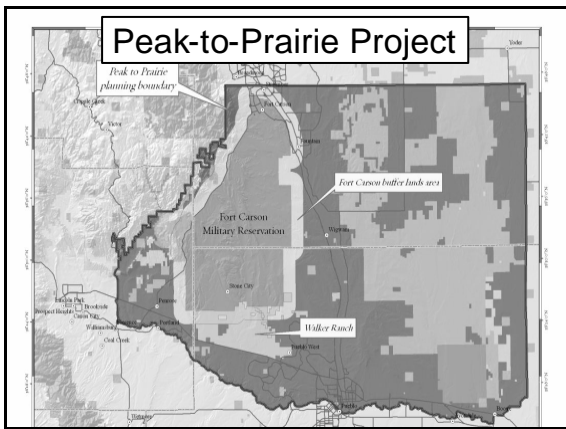
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### Shortgrass Prairie Partnership: A Common Goal



Promote & support **long-term survival** of all **native species, communities, ecological systems, & processes** to prevent **future restrictions on partner activities**

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### A Full Range of key grassland stakeholders

#### Federal Agencies

- Department of Defense
- EPA
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- NRCS
- USFS National Grasslands



#### NGOs

- The Nature Conservancy
- NatureServe
- Playa Lakes Joint Venture
- Rocky Mtn Bird Observatory
- CO Assoc of Conservation Districts
- Audubon Society
- Prairie Wings

#### State Agencies

- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- State Land Board
- CO Natural Heritage Program

#### Universities & consultants

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### Taking Action to Preserve the Shortgrass Prairie



- Common set of conservation funding priorities
- Regional species management plans
- Public land consolidation
- Farm Bill funding
- State Trust Land inventory
- Species banking
- Compatible energy development



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## Lessons learned

1. Good conservation can come from strange bedfellows
2. Think big
3. By working together we can get more done
4. "See things whole"

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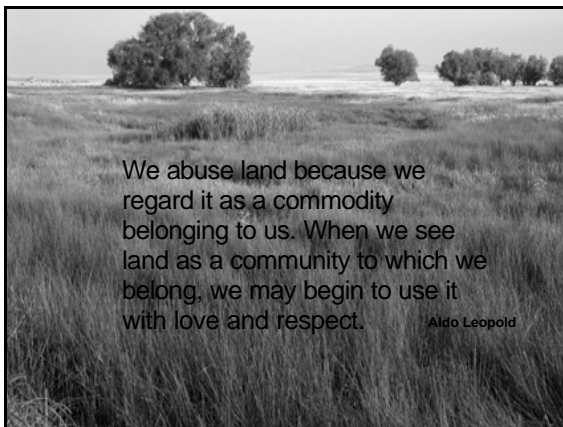
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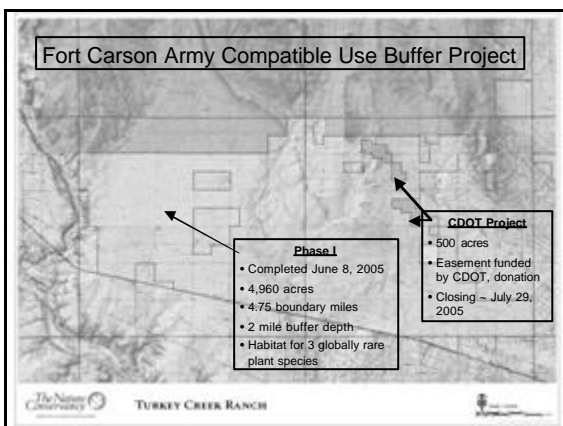
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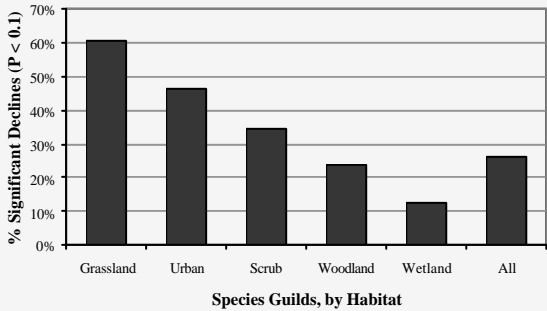
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Grassland birds - steepest, most geographically widespread declines of any birds in North America




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**The Nature Conservancy** Partnership



**Military training and preparedness**





**Preserve the diversity of life on Earth**



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**The Nature Conservancy** why is this place special...



the Chico Basin contains large expanses of sandsage and shortgrass prairie teeming with significant wildlife – all within an intact landscape mosaic







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### DoD - TNC Collaboration The Master Cooperative Agreement



- Species inventories & monitoring
- GIS and other data sharing
- Advice on natural resource plans
- Ecoregional conservation plans
- Hands-on conservation work
- Cooperative buffer land acquisitions
- Networking with regulators, NGOs
- Meet ESA goals
- Protect and restore biologically important areas
- Large areas in key ecoregions
- Contribute to ecoregional goals
- Develop and test best practices
- Model of successful partnership (leverage)

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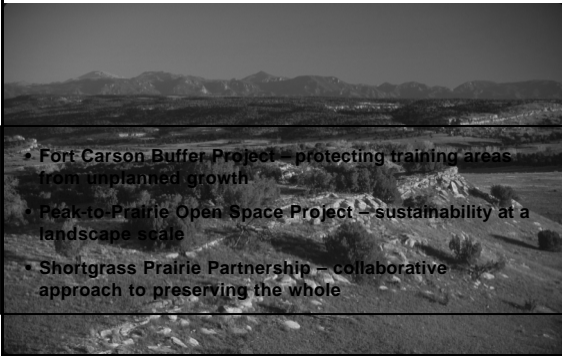
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### Ft. Carson-TNC Partnership



- Fort Carson Buffer Project – protecting training areas from unplanned growth
- Peak-to-Prairie Open Space Project – sustainability at a landscape scale
- Shortgrass Prairie Partnership – collaborative approach to preserving the whole

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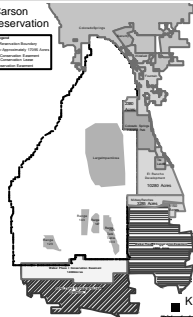


### Army Compatible Use Buffer Program



Fort Carson Military Reservation

- Active Military Installation
- Buffer Zone
- Other Areas



- Protecting important installations
- Respecting landowners
- Conserving our natural heritage

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## Setting Priorities in the Shortgrass Prairie

### What places could contribute to these goals?

Generate and evaluate alternative scenarios

### What is needed for their conservation?

Develop strategies for conservation action



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