

Helping Oklahoma's Endangered Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LPCH)



**Fence Marking Service Project
At
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC)
Cimarron Bluffs Wildlife Management Area
Saturday May 15, 2010
Come For The Day Or The Weekend**

Make a difference by improving prairie birds' habitat on May 15th. This is your opportunity to help improve habitat for Oklahoma's non-game bird species. Come spend a day or weekend at the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's Cimarron Bluff Wildlife Management Area located north of Woodward to mark fences. This is a service project that will help ODWC improve habitat for prairie birds including the endangered Lesser Prairie-Chicken on their management area. Contact Adrienne Holmes to sign up. Your helping hands are much needed!!!

Area Description: Cimarron Bluff WMA covers 3,430 acres in northeastern Harper County and is primarily rolling hills with high bluffs overlooking the west side of the Cimarron River. The area is dominated by mixed-grass prairie vegetation with isolated pockets of sand sagebrush, sand plum, and sumac occurring on red clay and gypsum soils. Cottonwood, hackberry, and western soapberry trees exist along the creeks flowing through the property. A limited amount of Cimarron River flood plain exists along the east boundary of the WMA, dominated by salt flats, interspersed with salt cedar.

Service Project Description: This trip begins at the south parking lot of ODWC Cimarron Bluffs WMA at 8:00 am. We will mark fences till about 11:30- noon and then take a long afternoon break. For those who want to stay, we will return to the WMA at 5:00 pm & mark fences till about 8:00 pm.

Contact: Adrienne Holmes if you are interested in attending.
adrianeholmes@sbcglobal.net Home: (405) 715-0811 Work (405) 935-8507

Level of Difficulty: Easy. This activity will involve walking over open NW Oklahoma grasslands to mark barbed wire fence. Snakes may be present.

Food: You are responsible for your own food. Bring a sack lunch and lots of water for Saturday.

Equipment: Leather gloves, long pants, hiking boots, insect spray, hiking stick, large bucket or reusable nylon bags to hold marking material, daypack with plenty of water, snacks, bag for your trash. Bring overnight gear if you plan to spend the weekend.

Outing Rules: No firearms or pets. Minors, 8 yr +, are allowed if accompanied by their legal guardian or prior arrangements have been made to get the liability waivers signed and they must be accompanied by an adult.

Emergency Contact Info: Contact the Woodward County Sheriff, 580-256-3264.

Driving Directions: Please print out the map of the Cimarron Bluff Wildlife Area. Approximately 28 miles north of Woodward in NE Harper County. The public has two access points to the WMA. The north parking area lies one mile east and one mile south of the junction of State Highway 34 and US Highway 64. The south access area is 1 mile east of State Highway 34 on Harper County Road 15. Cimarron Bluff WMA is approximately 15 miles east of Buffalo and 41 miles west of Alva on US Highway 64.

Overnight Accommodations: The University of Central Oklahoma's Selman Living Lab has made their bunkhouses and shower houses available on Friday and Saturday nights. The bunkhouses feature wooden bunks (i.e., no pads), a microwave, refrigerator, tables and chairs. Separate bath houses include showers, a toilet, sinks and mirrors. The lab also has a large campfire ring with grill, picnic tables, and water.

SEE MAP TO SELMAN LIVING LAB BELOW...please print out this map.

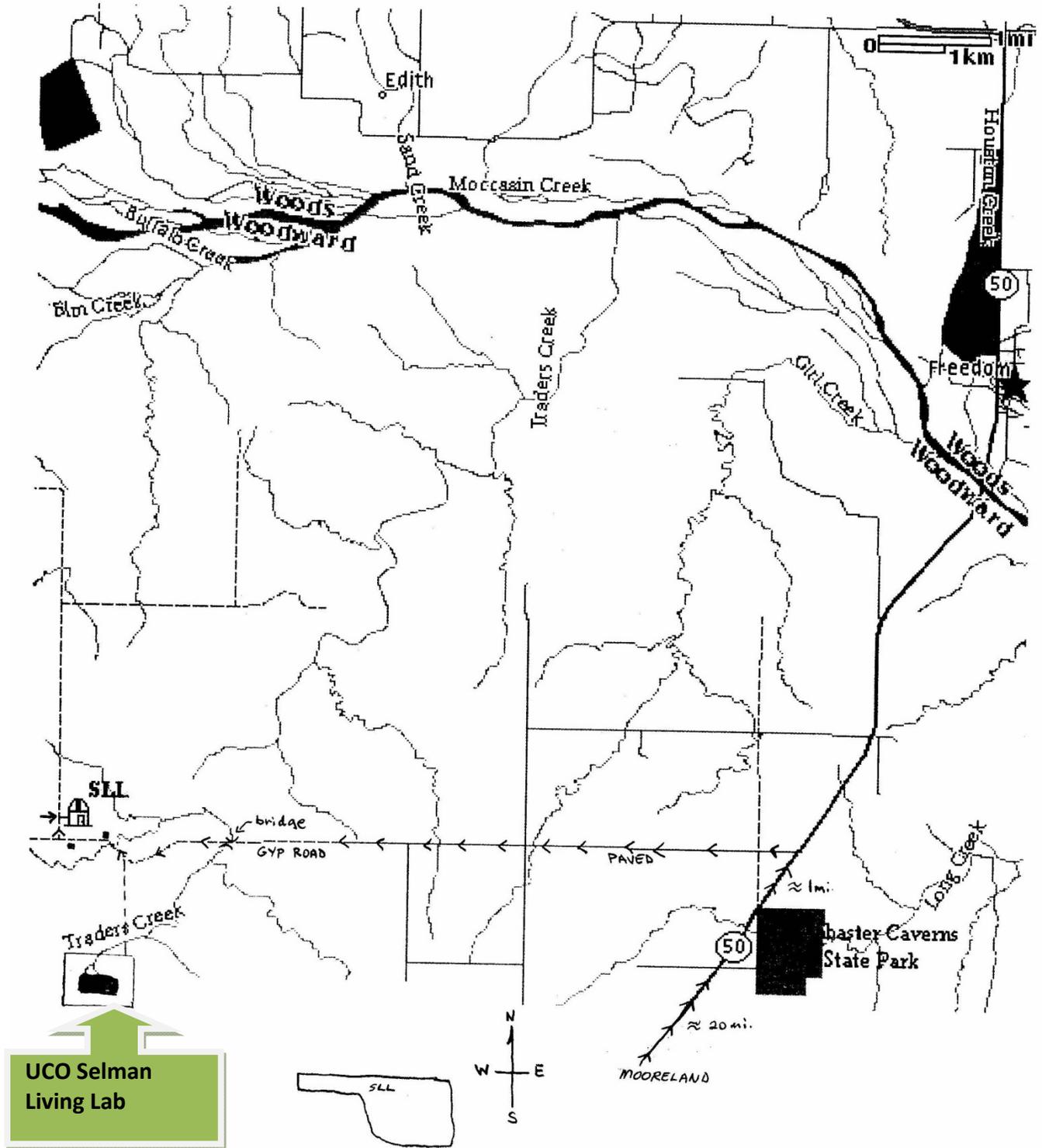
Significance Of This Activity: The Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LPCH) is a large grassland bird species endemic to 5 western states in the US and is currently under threat from development, agriculture, and other factors. It has been a candidate for the Endangered Species List since 1995. In December 2008, it moved to a category 2 candidate. From 1963 to 1980, the distribution of this species declined by 78% to about 10,500 square miles, representing an estimated 8% of its historic range. The remaining birds are found in fragmented pockets of habitat scattered across Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. More than 70% of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken's range in 2007 was owned privately. Only a few counties in western Oklahoma are fortunate to have a remnant of this species left. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife is actively purchasing private land in hopes to restore the open prairie habitat and the return of this species.

Barbed wire fences are a direct threat to the LPCH and contribute up to 40% of their mortality. During the numerous land runs, Oklahoma was sectioned off into very small parcels and distributed to new land owners. Landowners installed barbed wire fences to help control their cattle grazing practices. The open prairie became even more fragmented.

Lesser Prairie-Chickens are fast, but low flying birds. They often meet their doom by flying into the barbed fence because they don't see the fencing or can't stop in time to avoid it. Marking the fences with a white siding material makes the fence more visible for the bird enabling it to avoid flying into the barbs.

Both the Lesser Prairie-Chicken and its sister species, the Greater Prairie-Chicken, once abundant in Oklahoma, have declined in numbers dramatically. The Greater was instrumental in feeding Americans across the United States in the 1800's -1900's. It was commercially hunted and brought to restaurants and open market, feeding pioneers as they established themselves in large cities and moved west.

MAP TO SELMAN LIVING LAB:



PLEASE ALSO PRINT OUT THE MAP OF THE CIMARRON BLUFF WILDLIFE AREA.