

## Texas Conservation Plan for the Dunes Sagebrush Lizard

- The Dunes Sagebrush Lizard (DSL), a species whose range includes Texas' Permian Basin, was proposed for listing as an endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act in 2010.
- In 2012, the Permian Basin accounted for **57%** of Texas' statewide total crude oil production, **51%** of total statewide Texas liquid production and **14%** of total annual U.S. oil production. In 2010, there were approximately **47,000** oil and gas related employees associated with activities in the region.
- The Comptroller's office facilitated the development of the Texas Conservation Plan (TCP) for the DSL, a **voluntary** conservation plan. The goal of the TCP, approved by US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 2012, is to maintain economic activity in the Permian Basin while providing conservation to the lizard.
- The TCP is funded by Participants who **voluntarily** enroll acreage in the plan's Permit Area (including oil and gas operators and private land or surface owners). Participants pay an **annual fee** as follows:
  - Oil and gas operators pay **\$4 per acre** enrolled.
  - Private land or surface owners pay **\$10 for 1-100 acres enrolled; \$50 for 101-10,000 acres enrolled; and \$100 for anything above 10,000 acres** enrolled.
- These funds are used for:
  - Day-to-day administration, monitoring and oversight (Texas A&M University (TAMU)/Texas Habitat Conservation Foundation).
  - Research to help inform future decisions about the species and its habitat in Texas (TAMU).
- There are currently **13 Participants** (names and locations are **confidential by law**) who have enrolled:
  - More than 227,000 gross acres.
  - More than 108,000 habitat acres.
  - More than 21,000 buffer acres.
- The TCP, acreage enrolled and research conducted on the DSL in 2011 kept the lizard from being listed as an endangered species. **The District Court for D.C. upheld USFWS' decision not to list the species in 2014.** Environmental groups filed a notice of appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals.
- Participants have kept disturbances to a minimum: To date **less than 31 acres** of enrolled habitat have been disturbed, which is only **1.4% of the total amount of disturbance permitted** over first 3 years (2,173).
- **Everyone benefits, even those not enrolled or paying fees**, because of those who are actively participating.
  - DSL **was not listed** due in part to the TCP and Participants who enrolled **voluntarily** to conserve the species and its habitat.
  - **Texas and its economy benefit** because drilling can continue to occur in Permian Basin – one of the nation's most productive oil and gas regions.
  - Those **not enrolled benefit because they can continue their business operations in the Permian Basin uninterrupted, without having to pay annual fees or conduct additional conservation practices.**
  - **DSL benefits** because of conservation efforts and research funded through the TCP resulting in data to better inform future conservation needs of species.

*For more information about the TCP, please visit [www.KeepingTexasFirst.org](http://www.KeepingTexasFirst.org).*