

CONSERVATION AND PRIVATE LANDOWNERS: WATERFOWL HABITAT THROUGH A NEW LENS



FoW2
Dave Smith & Dr. Mark Petrie
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Overview

- **The Private Lands Niche:**
Pragmatic Future Emphasis Area
- **Working Lands Conservation:**
Building Support Beyond Birds
- **Pacific Flyway Case Study:**
Pintails and Ranchers
- **Thoughts for the Future:**
Through the Lens of the Landowner





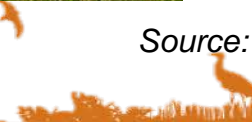
Waterfowl Habitat Conservation

Three Eras

- Citizen Biologist/Duck Club (1865-1917)
- Government Takes the Stage (1918-1984)
- Joint Ventures & Partnerships (1985-present)



Source: Petrie et al, in prep





The Private Lands Reality

- *JV Habitat Objectives*
- *Private Landowners are Decision-Makers:* Perhaps the most important *conservation supporters*
- *Harsh Realities*
 - “Duck Dollars” are insufficient
 - Traditional conservation programs have their limits
 - Many factors in private lands decision-making; we focus on biological – what’s needed, what’s right

Bottom Line: Innovations in private lands conservation are needed to overcome funding limitations – so we must focus on this frontier!





Relevancy & Private Landowners

- Relevancy and Public Engagement: ***Pragmatic*** and Emotional Ties
- ↓
- Waterfowl Hunters, Birdwatchers, and ***Private Landowners***
- ↓
- Private Landowners: ***Duck Hunters*** and ***Agricultural Producers***





Private Lands: Managed Wetlands

- *Duck Clubs*: Waterfowl hunters intensively manage vast amounts of private wetlands
- *Motivation*: High quality waterfowl hunting
- *Challenge*: Maintaining highly productive habitat conditions (e.g., moist-soil mgmt)
- *Conservation Programs*: These programs provide important financial incentives:
 - ✓ NAWCA
 - ✓ NRCS Wetland Reserve Program
 - ✓ FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife
 - ✓ State Duck Stamp Programs





Working Lands Conservation: Agricultural Producers

- JV planning generally indicates we have enough habitat, today, to support waterfowl at NAWMP goal levels
- Certain agricultural lands meet waterfowl habitat objectives and produce food & fiber
- Agricultural producers cost-effectively provide the operations and management – an important service to the American public!





Working Lands Conservation: Key Programs

The Foundation

- NAWCA
- FWS Wetland & Grassland Easements
- FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Next Generation

- NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) = \$1.5 billion/year
- NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program = \$500 million/year
- Industry Investments: Business Imperative





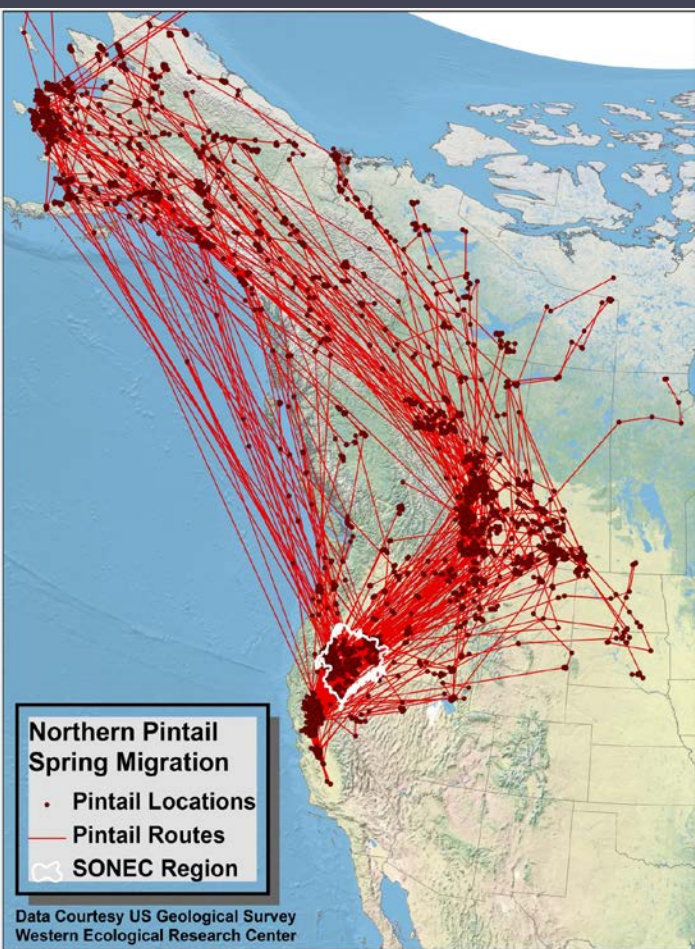
Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers

Ranching is Integral to Waterfowl Habitat Conservation

- Spring Migration: Southern Oregon-Northeastern California (SONEC)
- Breeding Grounds: Prairie Canada



Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers

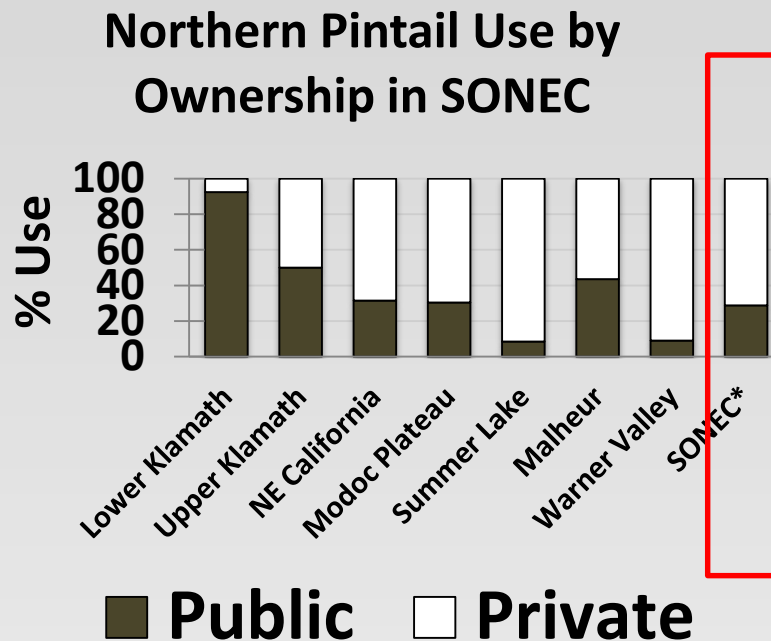




Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers

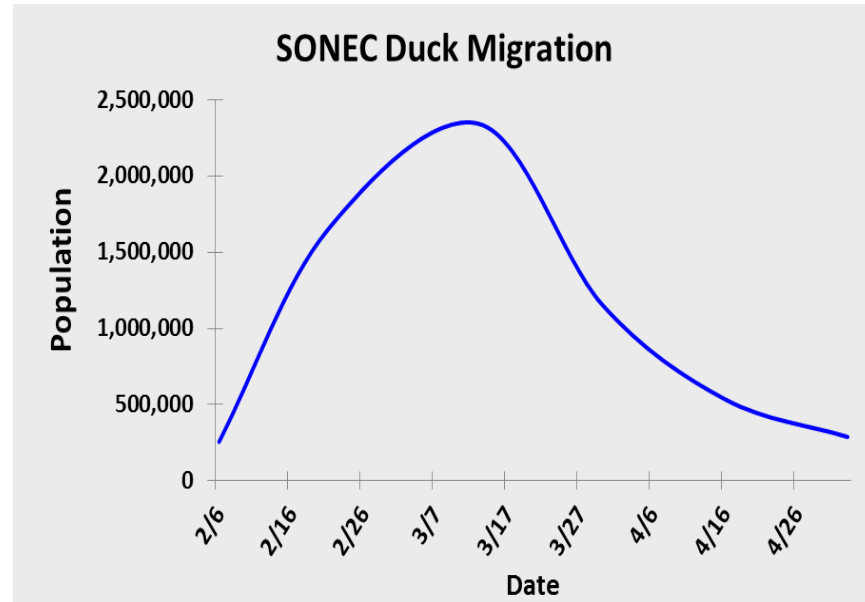


~70% Use on Private Lands





Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers





Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers

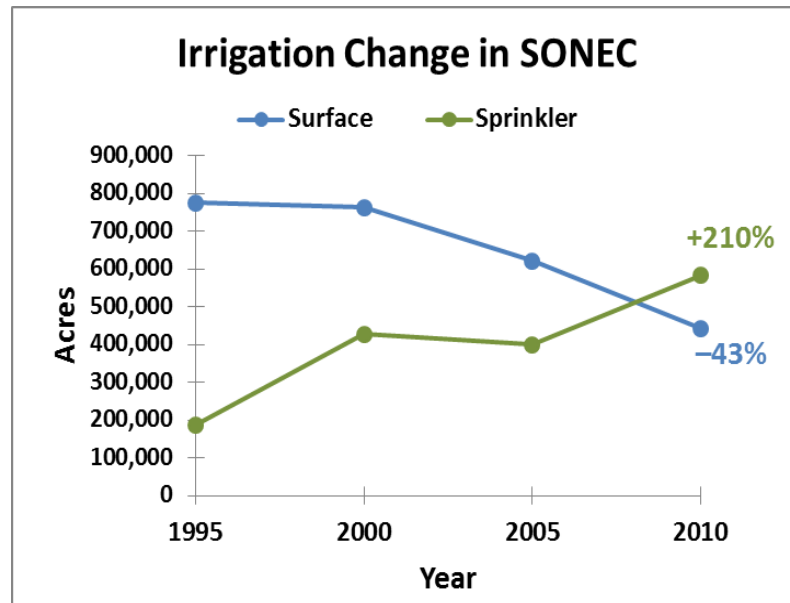




Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers



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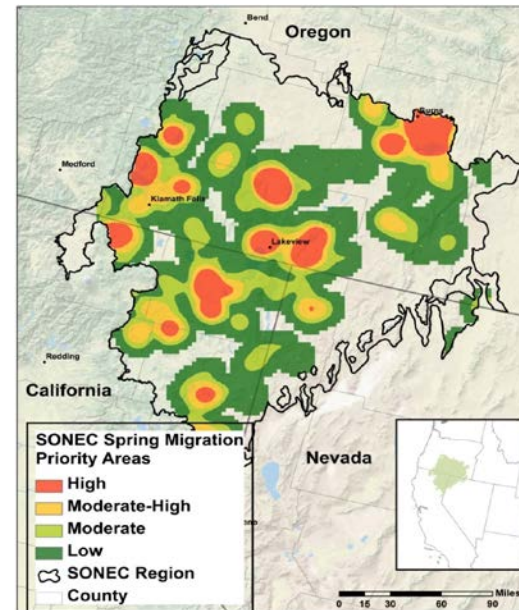
Balancing Multiple Resource Concerns





Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers

JV Science & Planning



Habitat Objective: 64,700 acres



Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers

JV Innovation

- *Field Delivery Capacity*: 2 new cost-shared Partner Biologists in NRCS Field Offices
- *Science Capacity* (JV wetland dynamics modeling)
- *Communications Capacity* (IWJV)
- *Human Dimensions Project* (IWJV, NRCS \$)
- *Working Wetlands Conservation Coordinator* (NRCS, IWJV, FWS PFW) = ranching background





Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers

SONEC Working Wet Meadows Initiative

- Flood-irrigation infrastructure improvement
- Working lands conservation easements
- Improve forage production and profitability
- *Tell the story* of multi-generational ranchers contributing to continentally significant waterfowl habitat conservation





Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers

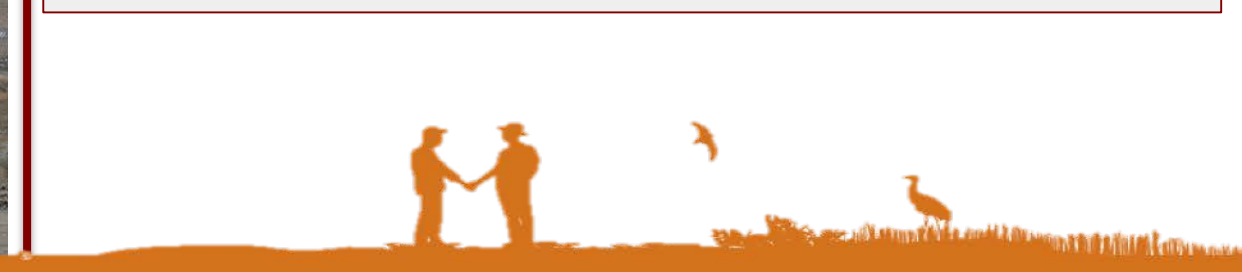




Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers

New Wetlands Conservation Funding

- Oregon NRCS EQIP = \$400,000/year
- NRCS RCPPP = \$600,000/year
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board = \$375,000/year
- Future Funding: The sky is the limit....even with no new “duck dollars” invested
- Key Point: The Initiative *strengthens* ranching!





Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers



SONEC

- *Objective:* Grass on the landscape and keep ranchers ranching!!
- *Approach:* Help ranchers stay in the business of flood-irrigating hay meadows through working lands conservation programs



Pacific Flyway Case Study: Pintails and Ranchers

Prairie Canada

- *Objective:* Grass on the landscape and keep ranchers ranching!!
- *Approach:* Sustain grasslands by supporting ranching through working lands conservation programs





Thoughts for the Future: Conservation Through a New Lens

Agricultural Landowner Perspectives

- Agricultural business model & profitability
- Heritage, culture, *lifestyle centrality*
- Generational transition challenges & objectives
- Proactive, voluntary conservation – strategically implemented at large scales – can alleviate the need for regulatory approaches
- Community.....community.....community!





Thoughts for the Future: Conservation Through a New Lens

Working with Agricultural Landowners: A Changing Paradigm

- *Old Ways:* How can we get the most wildlife habitat from agricultural producers?
- *The Future:* How we can help support agricultural producers so that they are providing waterfowl habitat three generations down the line?
- *Bottom Line:* Take the time to understand, learn, and find ways to support landowner objectives.





Thoughts for the Future: Conservation Through a New Lens

Industry Investments: Business Imperatives

- ConocoPhillips (CP) is a member of the Gulf Coast JV Management Board.
- CP is the single largest private wetlands owner in the U.S., with ~640,000 acres within the GCJV (CP Coastal Wetlands).
- Coastal Louisiana has lost 1,800 sq miles of land, 1932-2010.
- CP is actively engaged in restoration on their Coastal Wetlands for many reasons, including a desire to be good environmental stewards and alignment with their business interests.
- CP's Coastal Wetlands objective is to restore their properties to a 1950s footprint.
- Healthy wetlands generate surface income and maintain access to mineral rights.



Thoughts for the Future:

Conservation Through a New Lens

Industry Investments: Business Imperatives

- The success or failure of voluntary private lands conservation can impact not only agriculture but also other industries
- Some energy companies are investing to enhance success of private lands conservation – a solid business strategy to minimize risk of regulation
- *Bottom Line:* Think about how private lands conservation can be a *business imperative*





Thoughts for the Future: Conservation Through a New Lens

NRCS: The Agency of the Future for NAWMP

- Farm Bill conservation programs (\$5 billion/year)
- 85 years experience in private lands conservation
- Seat at the kitchen table with private landowners
- *Bottom Line:* Get to know your NRCS staff at the State Office, Area Office, and Field Office levels





Thoughts for the Future: Conservation Through a New Lens

Future Waterfowl Conservation Professionals

- Range conservationists
- Agronomists
- Hydrologists
- Bottom Line: Find people with a deep passion for *what matters* to private landowners



Thanks!

