Eco-Regional Cooperative Agreements

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Eco-Regional Cooperative Agreements

Purpose:

To ensure effective and efficient management of natural and cultural resources and to prevent encroachment on Department of Defense installations

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- Eco-Region (Defined)
  - Ecoregions are based on perceived patterns of a combination of causal and integrative factors including land use, land surface form, potential natural vegetation, and soils (Omernik, 1987)
  - May also be defined as relatively large units of land or water containing a distinct assemblage of natural communities and species, with boundaries that approximate the original extent of natural communities prior to major land-use change

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- The Sikes Act (16 USC 670c-1) SEC. 2908 Cooperative Agreements as amended
  - MULTIYEAR AGREEMENTS- Funds appropriated to the DoD for a FY may be obligated to cover the cost of goods and services provided under a cooperative agreement entered into under subsection(a) or through an agency agreement under section 1535 of title 31, United States Code, during any 18-month period beginning in that FY, without regard to whether the agreement crosses FY's

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- Front Range Eco-Regional MOU
  - A case study

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Key Management Constraints:

- Manpower
- Equipment
- Funding
- Contract and Operational Costs
- Stringent Environmental Regulations

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Shared Management Concerns:

- Noxious and Invasive Species
- Wildland Fire Management
- Watershed Protection
- Threatened and Endangered Species Protection
- Encroachment
- WWII and Cold War Historic Properties
- Archeological Resources
- Interagency Intergovernmental Coordination and Planning (IICEP)

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Solution:

- Develop a cooperative agreement under which DoD installations can share manpower, equipment, and contract mechanisms and reduce administrative and operational costs by developing a professional resource pool, increasing the region of influence, and improving the overall effectiveness of management activities

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Rationale:

- Installations are situated within the same Eco-Region
- Installations exhibit similar natural and cultural resources and management constraints
- Resources and personnel are within a reasonable distance

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Goals:

- Enhance Mission Support
- Reduce Contract and Administration costs
- Effectively Implement INRMPs
- Effectively Implement CRMPs
- Improve Regional Planning Efforts
- Improve Communication and Awareness within DoD and the region of influence
- Improve compliance with the regulatory requirements

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DoD Installations:

- Buckley AFB (3,800 acres)
- Cheyenne Mountain AFS (519 acres)
- Fort Carson (138,230 acres)
- Francis E. Warren AFB (6,400 acres)
- Peterson AFB (3,300 acres)
- Pinon Canyon Maneuver Area (235,604 acres)
- Pueblo Chemical Depot (23,000 acres)
- Schriever AFB (3,840 acres)
- US Air Force Academy (19,107acres)
- Total Acreage (433,800 acres)

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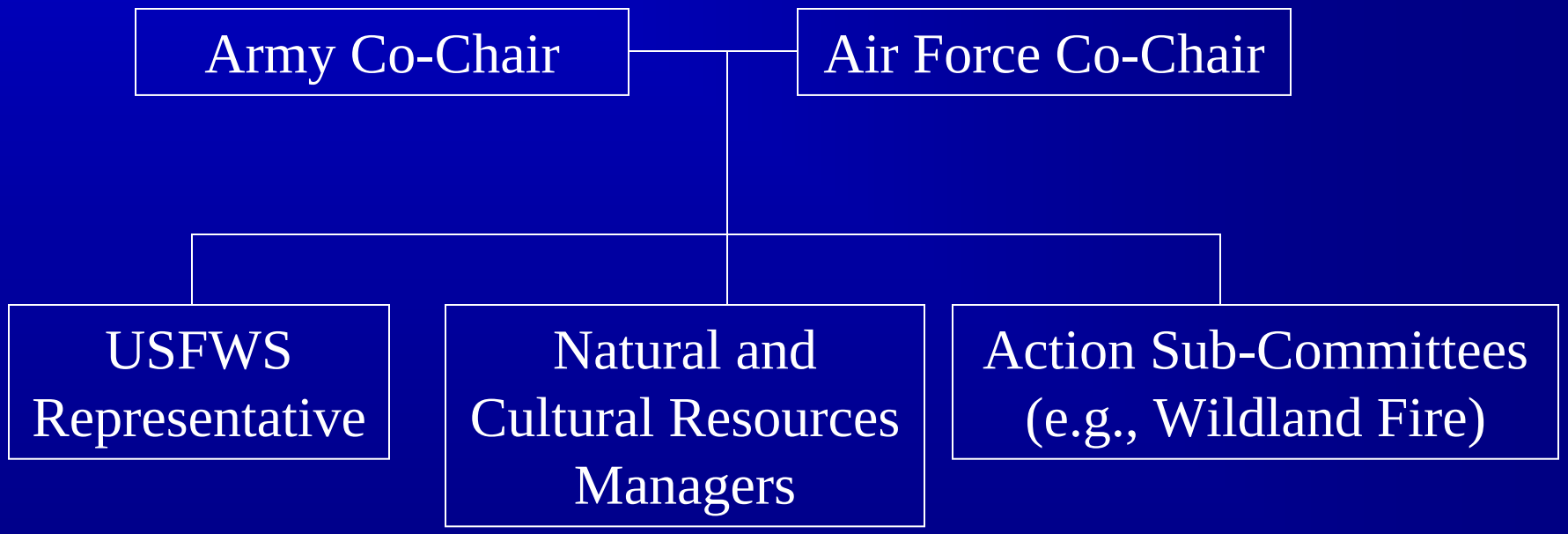
Proposed Organization:



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Professional Resource Pool Consists of:

- Wildlife Biologists
- Historic Preservation Specialists
- Foresters
- Soil and Water Conservation Specialists
- Wildland Firefighters
- Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers
- Rangeland Management Specialists
- Archeologists
- Environmental Engineers
- Environmental Planners

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Potential Cooperative Efforts

- Biological Control of Noxious and Invasive Species
- Prescribed Fire Implementation
- Forest Health Monitoring and Pest Suppression
- Black-tailed Prairie Dog Control and Relocation
- INRMP and CRMP preparation and/or review
- Technical Advice
- Regional Legacy-type Projects
- Large Grants/Research Efforts

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- Ongoing Partnering Efforts
  - BioControl of Invasive Plants
    - Mature programs at Fort Carson at USAFA
    - Buckley and FE Warren Initiating Programs
    - What's Next?

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- Ongoing Partnering Efforts, Cont'd
  - Fuels Management
    - USAFA assisting Cheyenne Mountain with technical recommendations
      - Cheyenne Mountain to initiate fuels management in FY03
        - » Need at cost effective method to accomplish mechanical fuel reduction

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- New Partnering Opportunities
  - Wildland fire
    - Our Responsibilities
      - Maintain lists of NWCG qualified firefighters
      - Maintain training records and taskbooks
      - ID internal DoD training opportunities and fire details
      - Maintain DoD individual resources and “crews”
      - Be prepared to go if called for interagency detail
    - Revised AFI 32-7064
      - Need standardized planning and approval processes
        - » AFSPC developing installation fire planning guide

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- New Partnering Opportunities, Cont'd
  - Encroachment
    - Conservation Easements & Perpetual Conservation Restrictions
      - Where are they needed? Buckley? Schriever?
      - How can we make them a reality?

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- New Partnering Opportunities, Cont'd
  - Black-tailed prairie dog/Burrowing owl mgmt
    - BTPD relocation areas (Conservation Easements?)
    - Monitoring/Relocation Contracts and Equipment
    - Black-footed ferret Reintroduction?

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- New Partnering Opportunities, Cont'd
  - Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse
    - Critical Habitat Designation & INRMPs
    - Monitoring Contracts
    - Off-site Management & Mitigation
    - Regional Recovery Efforts

Preble's meadow jumping mouse. *Photo courtesy of El Paso County, Colorado.*

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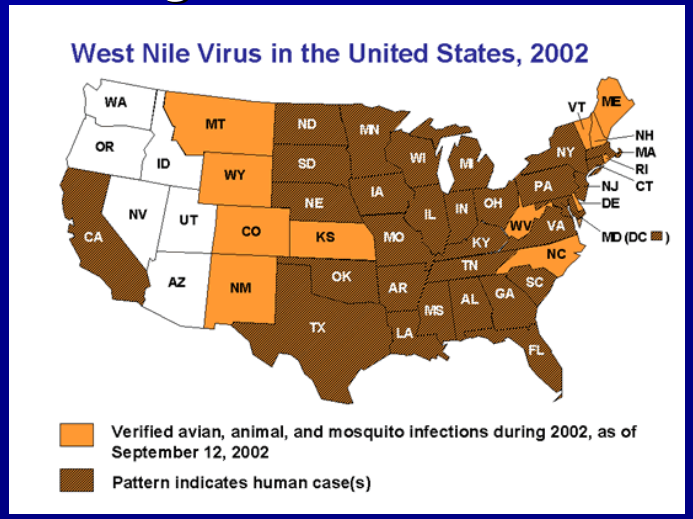
- New Partnering Opportunities, Cont'd
  - West Nile Virus
    - What is the role of a Natural Resources Manager?
      - Passive Monitoring (Crows, Ravens, Jays, Magpies, and livestock)
      - Monitor Mosquito Abatement Programs
      - Education



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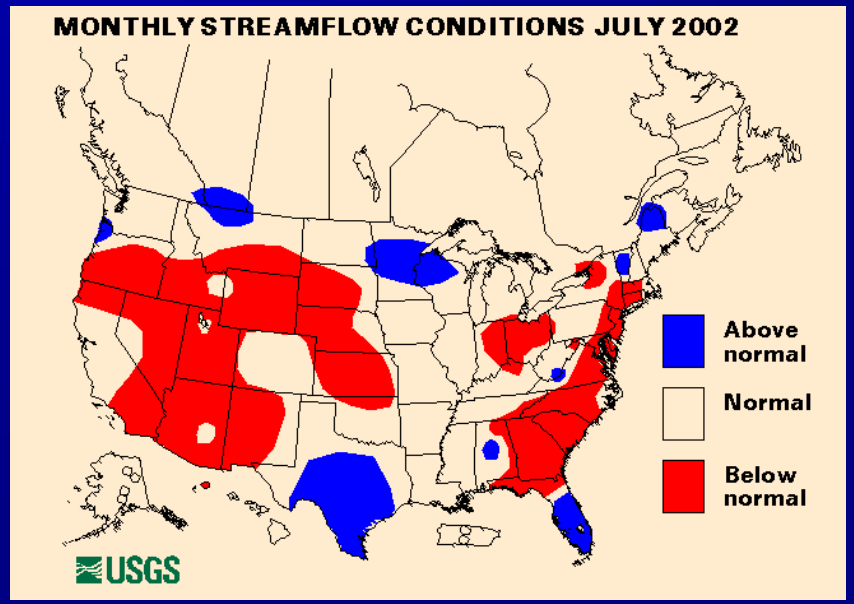
- New Partnering Opportunities, Cont'd
  - Water Conservation Programs/Dealing with Drought
    - Policy & Guidance for DoD Installations
    - INRMP Component Plans?
    - NEPA?
    - Education



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- New Partnering Opportunities, Cont'd
  - Pronghorn antelope at FE Warren AFB
    - Implement Archery Hunting Program
    - Trapping and Relocation Not Favored
    - Depredation if Necessary
    - Need help getting started

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- New Partnering Opportunities, Cont'd
  - UXO Clearance on Closed Ranges
    - Natural Resource Injury Resulting from Clearance
      - EIAP
        - » Not required for CERCLA; UXO Clearance Not a true CERCLA Activity
      - Natural Resources Injury Assessments
        - » Monitoring and Mitigation (Wetlands, TE Species, Archeological)

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