

# Protection of Land to Conserve Arkansas Valley Prairies and Woodlands

## Final Report, 2010



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**Report Format:** A final progress report is included below each deliverable approved in the original grant proposal. At the request of the grantee partner; the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC), and to maintain verbal confidentially agreements with the private landowners at the project site, this report does not include specific landowner information. The report will includes: 1) priority and rank map as described in this report (deliverables 1-4), and 2) a simple excel database that includes specific landowner information, acquisition and management data, and recommendations concerning acquisition priorities and potential land deals.

### **Methods / Deliverables**

1. Use ArcView to map all tracts within the Cherokee Prairie complex (12/2008);
2. Use the Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) to determine those landowner tracts that contain existing or potential prairie and woodland remnants. Incorporate new data from ANHC that refines the status of prairie remnants (03/2009);
3. Prioritize tracts for conservation efforts based on juxtaposition to currently protected areas and status of tracts (06/2009); and
4. Create a map of priority tracts by rank and landowner (09/2009).

Final Progress Report for Deliverable 1-4: **Complete.** ANHC produced a map that ranks the ecological integrity of prairie remnants based on biological evaluations completed by ANHC staff. This map was used to set acquisition priorities based on adjacency to protected areas, biological integrity, species composition, species richness, and restoration potential. (Appendix A).

A priority landowner list including contact information was produced. (Appendix B)

5. Contact all landowners and determine interest in selling tracts (09/2009).

Final Progress Report: All the priority landowners were contacted via form letter (Appendix C). Two responded to the form letter. One, Mrs. Joan Law responded with interest in including her pasture in prescribed fire work conducted by TNC. TNC will work with Mrs. Law to burn her property when ecologically appropriate, likely in conjunction with TNC's stewardship of Presson-Ogelsby Preserve which is adjacent.

The second respondent was Mr. Roy Hudson. Mr. Hudson is a willing seller. He was referred to ANHC. His property is currently under contract. Mr. Hudson's property was of the highest priority. It is both in relatively good condition and immediately adjacent to Flanagan Prairie Natural Area. When the transaction is closed 74 acres will be added to the Natural Area. (Appendix D).

In addition to the form letter, TNC staff traveled to the project site to discuss acquisition opportunities with various landowners and local officials. Discussions of priority tracts with local officials indicate acquisition opportunities are currently low. This is due to a variety of factors including: 1) speculation of future land prices; 2) speculation of future minerals play(s) due to gas drilling activity in the area; 3) a strong rural land ethic; 4) cyclical profits from haying operations; and 5) forage production for livestock.

6. Direct landowners that want to sell to ANHC of TNC (12/2009);

Final Progress Report: ANHC will acquire 74 additional acres to add to Natural Area system.

7. Direct landowners that want easement to TNC (12/2009);

Final Progress Report: There was no interest in easements among the local landowners.

8. Direct landowners that want management assistance to the appropriate agency (AGFC/NRCS). The project will be informed of the projects through TNC's website, newsletter, and neighbor contacts (03/2010);

Final Progress Report: Landowner's have been notified of management opportunities. To date there is one landowner interested in incorporating prescribed fire into her management routine.

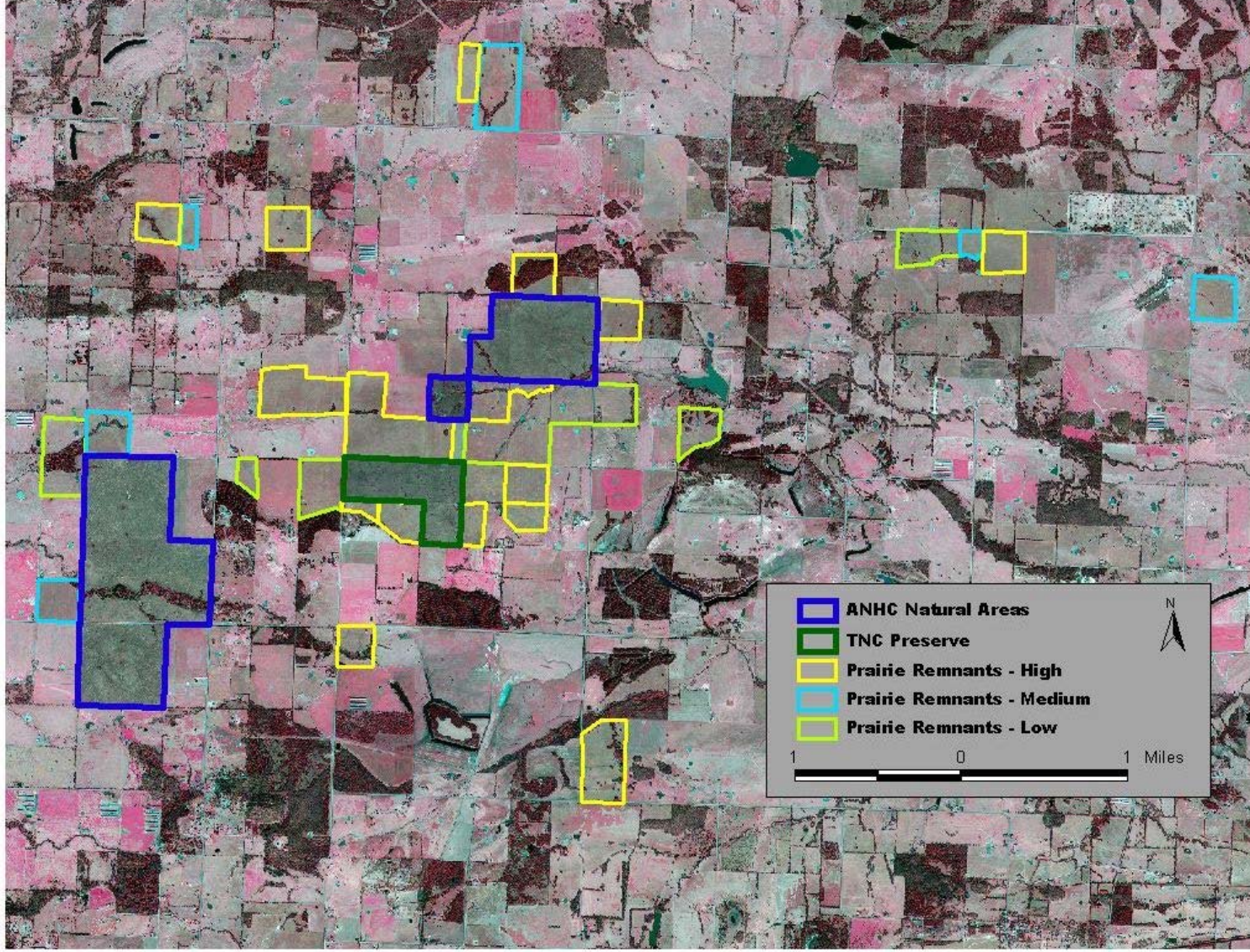
9. Update comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy database, including maps of affected lands on [www.ArkansasWildlife.com](http://www.ArkansasWildlife.com) (06/2010); and

Final Progress Report: Currently working with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission staff to update database.

10. Update Conservation and Scientific community at Arkansas Wildlife Action Plan Conference in 2010.

Final Progress Report: Scheduled to present, September 7-8 2010.

Appendix A: Prioritized Lands



\*developed by ANHC

Appendix B  
Priority Landowner List

| TRACTNAME              | PRAIRE ACRES | Permission to Inventory tract | Contact Name   | 2001 Plat Book      | Phone | Tract Location   |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------|--|
| Burt 35                | 33.680       | Yes                           | Mr. Burt       | J.A. Burt           |       | corner of Rattlesnake Road and Hwy. 60   |
| Craft                  | 36.066       | Yes                           | Mrs. Craft     | Loyd Craft          |       | west side of highway 217-south Drake Lane  |
| Flanagan 40 - TNC      | 35.418       | Yes                           | Mrs. Flanagan  | W.R. Flanagan       |       | adjacent to TNC Preserve, north and east sides adjacent to Preserve  |
| Flanagan 41 - Flanagan | 39.230       | Yes                           | Mrs. Flanagan  | W.R. Flanagan       |       | north of Grand Prairie Road, due north of Flanagan Prairie   |
| Haynes                 | 51.943       | Yes                           | Barbara Haynes | Herman Haynes       |       | corner of Hwy 217 and Haney Road   |
| Hudson                 | 36.299       | Yes                           | Roy Hudson     | Roy Hudson          |       | corner of Grand Prairie Road, across street from Flanagan Prairie  |
| Madden                 | 78.008       | Yes                           | Mr. Kerwin     | Erben Madden etal   |       | south of highway 60 on either side of Grand Prairie Road - particularly interested in grassland at corner of CR-25 and CR-23 |
| McDonald J 80 -hwy 215 | 24.795       | Yes                           | Jerry McDonald | Jerry McDonald      |       | north of highway 215, west of or before reach Gilsinger Road   |
| McDonald W 119         | 41.017       | Yes                           | Donna McDonald | William McDonald    |       | north of Ridge Road and west of Rattlesnake Road   |
| McDonald W 168         | 138.702      | Yes                           | Donna McDonald | William McDonald    |       | North of TNC Preserve - between Flanagan NA and Presson Oglesby along Rattlesnake Road                                       |
| McDonald W 358         | 84.322       | Yes                           | Donna McDonald | William McDonald    |       | bounded by highway 217 and Rattlesnake Road  |
| McFerran Bruce         | 23.705       | Yes                           | Bruce McFerran | Bruce McFerran etal |       | end of Ferran lane on left side - east of TNC preserve   |
| McFerran David         | 23.425       | Yes                           | Bruce McFerran | Bruce McFerran etal |       | east side of TNC Preserve  |

|                         |        |     |                 |                     |   |
|-------------------------|--------|-----|-----------------|---------------------|---|
| McFerran Stanley        | 37.386 | Yes | Bruce McFerran  | Bruce McFerran etal | end of Ferran lane - east of TNC preserve   |
| Sharum - High           | 49.344 | Yes | Richard Sharum  | Richard Sharum      | south of Flanagan Prairie NA; south of Flanagan Prairie NA and across Grand Prairie Road                                |
| Strozier                | 11.680 | Yes | Mrs. Strozier   | Harvey Strozier     | south of TNC preserve on Rattlesnake Road   |
| Vest                    | 39.422 | Yes | Norma Vest      | Norma Vest Tr.      | south of Peterpender Road   |
| Acoach - Medium         | 12.609 | Yes | Mr. Acoach      | A.L. Acoach         | south of Peterpender Road   |
| Burt 40 - Cherokee      | 39.686 | Yes | Mr. Burt        | J.A. Burt           | north of Hwy. 60, on west side of Cherokee Prairie  |
| Donberger (Mainard)     | 80.116 | Yes | Linda Donberger | Leo Mainard         | corner of highway 215 and Gilsinger Road  |
| Gramlich                | 14.311 | Yes | Paul Gramlich   | Paul Gramlich etal  | east side of highway 217 (south of Vesta but north of Ridge Road) - portion of land (~25 acres) south of chicken houses |
| McDonald J 80 -Cherokee | 41.100 | Yes | Jerry McDonald  | Jerry McDonald      | due north of Cherokee Prairie (about 40 acres looks to be decent prairie)   |
| Pile                    | 41.331 | Yes | Stephen Pile    | Cline Pile          | corner of Hwy 288 and Hwy 41  |
| Acoach - Low            | 44.142 | Yes | Mr. Acoach      | A.L. Acoach         | south of Peterpender Road   |
| Burton                  | 37.456 | Yes | Claudine Burton | Claudine Burton     | corner of Buckner Road where road makes sharp turn south (south of lake)  |
| Ernst                   | 75.428 | Yes | Sara Ernst      | Sara Ernst          | west side of Cherokee Prairie   |
| Ernst                   | 75.428 | Yes | Sara Ernst      | Sara Ernst          | west side of Cherokee Prairie   |
| Law (White)             | 53.451 | Yes | Joan Law        | Herman White Heirs  | northern prairie area, west of Rattlesnake Road - directly across from TNC Preserve                                     |

|               |         |   |                 |                  |  |
|---------------|---------|---|-----------------|------------------|--|
| McDonald W 39 | 14.562  | Yes   | Donna McDonald  | William McDonald | east side of highway 217, east of Cherokee Prairie                                       |
| Sharum - Low  | 191.886 | Yes   | Richard Sharum  | Richard Sharum   | south of Flanagan Prairie NA; south of Flanagan Prairie NA and across Grand Prairie Road |
|               |         | Yes   | Jerry McDonald  | Jerry McDonald   | west of Flanagan Prairie   |
|               |         | Yes - but later asked to hold off (tracts were not inventoried) | Isaac Bollinger | Isaac Bollinger  | land along Bollinger Road and Hwy 217  |
|               |         |   |                 | Reuben Hill etal | corner of Hwy 41 and Bollinger Road, on the east side of highway                         |
|               |         |   |                 | Paul Flanagan    | north of Peterpender Road  |
|               |         |   |                 | Paul Flanagan    | north of Peterpender Road  |
|               |         |   |                 | Paul Flanagan    | north of Peterpender Road  |
|               |         |   | Rickets         | Rickets          | adjacent to tnc preserve on south side   |

\*Phone number and address removed for privacy.

Appendix C  
Form Letter

Date

Name

Address

Mr./Mrs.,

I'm sending this brief letter and accompanying material in hopes that you may be interested in entertaining one or more proposals The Nature Conservancy would like to offer regarding your pasture land near Charleston, AR.

Arkansas River Valley prairies were once extensive originally covering hundreds of thousands of acres in west central Arkansas. The tallgrass prairies in Arkansas were fertile with sparse tree cover, and consequently settled very early by the new European settlers. Much of the landscape has changed significantly in the last 150 years, and high quality remnants of the pre-settlement ecological communities are difficult to find. The Nature Conservancy would like to work with you protect what remains of these prairies.

The Nature Conservancy works only with willing landowners and is very protective of private landowner's rights. We respect all landowner's wishes and will not pursue a relationship if the landowner is not interested. Arkansas River Valley prairies have provided options for you, not headaches.

In order to restore a function to Arkansas River Valley prairies, we need your help. The kind of help I refer to could include one or more of the following: Sell the property to TNC for the appraised value or less (selling for less than appraised value is the same as a donation and would provide a tax advantage to you); Sell or donate a Conservation Easement that would allow for prairie restoration but also allow you to utilize the property; Donate all or part of the property for a possible tax advantage; Enter into a Conservation Agreement, which is less binding than an Easement; or Donate or Sell TNC the Right of First Refusal for the property. In addition, if you prefer to maintain your property The Nature Conservancy can provide land management assistance to help you maintain the best possible condition of your prairie.

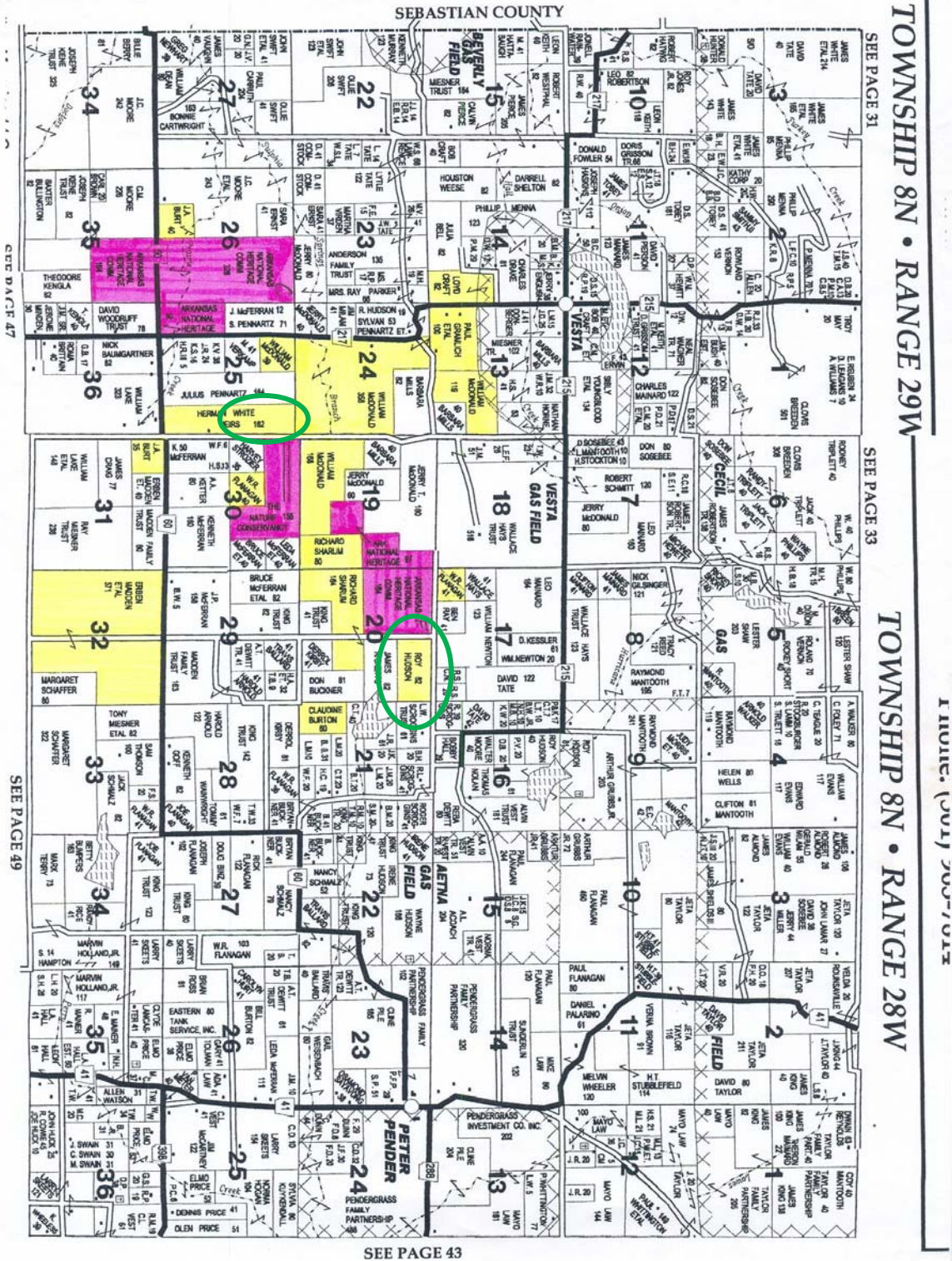
We work with landowners every day and there are hundreds of ways that TNC can achieve its goals and provide valuable options to those landowners at the same time. We hope you will be interested in visiting with us about those options in the near future.

Sincerely,

Matt Lindsey  
Project Manager



Appendix D  
Action Oriented Landowners



\*Herman White Heirs: Mrs. Law’s burnable acreage  
 \*Roy Hudson: Property under contract with Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission