

2014-2015 Mazama Pocket Gopher Action Plan - Updated 6 November 2014

The purpose of this action plan is to identify the next-best conservation actions that can be conducted over the next 3-5 years to support MPG recovery.

Category	Ref. #	Task Synopsis	Rank	Status and Implementing Party (Options: Ongoing, In Progress, Planned, or No Action Yet)
1. Survey and Monitoring	1.1	1. Develop a survey/monitoring scheme to addresses probability of occurrence, assess site occupancy, and monitor trends.	3	In Progress WDFW
	1.1.a	a. Identify the type, number and timing of surveys required to determine occupancy, including refining process to determine area occupied.		In Progress WDFW, FWS
	1.1.b	b. Identify the type, number and timing of surveys required to achieve recovery objectives (e.g. determine population numbers and trends).		In Progress WDFW
	1.1.c	c. Develop and test cost effective and efficient monitoring protocols at multiple scales.		
	1.2	2. Implement survey/monitoring scheme.		
	1.2.a	a. Refine and update gopher distribution.		Ongoing (WDFW), USFWS, Thurston Co. JBLM, CNLM
	1.2.b	b. Assess population trend.		
	1.2.c	c. Utilize WDFW Species Occurrence Database (WSDM).		
2. Protect Existing Populations and Habitat	2.1	1. Protect occupied habitat via land purchase, easements, voluntary conservation, etc.	1	
	2.1.a	a. Develop and implement management agreements (e.g. ESMP, Mgmt. Plan).		In Progress JBLM, WDFW, CNLM, FWS, Thurston Co.
	2.1.b	b. Develop opportunities to explicitly implement gopher protection through NRCS Farm Bill programs.		
	2.1.c	c. Pursue opportunities within existing programs to purchase land (e.g. West Rocky Prairie via WWRP; ACUB; Section 6).		
	2.1.d	d. Explicitly include gophers in incentive programs that support habitat protection, (e.g. ACEP).		Ongoing NRCS
	2.2	2. Protect occupied habitat via regulation.		
	2.2.a	a. Create long-term strategy to address development pressure via regulation (e.g. mitigation bank, interim permitting strategy, HCP).	2	In Progress Thurston County, FWS, WDFW, CNLM
	2.2.b	b. Improve conservation effectiveness and implementation of regulatory process for local permitting offices, consultants and DFW.		Ongoing WDFW, Thurston Co.
	2.2.b.i	i. Develop and implement compliance monitoring measures		
2.2.c	c. Assess effectiveness of habitat protection areas for gopher conservation (e.g., set-aside, mitigation bank).	9		
2.2.c.i	i. Develop conservation performance criteria for habitat protection areas established through HCP and other programs			
2.3	3. Identify priority conservation areas for MPG (e.g. Reserve Design).		Ongoing (FWS, Thurston Co., WDFW)	
3. Manage, Enhance, and Maintain Habitat	3.1	1. Implement habitat restoration, maintenance and enhancement.	5	
	3.1.a	a. Control pest plants at occupied sites (e.g. trees, shrubs, pasture grasses).		Ongoing
	3.1.b	b. Expand occupied habitat through restoration (e.g. tree removal).		
	3.1.c	c. Assess site-specific vegetation composition and structure, improve as needed.		
	3.2	2. Develop and implement spatially-explicit plans to restore, enhance, maintain habitat.	7	
	3.2.a	a. Identify compatible/incompatible land uses and redirect incompatible land use (e.g. recreation, military training, grazing, prescribed fire).		
	3.2.b	b. Explicitly include gophers in incentive programs that support habitat management (e.g. FWS Partners Program, NRCS Stewardship Programs/EQIP).		Ongoing FWS, NRCS
	3.3	3. Identify important habitat features.	8	In Progress (Initial scoping)
	3.3.a	a. Identify vegetation structure and functional group composition favorable to Mazama pocket gophers.		
3.3.b	b. Identify the level and type of disturbance (e.g. fire) beneficial to gophers and/or their habitat e.g., source, frequency, intensity, duration, and spatial extent.			
3.3.c	c. Determine relationship between gopher population demographics and soil type and structure.			
4. Increase Sizes and Numbers of Populations	4.1	1. Evaluate the range-wide need to increase numbers of populations. If needed, identify if this should be done through translocation or by increasing sizes of existing populations through habitat manipulations.	12	
	4.2	2. Evaluate translocation as a tool to maximize conservation value on protected lands and minimize loss.		
	4.2.a	a. Identify sites that are suitable for translocation (actual implementation of translocation is pending regulatory decisions).		
	4.2.a.i	i. Identify, evaluate, and prioritize potential translocation sites		
	4.2.a.ii	ii. Develop criteria to identify source populations for translocations		
	4.2.a.iii	iii. Incorporate genetic and demographic research results as appropriate		
	4.2.b	b. Conduct translocation research.		
4.2.b.i	i. Evaluate efficacy and feasibility of translocating gophers		In Progress WDFW	
4.3.b.ii	ii. Refine translocation methods			
5. Additional Research	5.1	1. Conduct demographic and genetic studies.		
	5.1.a	a. Use genetic information to map boundaries of distinct populations (demes) to inform management units and/or focal areas.	4	In Progress FWS, WDFW
	5.1.b	b. Determine population vital rates and factors that might affect those rates (e.g., survival, reproduction, etc.) to inform determination of sustainable population size relative to habitat patch size and quality.	11	
	5.1.c	c. Identify characteristics of dispersal that would affect population structure and viability (e.g., timing, distance, and demographics).		In Progress WDFW
5.1.d	d. Evaluate genetic diversity of existing populations.			
6. Communications and Coordination	6.1	1. Develop and implement a regional, cooperative communications strategy for multiple audiences.	6	In Progress (see below)
	6.1.a	a. Conduct direct outreach to landowners of existing populations.		In Progress WDFW, Thurston Co., CNLM, Conservation Dist.
	6.1.b	b. Improve public perception and understanding of gophers and gopher-related conservation actions through positive PR & other means.		In Progress Round Table
	6.1.c	c. Educate public on regulatory and incentive programs (e.g., ESA, CAO, HCP, Farm Bill, Futures).		Ongoing Thurston Co., NRCS
	6.1.d	d. Curate and condense information packet (for private landowners, agricultural landowners) for voluntary conservation (e.g. who to contact, how to do it) utilizing existing information.		Planned USFWS (support by Thurston Co, CNLM)
	6.1.e	e. Update habitat management guidance for land managers.		
	6.1.f	f. Update, clarify, and explicitly link private, federal, county and state on-line information (e.g., PHS, CAO).		Ongoing
6.2	2. Maintain active working group, information sharing, and collaborative action.	10	Ongoing CNLM, Partners	