

# Western Governors' Wildlife Council

## Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool

January 4, 2012

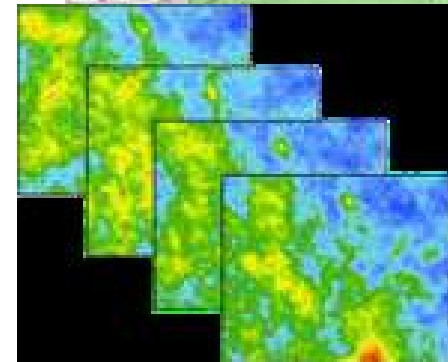
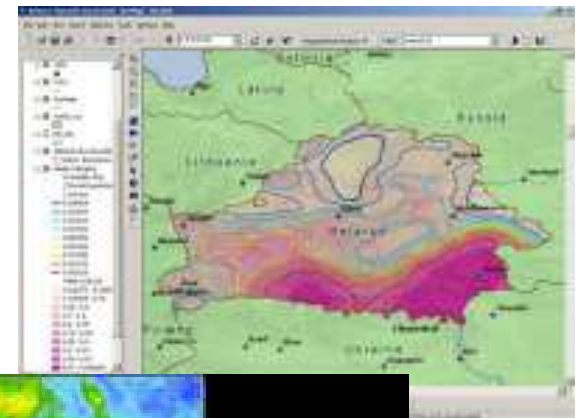


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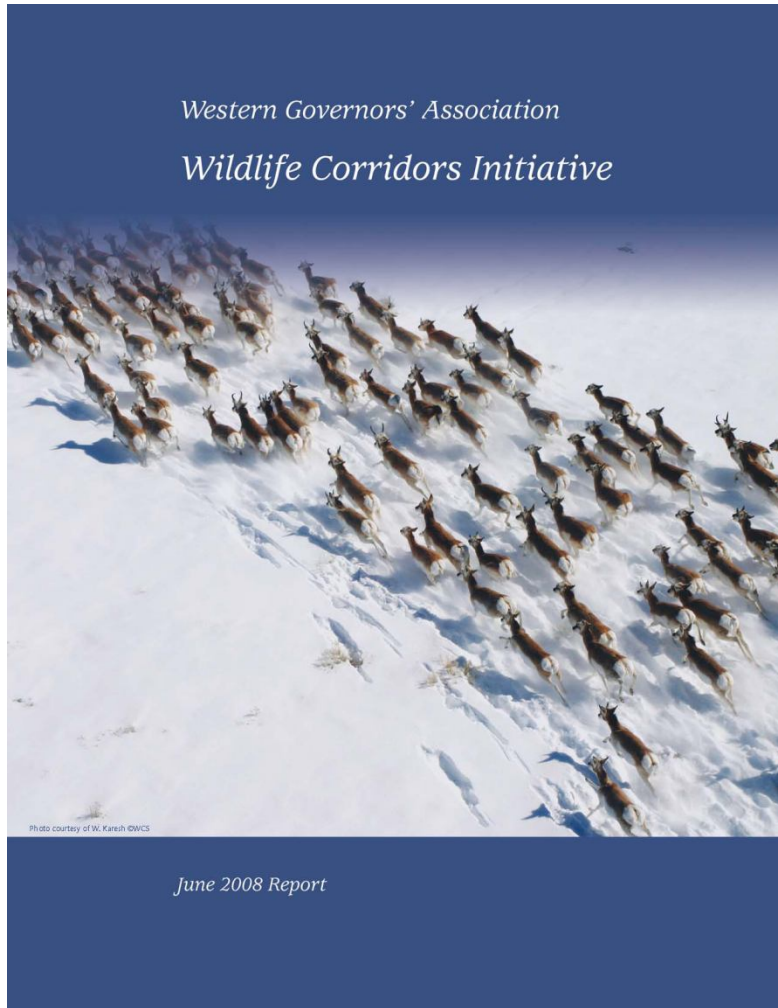
# Wildlife Council Vision

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- Identify key wildlife corridors and crucial habitats, and develop and coordinate policy options and tools for preserving those landscapes.
- Provide a user friendly online tool for parties to access consistent wildlife information across political boundaries to better inform land use planning.



# Western Governors' Wildlife Council



2007: Western Governors' policy

2008: Formation of Western Governors' Wildlife Council

2009: MOU for federal support to states

2010: Wildlife mapping underway in each state – pilot projects launched

2011: Federal agreement enhanced

2012: Coordination across states

2013: Governors' deadline for public information  
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# Crucial Habitat and Corridors Identification

## Step 1 - Data Development

- inventory information valuable in identifying crucial habitat,
- address data gaps and inconsistencies across political jurisdictions

## Step 2 - Prioritization of Crucial Habitats

- apply common definitions of crucial habitat consistently to data across – prioritize based on aggregate data and state conservation objectives

## Step 3 – Develop Public Planning Tool

- Build geospatial representation of the conservation priorities of a state wildlife agency, displayed in a consistent manner across political jurisdictions, to better inform land use decisions.

# Benefit to Planners

Informative: Better equips decision-makers to analyze proposed energy projects.

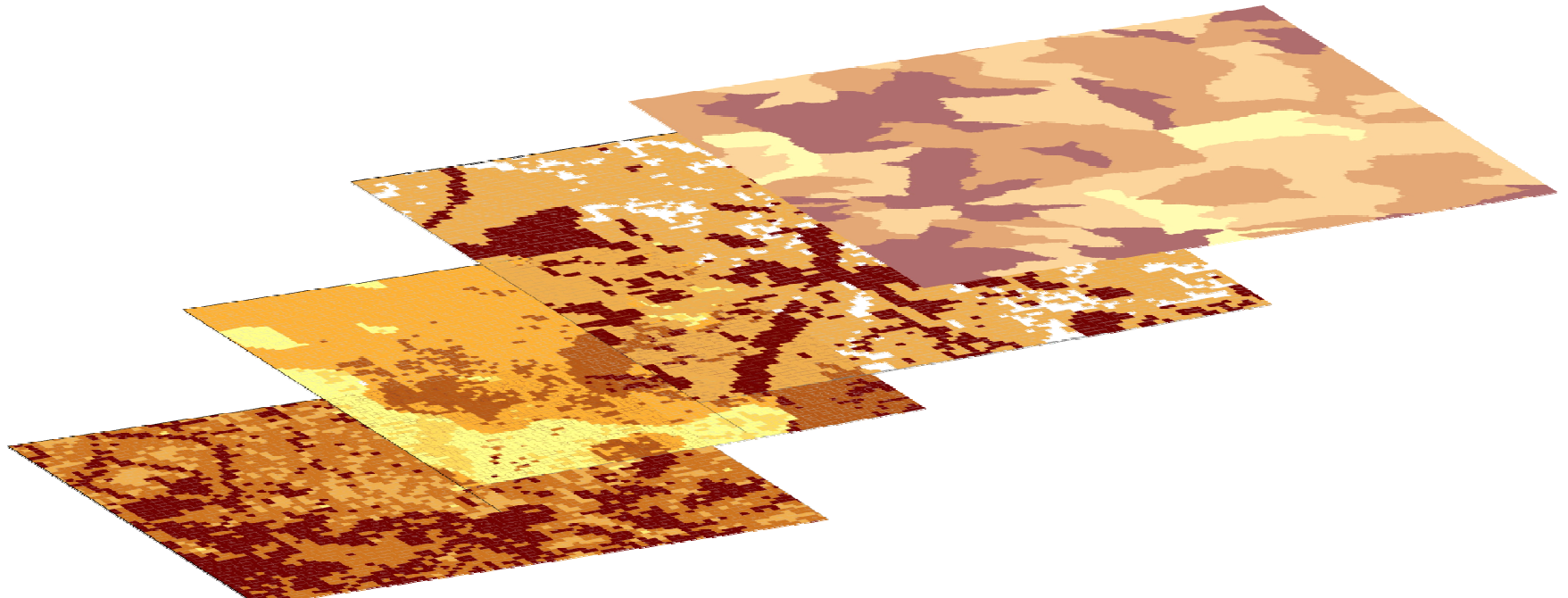
Relevant: Inspired by recognition of the need to develop new energy resources across the West. Initial work funded U.S. DOE, which seeks to incorporate wildlife considerations into regional transmission planning.

Proactive: Provides a common starting point, to proactively obtain important wildlife information at regional scales

Desirable: Offers greater predictability and efficiency by combining unique wildlife information from multiple states into a single, user-friendly system of coordinated, vetted and pre-qualified data and maps.

# CHAT in 2013

- Identification of crucial habitat for fish and wildlife, and important wildlife corridors across Western states
- West-wide CHAT displaying wildlife information at relevant scales across the entire Western U.S.
- Individual GIS-based tools in several states





# Technical Work

Collect and Compile Tier I data west-wide

- Habitat for Species of Concern

- Native Unfragmented Lands

- Riparian/Wetland Habitat

- Connectivity or Linkage Areas

- Terrestrial Game and Sportfish Habitat

Explore options for applying crucial habitat definitions from White Paper

Accommodate state specific needs

Develop options for developing west-wide, online CHAT in 2013

# Ensuring Use of CHAT

2009 MOU between Governors, DOI, DOE, USDA

Federal agencies to support state identification of crucial habitats and corridors consistently across West

2011 Agreement Under MOU

Reaffirm state authority to manage fish & wildlife

Fed agencies will utilize crucial habitat & corridor information

Improve coordination - reduce duplication of effort and efficiency in funding across similar initiatives

Stakeholder Advisory Group



# Available State CHATs

- Montana Crucial Areas Planning System (CAPS)
- Washington Priority Habitat Species (PHS On Line)
- 5-state Southern Great Plains CHAT - Lesser Prairie Chicken
- Arizona HabiMap

# Arizona's HabiMap

www.habimap.org

The screenshot shows the HabiMap website in a Firefox browser window. The browser's address bar displays "habimap.org/habimap/". The website's navigation bar includes links for "Layers", "Species Query", "Draw Projects", "X-ray View", "Identify Layers", "Bookmarks", and "Find a Place". The main content area features a map of Arizona with a blue overlay representing conservation data. A "Layers" panel is open on the left, showing a list of layers with checkboxes and information icons. The "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" layer is checked. Below the map, a scale bar indicates 50 km and 40 mi, and the coordinates "Latitude:33.378716 Longitude:-113.810242" are displayed. The browser's status bar at the bottom shows the search term "ski" and the system clock "8:24 AM 12/23/2011".

Layers

- Reptile Distributions
- SERI Distributions
- Vegetation
- Species & Habitat Conservation Guide
- Riparian
- Species of Economic & Rec. Importance
- Species of Greatest Conservation Need
- SGCN Model
  - High Value

50 km 40 mi

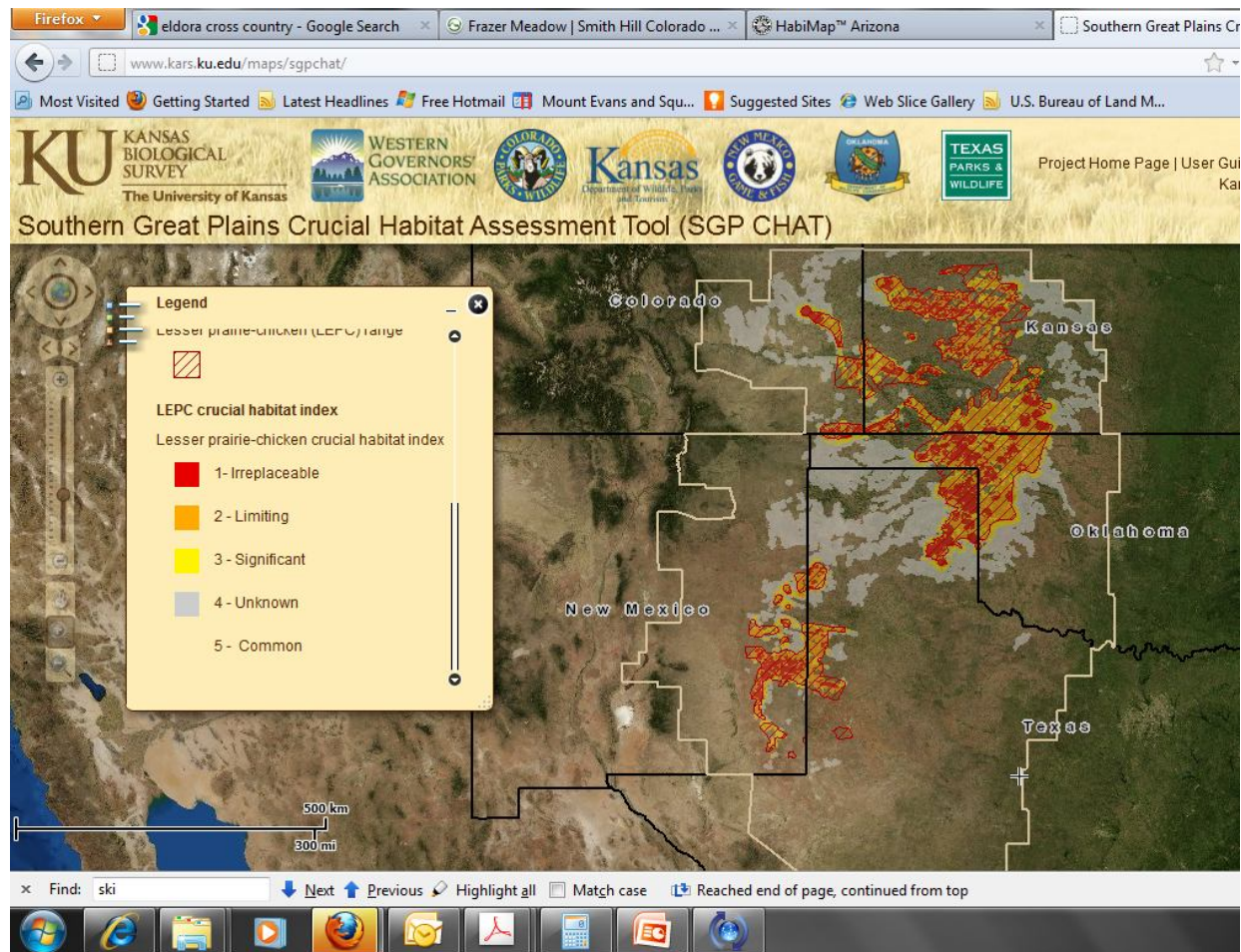
Latitude:33.378716 Longitude:-113.810242

Find: ski

8:24 AM 12/23/2011

# Southern Great Plains CHAT

<http://www.kars.ku.edu/geodata/maps/sgpchat/>



# Montana's CAPS

fwp.mt.gov/gis/maps/caps

The screenshot displays the Montana's CAPS (Crucial Areas Planning System) web application. The browser window shows the URL [fwp.mt.gov/gis/maps/caps/](http://fwp.mt.gov/gis/maps/caps/). The application header features the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks logo and the title "CAPS: CRUCIAL AREAS PLANNING SYSTEM".

The interface includes a left-hand sidebar with a tree view of layers:

- Crucial Areas Supporting Data
  - Aquatic Layers
  - Terrestrial Layers
    - Terrestrial Conservation Species
    - Terrestrial Species Richness
    - Terrestrial Game Quality
    - Terrestrial Game Quality Contributing
  - Habitat Layers
  - Development & Infrastructure Layers
  - Boundary and Other Layers
    - Designated Areas
    - Montana Land Cover
    - Public Land Ownership
    - TRCP Hunter and Angler Valued Lands
    - Watershed Boundaries

Below the sidebar, there are controls for "Adjust transparency value for:" with radio buttons for "Crucial Areas Layers" (selected) and "Other Layers", and a transparency slider ranging from "Transparent" to "Opaque".

The main map area shows a color-coded map of Montana's terrestrial species richness. A legend on the right side of the map defines the following categories:

- Areas Outside of FWP Jurisdiction
  - Indian Reservations & National Park Service Lands
- Terrestrial Species Richness
  - Class 1 (Highest)
  - Class 2
  - Class 3
  - Class 4 (Lowest)

The map also includes a scale bar (1:2,311,167, 36 Miles), a north arrow, and various map navigation tools. At the bottom of the application, there are logos for StreamNet, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and the Montana Natural Heritage Program. Navigation links for CAPS Tutorial, User Guide, Documentation, FAQs, and Suggestions are provided. The browser's search bar contains the text "ski". The system tray at the bottom right shows the date and time as 8:32 AM on 12/23/2011.



## Additional State CHATs in 2012

- Wyoming Interagency Spatial Database & Online Management System (WISDOM)
- California Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE)

# Looking Ahead

- October 2012
  - Every state will identify “crucial” habitat
  - Some states will develop individual state CHATs
- December 2013
  - State information will be integrated and displayed in a public, West-wide CHAT
- Ongoing
  - Updates and maintenance are essential for the long-term benefit of CHAT