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## **Department of Game and Fish purchases new property in southeast New Mexico**

SANTA FE – On Thursday, September 23 the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) was joined by members of the State Game Commission, NGL Energy Partners LP, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst and members of the public to cut the ribbon on a newly purchased property for the benefit of the lesser prairie chicken, other grassland birds, pronghorn and grassland habitats.



The acquisition of the Pipkin Ranch, located about 40 miles southeast of Fort Sumner was made possible through a public-private partnership with NGL Energy Partners and funds generated through the sale of fishing and hunting licenses. This 7,500 acre purchase connects two existing Department properties, creating over 10,000 continuous acres dedicated to New Mexico's grassland wildlife.

"I'd like to thank the sportsmen and sportswomen of New Mexico and our NGL partners for their contributions to conservation," said NMDGF Director Mike Sloane. "This public-private partnership is an example of the positive work that can occur when we all recognize the value of conservation. I am excited to have been a part of this effort and believe that it will stand as an example going forward as we begin to implement the 30 x 30 initiative recently advanced by the governor."

Game Commission Chairwoman Sharon Salazar Hickey said, “Purchasing and maintaining property, such as this ranch, provide a great example of conserving wildlife habitat.” She added, “To the average eye, the Pipkin Ranch might look like rolling grassland with little value; but to the lesser prairie chicken it is a chance for growth – an important conservation stronghold!”

The lesser prairie chicken is an iconic American grouse species that is being considered for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. The lesser prairie chicken tends to occupy native grasslands and prairies. One of the primary causes for concern for the lesser prairie chicken is loss of habitat.

[NGL Energy Partners LP](#) is a diversified, publicly traded, mid-stream energy company, with infrastructure to primarily move liquid hydrogen carbons and New Mexico water including waste water. NGL Energy Partners selflessly stepped in to facilitate the purchase - ensuring that this property, with its known multiple lesser prairie chicken leks, would be added to the state’s conservation portfolio.

Matthias Sayer, with NGL Energy Partners, said, “Given our land ownership and lease holdings in New Mexico, it was organic and natural that we engage with Game and Fish, and started talking about wildlife conservation not only on our properties and those we manage but across the State.”

This public-private partnership came about just days before Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham’s 30 x 30 initiative was issued. Sayer quoted from Governor Lujan Grisham’s [executive order Protecting New Mexico’s Land, Watersheds, Wildlife and Natural Heritage](#), “Voluntary practices implemented by land managers, including private landowners and leaseholders, on working lands (both private and public) provide opportunities to support broader restoration activities, improve watershed health, create resilience in rural and urban communities, add value to the food chain and food security and contribute to the state’s outdoor recreation and eco-tourism economy.” Sayer continued, “That is exactly what has been done here today and we are happy to be a part of it.”

The full comments and ribbon cutting ceremony can be found on the [Department’s YouTube Page](#).

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