Sage-Grouse Initiative (SGI)

Tim Griffiths
David Naugle
Our Collective Ag and Wildlife Futures

Chief White’s vision is to marshal NRCS resources in true partnership fashion to make operational the scale of working lands conservation that we currently only write about in textbooks.
Introducing Conservation Initiatives

Coordinated to identify national priorities, implement solutions and achieve outcomes

• Science based
• Locally led partnerships
• Dedicated resources to accelerate implementation
NRCS’ Sage-Grouse Initiative

- Remove threats to sage-grouse and improve sustainability of working ranches
- Implement enough of the right practices in the right places to benefit populations
- Assess effectiveness of practices to document outcomes and adapt program delivery
What’s Good for Rangelands Is Good for Grouse

Beneficial for both
- Large and intact rangeland
- Rangeland plant diversity
- Healthy rangeland

Negative for both
- Urbanization/subdivision
- Encroached conifer

Identify and articulate shared ‘vision’
75 Years of Trust & Credibility

11,500 trained and dedicated employees

‘SGI simply marshals these existing resources to further embrace our original mission’

‘Helping People Help the Land’
sage-grouse is a landscape ‘focal’ species
Conservation Triage

Greater Sage-Grouse Breeding Density Thresholds

- Red: 25% of Population
- Orange: 50% of Population
- Yellow: 75% of Population
- Light Yellow: 100% of Population
- Blue: Occupied Distribution

Distance:
- 240 Kilometers
71% of SGI projects within cores and 92% within species occupied range.
OREGON

BEFORE

AFTER

2010 Oregon SGI Locations

Legend
- SGI Locations
- 75% Core Areas
- 100% Core Areas
- GSG Distribution
Mark or Move ‘High Risk’ Fence Within 0.25 mi of Leks

180 miles

Improve Grazing Management

1,000 sq miles

Remove Encroached Conifers

40,000 Ac
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B.S. Stevens, K.P. Reese, J.W. Connelly, and D.D. Musil
Univ. Idaho and ID Fish and Game
2 inch increase in grass height

8% increase in nest success

equates to 10% increase in population growth
Benefits of Conifer Removal
Conditioned 40 practices to ensure benefits to sage-grouse

*Provides ‘certainty’ to landowners*

*Enables producers to receive ‘credit’ for voluntary conservation*

**FWS Report recommendations**
Partners rally around SGI

“Don’t tell us what to do; help us do what we need to do…NRCS is doing just that.” Director Bob Budd, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust

“[SGI] has won ranchers' support…for working alongside livestock owners rather than removing land from the grazing system,”

Mike Deering, National Cattlemen's Beef Association
We may have branded SGI with a sage-grouse but our creation now transcends that of a bird and instead embodies our commitment to maintaining rural ways of life and world-class wildlife populations in the West.
NRCS’ SGI media inquiries contact Sylvia.Rainford@wdc.usda.gov (202)720.2536

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