

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



PARTNERING TO CONSERVE
SAGEBRUSH
RANGELANDS





Annual Report October 1, 2021–September 30, 2022

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The purpose of this report is to share FY 2022 partnership accomplishments of the intra-agency agreements between the Bureau of Land Management and the Intermountain West Joint Venture. Between FY 2016 and FY 2022, BLM Headquarters has provided \$7,833,237 to build sagebrush rangeland capacity in priority landscapes. These funds have been matched with \$6,146,118 by dozens of partners.

The goal of our work is to scale up efforts to conserve intact and resilient sagebrush rangelands through proactive, science-based, landscape-scale management and restoration on public, Tribal, and private lands. This partnership is a premier example of how to effectively accelerate the pace and scale of deliverable conservation actions that address threats to sagebrush rangelands across ownership boundaries. Throughout this seven-year endeavor, we have continued to support locally led efforts to conserve, connect, and restore the lands, waters, and wildlife on which we all depend, making this partnership a conservation catalyst across the American West.



INTERMOUNTAIN WEST
JOINT VENTURE



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Executive Summary

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the [Intermountain West Joint Venture \(IWJV\)](#) entered into a formal partnership in June 2016 to implement voluntary, incentive-based restoration and management of sagebrush rangelands across jurisdictional boundaries. We call this effort [Partnering to Conserve Sagebrush Rangelands](#). We are using an “all hands, all lands” approach to work across ownership boundaries in order to conserve this nationally significant sagebrush ecosystem.

This 2022 Annual Report captures the major accomplishments of BLM, IWJV, and over 650 partners. The report summarizes activities of two intra-agency agreements. The first agreement was signed in June 2016 to deliver sage grouse and sagebrush habitat conservation to support the [Memorandum of Understanding between the BLM, the Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\), and the U.S. Forest Service \(USFS\)](#) for the fiscal years (FY) 2016–2022. The second intra-agency agreement was signed in August 2019 to expand upon the proven success of the BLM-IWJV partnership in achieving community-based sagebrush habitat conservation through diverse partnerships for the period FY 2019–2024.

Through these agreements, BLM has provided \$7,833,237, which has been leveraged with \$6,146,118 from partners. BLM State, District, and Field Offices have also contributed \$565,883. Our seven-year partnership has resulted in **\$14,545,238** in funding to support sagebrush rangeland conservation. These collaborative efforts have helped deliver **\$38,169,347** in projects, benefiting communities, wildlife, and habitat across the West.

The current agreement focuses on six priorities of the Department of the Interior and BLM:

- reduce catastrophic rangeland wildfires;
- prevent and control noxious and invasive weeds;
- restore wet meadow and riparian habitats;
- remove conifers that have expanded into sagebrush habitat;
- implement range structural improvements;
- coordinate habitat protection and restoration actions associated with big game migratory corridor efforts.



The core part of our work involves providing capacity to the field to help BLM and partners achieve conservation across boundaries. Notably, we’ve built relationships with 56 BLM State, District, and Field Offices to identify barriers to planning, implementation, and evaluation. We support BLM’s collaboration with partners on persistent, large-scale threats like invasive annual grasses, catastrophic wildfire, conifer encroachment, drought, and impacts of climate change on sagebrush rangelands. We also bring targeted communications, outreach, and technical transfer tools to address these challenges.

A conglomeration of partners—including private landowners, Tribal Nations, recreationists, conservation organizations, state fish and wildlife agencies, other federal agencies, universities, corporate entities, foundations, and more—are at this important table, helping BLM sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands—along with neighboring lands—for the future.



The continual threats that impact the sagebrush ecosystem are driving movements in which people come together to utilize resources and leverage partnerships in order to sustain this habitat and the numerous invaluable resources it provides. This partnership is key to making that happen, given the BLM’s responsibility in managing 78 million acres of sagebrush habitat. Together, we are helping conserve the Greater Sage-grouse and more than 350 species of conservation concern. The strategic and proactive efforts of western conservation partners working to conserve sagebrush rangelands are also ensuring that these lands can continue to meet people’s cultural, economic, recreational, and other needs well into the future.

We use the latest research, science-based planning, and decision-support tools to focus our efforts on creating field capacity that accelerates, coordinates, and streamlines conservation actions and treatments across fence lines. By engaging with BLM State, District, and Field Offices and communities, we identify needs such as staffing capacity, clearances and consultation, or planning tools, and create field-based support. Investments from BLM Headquarters in partner positions are leveraged with additional funding (federal, state, private, and corporate) to increase efficiency and outcomes—providing collaborative infrastructure.

Total FY 2018–2022 Accomplishments

326,971	acres of conifer removal
5,305	acres of fuels treatment
2,633	acres of fuel breaks
12,970	acres of conservation easements
17,831	acres of annual/noxious weeds treated
105,479	acres of vegetation treatment/enhancement
80,748	acres of improved grazing practices
1,747	acres of wet meadows restored
1,095	mesic structures installed
553,684	total project acres
18	field delivery capacity positions supported
56	BLM Field, District and State Offices supported with capacity

2022 Overview and Noteworthy Achievements of the Field

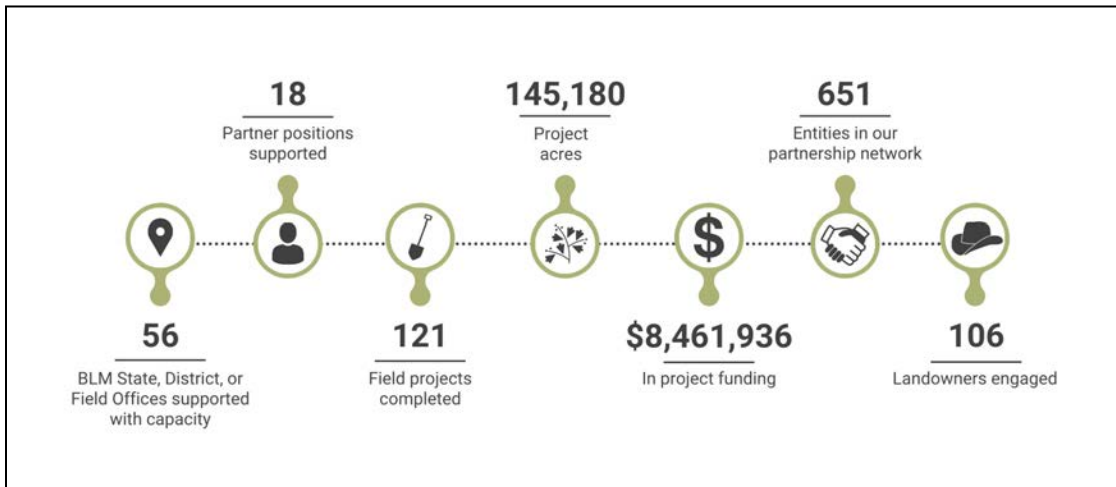
- ❑ 18 field delivery positions are supported to assist BLM offices across 10 states with implementing sagebrush habitat projects and treatments in collaboration with partners.
- ❑ Accelerating conservation with 145,180 project acres completed: 92% of these project acres occurred on BLM land.
- ❑ Leveraging funds by teaming up with other agencies, collaboratives, and partners to secure substantial grant funds, including Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) dollars.

- ❑ Supporting their local communities in which they live by hiring local contractors when possible, engaging youth through a youth employment program, and utilizing conservation corps members.
- ❑ Creating GIS tools, maps, and plans that aid in strategic project planning that is specific to local landscapes.

Sage Capacity Team

One of the most powerful elements of this partnership has been our ability to build and support the much-needed “boots on the ground” through developing field delivery capacity positions that work on voluntary, proactive sagebrush habitat conservation in partnership with the BLM across the West. These positions are pivotal, adding capacity and becoming a powerful and coordinated team.

As of FY 2022, funds in the BLM-IWJV partnership support 18 of these field delivery positions in 10 states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming. These positions are referred to as the [Sage Capacity Team](#); they are non-federal positions that are hosted by non-governmental organizations or other institutions. Each position helps to coordinate rangeland health and wildlife projects across public and private boundaries; address challenges in rangeland conservation; track projects; facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue and forums; and communicate success stories.



FY 2022 Accomplishments in the Field

The following table includes the cumulative accomplishments of the Sage Capacity Team.

<i>Overview of Capacity</i>		<i>Partnership Accomplishments</i>	
Total Projects Planned	85	Conservation Easements (acres)	2,621
Total Projects Completed	121	Conifer Removed (acres)	128,330
Total Project Acres	145,180	Annual/Noxious Weeds Treated (acres)	3,280
Total Project Funding	\$8,461,936	Vegetation Management/Habitat Enhancement (acres)	3,643
Partners Engaged	651	Improved Grazing Practices (acres)	6,854
Landowners Engaged	106	Fence Modification (miles)	5
Meetings/Field Tours	140	Wet Meadows Restored (acres)	34
Outreach/Volunteer Events	12	Seedlings Planted	220,900
		Mesic Structures Installed	319



The following narrative details the accomplishments of each position. Please see the [Partners in the Sage](#) platform to learn more about each position and their location.

Field Delivery Capacity Icon Key

Each position provides "Project Delivery" or "Partnership Facilitation" services, and in some cases both.

Project Delivery: 

Partnership Facilitation: 

1 and 2. Southwest Montana Sagebrush Conservation Partnership Coordinator and Project Manager

**Supports: Dillon BLM Field Office, Western Montana District Office
Established 2018; Project Manager position created in 2021**



Capacity Need:

- Enhance coordination among partners (e.g., schedule, organize, and facilitate meetings)
- Improve project management (e.g., define priorities and implement coordinated actions across jurisdictional boundaries)
- Build strategic outreach/communications (e.g., build external relationships to support SMSP, develop brochures for landowners, and communicate success stories)

The Partnership Coordinator supports the Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership (SMSP) as it continues to leverage collaboration within the sagebrush biome with new partners, strengthen existing programs, and expand community engagement with the Dillon [Youth Employment Program](#). The Project Manager works closely with the Coordinator as the partnership maintains a fast pace, delivering on-the-ground habitat restoration projects while expanding work to address additional threats to the sagebrush steppe ecosystem in southwest Montana. In FY 2022, SMSP maintained their aggressive management in continuing to address conifer encroachment by completing 8,172 acres of conifer expansion treatments across all land ownerships.

Capitalizing on additional capacity, efforts with the BLM Dillon Field Office and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation allowed the partnership to complete fuels work. SMSP plans to use this treatment as a pilot project for biochar production in the region, demonstrating a means to sequester carbon by burning conifer slash and putting it back into the soil, rather than the business-as-usual approach of burning slash piles and releasing 100% of carbon into the atmosphere. Biochar is a charcoal-like substance that's made by burning biomass in a controlled process to reduce contamination and store carbon.

Exciting new funding opportunities transpired as the Partnership Coordinator and Project Manager worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) partner biologist and the USFWS's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program to submit a proposal to the USFWS Sagebrush Ecosystem Program funded through the BIL. The \$940,000 proposal was fully

funded to deliver conifer expansion treatment in priority sagebrush habitat over the next two years.

The Project Manager developed an ArcGIS online tool that helped accelerate widespread cheatgrass inventory utilizing Youth Employment Program crews and seasonal SMSP staff. Through partnership with the USFWS BIL proposal, the Partnership Coordinator secured \$188,000 over two years, earmarked for treatment of 1,500 acres and a comprehensive inventory of invasive annual grasses in southwest Montana. This is the first region-wide funding allocated to addressing this threat at scale for SMSP.

A [BLM Daily](#) story, “Dillon Field Office improves wet and mesic meadow areas in priority sage-grouse habitat,” describes how Keystone Gulch (priority sage grouse habitat) contains a series of slope wetlands that capture and slowly release runoff and groundwater discharge in the headwaters to the Upper Missouri River Basin. As a result, they sustain unique plant communities, cover, and insects that are critical to sage grouse brood rearing, as well as many other species of wildlife.

Overview

Total Projects Planned: 19
Total Projects Completed: 25
Partners Engaged: 21
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 10
of Landowners Engaged: 20
Total Project Acres: 8,185 acres

Partnership Accomplishments

Conifer Removed: 8,172 acres
Mesic Structures Installed: 311
Mesic Structures Planned: 102
Total Project Funding Completed: \$812,629



3. Prineville & Vale Sage-Grouse Local Implementation Teams (LIT) Coordinator Supports: Prineville BLM District Office, Vale District Office, Malheur Field Office Established 2019



Capacity Need:

- Build effective collaboration at the local level to promote and support landscape-scale conservation planning
- Reinvigorate and provide support to two LITs (Prineville and Malheur)
- Work with BLM to create Comprehensive Threat Reduction Plans

The Coordinator continues to be instrumental in bringing Vale and Prineville LITs together to help grow and execute each LIT's objectives, as well as to facilitate communication and foster collaborative efforts between members of the LITs.

The Coordinator is incorporating partner comments into the Prineville Threat Reduction Plan with the goal of finalizing it in the first quarter of 2023. With assistance from Pheasants Forever, the Coordinator supported LIT partners in successfully pursuing grant funding for juniper removal.

Several members of the Vale LIT teamed up with the Harney County Wildfire Collaborative to jointly apply for grant funding through Senate Bill 762: Landscape Resiliency Program. This joint effort was awarded just over \$5 million to implement the [Southeast Oregon Wildfire Resiliency](#) project, which will enhance wildfire resiliency and reduce fine fuels to minimize the threat of large-scale wildfires across more than 26,000 acres of sagebrush steppe landscapes in southeast Oregon. The Coordinator played several vital roles, including being the lead Pheasants Forever representative for planning and implementing the grant funding, providing GIS and mapping support, and most importantly, serving as point person in charge of outreach to owners of private land adjacent to lands where BLM was planning to do treatments under this new effort, to encourage cross-boundary continuation of projects.

In June 2022, Vale LIT partners toured along Willow Creek, showcasing low-tech restoration techniques completed through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. All projects used low-tech restoration techniques to restore a contiguous reach of Willow Creek that includes a patchwork of private landowners and BLM-administered lands.

The Coordinator continued to serve on the SageCon's Adaptive Management Working Group, which strives to build accountability and a framework for the Sage-grouse State Action Plan to ensure strategic implementation throughout agencies and across ownerships.

"This project proposal recognizes that work on this landscape must transcend piecemeal projects and use the multiple partners working across multiple ownerships to influence landscape-scale fire outcomes." ~Katie Wollstein, Oregon State University Rangeland Fire Specialist, regarding one of the project proposals the Vale LIT submitted for funding using Pheasants Forever as grant administrator and project manager.

Overview

Partners Engaged: 51

Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 17

Projects Planned: 2

4. Bruneau-Owyhee Sage Grouse Habitat (BOSH) Project Outreach Coordinator
Supports: Boise BLM District Office
Established 2020



Capacity Need:

- Provide range and wildlife technical assistance targeting conservation efforts on public and private lands to assist with BOSH project coordination, management, and success
- Enhance coordination among partners
- Implement strategic outreach/communications

The Coordinator provides technical support to the BLM Boise District and the BOSH project. The position is instrumental in keeping effective communication between these entities and landowners, as well as serving as the primary contact for general project issues.

The Coordinator also provides range and wildlife technical assistance targeting conservation efforts on public and private lands to assist with overall BOSH project coordination, management, and success. Public land managers, private landowners, and numerous partners in Owyhee County have come together to strategically remove encroaching conifers from horizon to horizon. The BOSH project aims to remove Western juniper from 617,000 acres. To maximize benefits to sage grouse, highly targeted conifer removal treatments focus on early-stage conifer encroachment within six miles of sage-grouse leks. Progress to date already makes BOSH one of the largest conifer removal efforts in the sagebrush biome.

The [BOSH Storymap](#) spotlights how land managers are utilizing the latest science and management practices to guide strategic conifer removal and restore this incredible region.

Overview

Total Projects Planned: 5
Total Projects Completed: 5
Partners Engaged: 10
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 1

Partnership Accomplishments

Conifer Removed: 78,059 acres
Conifer Removal Planned: 41,347 acres
Total Project Funding Completed: \$1,489,665



Before



After

5. Outcome-based Grazing Authorization Coordinator
Supports: Nevada BLM State Office, Lakeview Oregon Field Office
Established 2018 and refilled in August 2021



Capacity Need:

- Provide support to the BLM National Outcome-based Grazing (OBG) Project Lead to create and archive the best management practices developed through the pilot phase of the Outcome-based Grazing Authorization (OBGA) pilot projects
- Develop and integrate a national OBG program
- Build relationships and provide technical assistance to BLM staff and permittees with program application and expansion
- Strengthen and facilitate communications and collaboration with stakeholders, partners, and the public

The Coordinator provides additional capacity and efficiency to scale up and expand the OBG program within BLM and among livestock operators. The Coordinator works closely with the National BLM Outcome-based Grazing Lead for OBGA. As forward momentum for the OBG program continues, land managers are setting new goals and looking to widen the program's reach. In 2022, the program aimed to incorporate flexibility in livestock grazing permits on a larger scale and continue expanding to encompass fully processed grazing authorizations. [The Need for Flexibility: Exploring Innovation in a Public Land Grazing System](#) video was created, highlighting the Lakeview, Oregon, OBGA Demonstration project as the first fully processed OBGA permit that put flexibilities into practice. Three projects issued grazing decisions this year. The BLM plans to develop guidance and best management practices for broader implementation of OBGA based on experiences from implementing nationally supported demonstration projects. Grazing management actions will be developed for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis.

The Coordinator worked with the three BLM demonstration project leads and IWJV communications to create a [Grazing for Outcomes](#) StoryMap. The BLM's OBG program continues to grow in exciting directions. During this year's virtual Society for Range Management Annual Meeting, the BLM shared updates from the program through a series of virtual webinars. [Click here to watch the full virtual webinar.](#)



The Coordinator has worked with BLM, TechMatters/Terrasos, and the Jornada office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on overhauling the existing LandPKS mobile application that can be integral to consistently collecting and reporting monitoring data of OBG and Flexibility Authorizations. This umbrella of mobile applications will be available to the public.

Overview

Demonstration Projects Implementing OBGA Grazing Decisions: 8/10
Communications Projects Completed: 4
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 5

6. Idaho Rangeland Conservation Partnership (IRCP) Coordinator
Supports: Idaho BLM State Office, Owyhee Field Office
Established 2018



Capacity Need:

- Create an overarching entity that works across organizations with vision and focus
- Build consensus around needed rangeland management practices, research, and policies
- Leverage resources (e.g., ideas, knowledge, and financial capital) to implement conservation practices in sagebrush ecosystems

The Coordinator supports the IRCP network to bring groups together that may not have another avenue to communicate with each other about the importance of healthy, sustainable rangelands and collaborative solutions. The Coordinator works closely with BLM staff regularly on projects, opportunities, and issues and helps identify how IRCP can be most effective. Collaborating with the BOSH Coordinator and the BLM Boise District Fuels Coordinator, IRCP hosted a meeting to connect the agencies and private landowners to initiate discussions about BOSH fuel break projects and juniper removal. Through trust built with stakeholders, the Coordinator connected them with these project efforts and funding partners, resulting in larger-scale implementation.

In FY 2022, IRCP achieved the following important accomplishments:

- Co-host for the University of Idaho Rangeland Fall Forum “From Drought to Resilience” that can be viewed on the [Rangeland Center’s web page](#).
- Partnered with the [Sustainable Rangeland Roundtable](#) to train landowners and land managers on the [Sustainable Ranch Management Assessment](#) tool, which helps with business planning and ecological monitoring to assess the sustainability of their ranch or land.
- Brought partners together for the Annual [Idaho Rangeland Conservation Partnership](#) meeting.
- Conducted educational outreach that included:
 - Speaking at a two-day workshop for journalists, [Wildfire on the Range](#).
 - Staffing a booth at Shade City Brewfest Earth Day Celebration and sharing the message about the social, economic, and ecological aspects of Idaho rangelands with a diverse group of young adults, urban dwellers, and folks new to the West.
- The Coordinator was pivotal in bringing key landowners to the table for landscape-scale treatments and assisting permittees in working with the BLM and other partners to address feasible grazing rotations post-treatment.

“The IRCP has furthered crucial conversations around the future of dispersed recreation in Idaho by bringing stakeholders and state and federal agencies together toward sustainable actions across the landscape.” ~Tanya Thrift, Boise BLM District Manager

Overview

Total Projects Completed: 5
Partners Engaged: 25
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 5
of Landowners Engaged: 5
Outreach/Education/Volunteer Events: 4
Total Project Acres: 282

Partnership Accomplishments

Annual/Noxious Weed Treated: 282 acres

7. Burns and Lakeview Oregon Local Implementation Team (LIT) Coordinator
Supports: Burns BLM District Office, Lakeview Field Office
Established 2021



Capacity Need:

- Create an overarching entity that works across organizations with vision and focus
- Build consensus around needed rangeland management practices, research, and policies
- Leverage resources (e.g., ideas, knowledge, and financial capital) to implement conservation practices in sagebrush ecosystems

The Coordinator supports the Burns and Lakeview, Oregon, LITs in promoting working lands conservation to restore sage grouse habitat and populations in Lake and Harney counties. Though each LIT group is still in the beginning phases of collaboration establishment, both have taken a similar approach to developing work objectives and planning future project areas. The Coordinator facilitated several meetings with each group to develop mapping projects that identify where work has been done and priority areas on which to focus future project plans. Upcoming multi-year projects include juniper removal and restoration work in Burns LIT with Good Neighbor Authority agreements with BLM and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in the Steens Mountain area.

Overview

Partners Engaged: 20

Landowners Engaged: 8

Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 6



8. Sage Grouse Initiative Range and Wildlife Conservationist
Supports: Twin Falls BLM District Office, Burley Field Office
Established 2018



Capacity Need:

- Support shared partnerships and projects that fulfill the intent of the NRCS-BLM-USFS Memorandum of Understanding
- Deliver landscape-level conservation and habitat enhancement across private and public lands

This Conservationist plays an integral role in expediting projects across the Burley landscape by assisting with contracting and coordination between partners. Conservation projects were implemented across multiple boundaries in south-central Idaho to improve the landscape of southern Idaho by reducing Utah juniper encroachment and enhancing sagebrush habitat. This shared position played a vital role of connecting partners (Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Governor’s Office of Species Conservation, Minidoka Ranger District of the USFS, Pheasants Forever, Twin Falls District and Burley Field Office of BLM, and USFWS) and conservation efforts which have led to landscape-scale benefits. This position also assists with range seeding, sagebrush planting, annual grass treatment, and mesic restoration on multiple land ownerships.



Overview

Total Projects Completed: 3
Total Projects Planned: 4
Partners Engaged: 6
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 9
of Landowners Engaged: 4
Total Project Acres: 17,906

Partnership Accomplishments

Conifer Removed: 14,610 acres
Veg Management/Hab Enhanced: 298 acres
Annual/Noxious Weed Treated: 2,998 acres
Seedlings Planted: 201,900
Total Project Funding Completed: \$1,388,414

9. Sage Grouse Initiative Range and Wildlife Conservationist
Supports: Lander BLM Field Office
Established 2018



Capacity Need:

- Support shared partnerships and projects that fulfill the intent of the NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative and local partnership efforts
- Deliver landscape-level conservation and habitat enhancement across private and public lands

The Conservationist focuses on landscape-scale, partner-based, science-driven conservation efforts across both private and public lands to promote sage grouse conservation and enhance

rangeland habitat utilized by hundreds of other sagebrush-occurring species. This position works closely with the local BLM and Wyoming Game and Fish Department offices, facilitating interactions with NRCS.

In addition to providing agricultural producers and private landowners with technical assistance, the Conservationist works to deliver voluntary Farm Bill conservation programs that provide incentives to ranchers and farmers who implement various management efforts. This position is also working on key areas that include rangeland improvement projects, wet-meadow and mesic restoration, annual grass invasion treatments, and juniper removal. Producers hire local contractors when possible to implement projects, as a way to connect conservation practices to the community. The Conservationist attended two mesic meadow restoration workshops this year and plans on scaling up mesic meadow restoration projects this next fiscal year.



Wyoming received \$5 million as a pilot state for a new NRCS program focusing on conservation of lands important for migratory big game populations. The Conservationist secured \$1.1 million to implement three projects out of his field office to remove encroaching conifer, treat annual invasives, implement wildlife-friendly fence projects, plant native rangeland, and restore mesic meadows.

The position served as the project lead on approximately 39,720 acres of BLM-administered lands currently enrolled in prescribed grazing contracts administered and paid for by NRCS, with several more thousands expected to be enrolled next year. The position will continue to work closely with BLM, grazing allotment permittees, and NRCS to assist producers in the application process for NRCS cost-share incentives on BLM-administered lands.

Overview

Total Projects Planned: 9
Partners Engaged: 8
of Landowners Engaged: 17
Partner Meetings/Field Tours: 7

Partnership Accomplishments

Total Acres Planned: 72,199
Total Project Funding Planned: \$1,893,273



10. Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance Landscape Coordinator
Supports: Salt Lake City BLM Field Office, West Desert District Office
Established 2017; *sunset in 2022



Capacity Need:

- Increase field capacity for collaborative sagebrush conservation
- Improve cross-agency, cross-partner conservation and communication
- Increase efficiencies in managing public land uses and implementing restoration projects in sagebrush ecosystems

The Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance was created in 2017—and represented the first investment in field delivery capacity to support the BLM-IWJV partnership. The Coordinator provided partnership coordination and support to BLM, the West Box Elder Coordinated Resource Management Group, Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative, Utah Department of Natural Resources, NRCS, Utah State University, and ranchers in West Box Elder County.

This Coordinator played a valuable role in this landscape until her position sunset in February 2022. IWJV has and will continue to work with partners in Utah to identify other capacity needs.

**This position was discontinued in 2022 and does not appear in the graphic on page 27.*





Sage Capacity Team Members



In Action



11. Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage-Grouse Working Group Project Coordinator
Supports: Bishop BLM Field Office
Established 2020



Capacity Need:

- Support the Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage Grouse Working Group with management and restoration efforts that promote the long-term conservation of sage grouse, the sustainability of sagebrush ecosystems, and working rural landscapes
- Use adaptive management to scale up on-the-ground projects
- Build locally based, effective collaboration that promotes landscape-scale conservation planning and enhances partnerships

The Coordinator provides holistic oversight to the Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage-Grouse Working Group's goals while significantly increasing its capacity to design, implement, and monitor projects to benefit Greater Sage-grouse. The Coordinator provides the collective capacity of the group to scale up on-the-ground projects through knowledge gained from pilot work and by using concepts of adaptive management, strengthening partnerships across the 1.5 million acres spanning Lassen County, California, and northwestern Washoe County, Nevada.

The working group gained momentum following completion of the updated Conservation Strategy in 2021 for the Buffalo-Skedaddle Population Management Unit to identify, prioritize, and implement projects across the landscape, such as stream projects that improve riparian ecosystems, an important component of brood-rearing habitat for sage grouse. The Coordinator facilitated construction of eight beaver dam analog structures and led a youth crew in constructing a pipe rail fence around a spring near Mixie Flat to protect the heavily utilized riparian area from overgrazing.



To decrease the burden on cultural resource staff with surveys, the Coordinator proposed an innovative approach that involved developing a new phase of juniper, "Half Phase 1" juniper, that would have no adverse effect on cultural resources if hand cut to protect key sage grouse habitat. The Coordinator was instrumental in planning juniper removal projects on California Department of Fish and Wildlife parcels in Lassen County this year. She helped write a Phase 1 juniper removal contract for one such 380-acre parcel that sits between two active sage-grouse leks and is near a previous juniper treatment on BLM land.

The BLM Eagle Lake Field Office contracted a crew of about 20 conservation corps members from the Great Basin Institute to plant over 16,000 seedlings. The Coordinator helped BLM lead the crews in planting the seedlings within three different fire scars.

The Coordinator worked with University of California Cooperative Extension colleagues on a couple of indaziflam research plots. They will continue to collect data for several more years to investigate native plant injuries and lack of consistency in annual grass control.

Overview

Total Projects Completed: 7

Partnership Accomplishments

Conifer Removal Planned: 4,882 acres

Total Projects Planned: 8
Partners Engaged: 31
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 16
of Landowners Engaged: 2

Total Project Funding Completed: \$172,000
Total Project Funding Planned: \$1,222,543

12. Results Oriented Grazing for Ecological Resilience (ROGER) Facilitator Supports: Nevada BLM State Office, Multiple District/Field Offices Established 2020



Capacity Need:

- Coordination and facilitation of the ROGER group

The Facilitator has kept the ROGER stakeholders informed and connected as a key support in organizing and facilitating many partner meetings throughout the year. The ROGER is a collaborative group formed in 2016 to achieve land management objectives that improve overall ecological resilience, landscape health, and productivity, and that support ranching. This position's work is vital in keeping partners engaged with the ROGER group and making meaningful connections regarding public land management statewide. The trust and relationships built through ROGER have helped create a working group that is focused on one of the pilot ranches participating in the BLM's [Outcome-Based Grazing Authorizations](#) program: the Winecup-Gamble Ranch.

Overview

Partners Engaged: 60
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 16
of Landowners Engaged: 23



13. Bristlecone Project Coordinator
Supports: Bristlecone BLM Field Office, Ely District Office
Established 2020



Capacity Need:

- Provide range and wildlife technical assistance targeting conservation efforts on public and private lands to assist with overall project coordination, management, and success
- Enhance coordination among partners (e.g., schedule, organize, and facilitate meetings)
- Facilitate strategic outreach and communications

The Coordinator worked with BLM habitat biologists and fire management specialists to provide “boots-on-the-ground” assistance with a wide variety of conservation activities by developing, facilitating, and coordinating local contract agreements. With a mix of diverse public-private partnerships and pooled resources, the Coordinator and BLM staff expanded efforts across the BLM Ely District area to treat encroaching conifers. A local contractor was utilized to complete two large conifer projects.

The Coordinator continued to develop relationships with the local community and partners to grow conservation coordination efforts and awareness, providing a full watershed-scale influence for wildlife and working rangelands. With these watershed-scale projects come several immeasurable benefits to local communities and their working lands. These projects protect local communities and natural resources by reducing the risks of catastrophic wildfires, improving working lands, and improving wildlife habitat.

Overview

Partners Engaged: 5
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 6
of Landowners Engaged: 4
Total Project Acres: 32,374 acres

Partnership Accomplishment

Conifer Removed: 25,031 acres
Improved Grazing Practices: 6,835 acres
Fuels Treatment: 455 acres
Total Project Funding Completed: \$3,821,640

14. Northwest Colorado Sagebrush Conservation Partnership Coordinator
Supports: Grand Junction BLM District Office, White River Field Office
Established 2021



Capacity Need:

- Provide range and wildlife technical assistance targeting conservation efforts on public and private lands to assist with overall project coordination, management, and success
- Provide support to local BLM offices as part of an interdisciplinary team to complete rangeland health assessments, permit renewals, and sage grouse habitat improvement projects
- Expand local and state partner capacity to implement migration corridor projects at landscape scales and across ownership boundaries
- Increase project funding and cost-share opportunities through seeking habitat restoration grants
- Facilitate strategic outreach and communications

The Coordinator assists Colorado BLM and partners with enhancing landscape-scale conservation and restoration efforts in crucial sagebrush steppe habitat for lands managed by the BLM Grand Junction and White River Field Offices, as well as adjacent private and state lands. This position was created to support implementation of SO 3362, an order “Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors.” The Mule Deer Foundation hosts the position, with supporting partners including Colorado Parks and Wildlife, USFWS partners, Colorado State University, White River and Douglas Creek Conservation District, and other local and state partners.

In 2022, the Coordinator formed a Position Advisory Committee designed to provide feedback on the overall vision for this position, give guidance on position deliverables and possible partnership opportunities, help identify gaps and capacity needs, and contribute to the development and revisions of a Strategic Work Plan for this position.

The Coordinator played a key role in contract administration and coordination as well as project inspection and reporting for a 415-acre pinyon-juniper hand-thinning project. For future mechanical treatments, the Coordinator was responsible for working directly with BLM staff to develop a survey protocol for conducting Special Plant Surveys on 1,677 acres. This project also included the Coordinator conducting private landowner visits to gain access to survey areas, as well as managing a survey crew and completing the GIS and written reporting requirements.

In addition, this position has engaged with a newly formed group called the Grand Mesa Watershed Resiliency Partnership. This group is collaboratively engaging to plan future watershed improvement projects on the Grand Mesa National Forest. In addition, last spring, MDF was awarded a \$383,000 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to complete post-fire rehabilitation on one of Colorado’s largest wildlifes, the Pine Gulch Fire. In the coming year, the Coordinator will be working with partners to plan and implement projects under this landscape-scale restoration effort.

Overview

Partners Engaged: 6
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 3
of Landowners Engaged: 1
Total Project Acres: 415

Partnership Accomplishments

Conifer Removed: 415 acres
Total Acres Planned: 6,677 acres
Total Project Funding Completed: \$282,152



15. Bi-State Local Area Working Group Coordinator
Supports: Bishop BLM Field Office
Established 2018



Capacity Need:

- Increase effectiveness and efficiency in meeting reporting and accountability needs
- Broaden outreach within the Bi-State community
- Add agency capacity to implement priority projects on-the-ground
- Coordinate actions across ownership boundaries for seamless conservation

The Bi-State Sage-Grouse Local Area Working Group (Bi-State LAWG) works across jurisdictional boundaries to monitor Bi-State sage grouse populations and improve sage grouse habitat. This collaborative conservation network contains a diverse group of stakeholders that includes federal, state, and local government agencies; Tribal members and representatives; nonprofit organizations; and private landowners. The Coordinator position was established in 2018 to support the Bi-State LAWG by growing the group’s partnerships and capacity, managing organization logistics, coordinating conservation efforts, and championing the success of this unique collaborative. Given that nearly 90% of sage grouse habitat in the Bi-State is found on public lands, the Coordinator works closely with several BLM offices in California and Nevada.

In FY 2022, the Coordinator’s accomplishments included:

- Developed relationships and continued building trust with LAWG members, growing the collaborative and facilitating their momentum.
- Worked with the Technical Advisory Committee to begin updating the Bi-State Action Plan, which is the framework that guides all conservation efforts.
- Identified conservation priorities and organized meetings to develop annual work implementation plans.
- Completed the [10-Year Action Plan Accomplishment Report](#).
- Coordinated spring lek monitoring efforts.
- Coordinated with the Bi-State Tribal Natural Resource Committee to expand their capacity and involvement in conservation efforts.
- Attended public education and outreach events.
- Developed outreach and communication pieces to share the amazing story of iconic species and this hard-working and dedicated collaborative.

Overview

Total Projects Completed: 46
Total Project Acres: 4,904
Partners Engaged: 364

Partnership Accomplishments

Conifer Removed: 2,268 acres
Conservation Easements: 2,621 acres
Veg Management/Hab Enhanced: 15 acres
Seedlings Planted: 3,000
Total Project Funding Completed: \$170,436



16. Arizona Strip Wildlife Biologist/Habitat Planning and Implementation Specialist
Supports: Arizona Strip BLM District Office
Established 2020



Capacity Need:

- Provide range and wildlife technical assistance targeting conservation efforts on public and private lands to assist with overall project coordination, management, and success
- Enhance coordination among partners (e.g., schedule, organize, and facilitate meetings)
- Implement strategic outreach/communications

The Specialist enhances partnerships with cooperating agencies, enabling large-scale coordination in this remote northwestern corner of Arizona between Grand Canyon and the Utah state boundary line. This position supports implementation of SO 3362, an order “Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors.” This position is instrumental in maximizing financial resources to develop project proposals for improving wildlife habitat, increasing the economic viability of permit holders, and building cross-boundary relationships that will enable landscape-level restoration of sagebrush and strengthen the conservation ethic in communities on the Arizona Strip.



The Specialist has bolstered connectivity through developing innovative and creative solutions for agreements to help implement treatments. A key partner, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, developed a new platform for tracking projects, called LORAX. The Specialist worked between Arizona Game and Fish and the BLM to negotiate sharing shapefiles and project information to populate this pivotal project-tracking platform. This information will help direct funding to projects Arizona Game and Fish would like to prioritize in order to achieve landscape-level effects on the Arizona Strip, as well as throughout Arizona.

The Specialist was a key planner for a [field tour](#) of the Sage Capacity Team, highlighting rehabilitation and stabilization projects completed with the dedication of local BLM partners and many BLM staff, including members of the Integrated Vegetation Management team.

“Our Integrated Vegetation Management program accomplishments have grown tenfold over the last three years, and Kaitlyn Yoder has been a major part of that growth since 2020. Kaitlyn is an asset for our district. Our Integrated Vegetation Management programs would not be where they are without her.” ~Brian Tritle, Arizona Strip Associate District Manager

Overview

Total Projects Planned: 3

Partners Engaged: 8

Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 18

Partnership Facilitation

Total Acres Planned: 1,200 acres

Total Project Funding Planned: \$106,989

17. New Mexico's Coordinating Wildlife Biologist/Habitat Planning and Implementation Specialist

Supports: New Mexico BLM State Office, Farmington and Albuquerque District Offices, Taos and Farmington Field Office
Established 2021



Capacity Need:

- Improve communication, cooperation, and collaboration among key agencies in the land management and wildlife management areas
- Improve outreach to and engagement of members of the public, including landowners, interested stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations
- Connect landowners and stakeholders with agencies, projects, and research that can assist them in creating better habitat
- Improve habitats along the migration corridors in New Mexico on both private and public lands

The Specialist focuses on partnership facilitation and coordination across agencies to plan and implement on-the-ground conservation projects that accelerate work in this landscape for big game and other sagebrush obligate species. Similar to other positions supported by this partnership, the Specialist supports implementation of SO 3362, an order "Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors."



In FY 2022, this position proved instrumental in re-establishing relationships between the BLM, the USFS, and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, facilitating data-sharing from the state fish and wildlife agency's wildlife corridor study. This collaboration culture encourages these entities to work toward expanded connectivity for wildlife as well as to build connectivity in hunting, viewing, and recreation for communities. One major effort the Specialist led was gaining Freedom of Information Act exceptions to enable New Mexico Game and Fish to share radio collar data with the BLM, USFS, and other federal conservation agencies. Access to scientific collar data will streamline the NEPA process. The Specialist has built relationships and trust among agencies, conservation organizations, and private landowners, planning future collaborative conservation projects and advancing partnerships to a new level that would not have happened otherwise. This has built promising project funding and implementation planned for FY 2023.

Overview

Total Projects Planned: 3

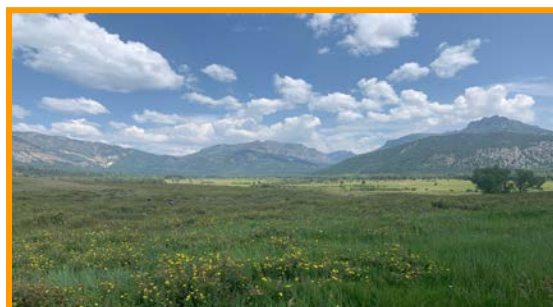
Partners Engaged: 8

Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 18

Partnership Facilitation

Total Acres Planned: 1,200 acres

Total Project Funding Planned: \$106,989



18. Montana Big Game Habitat Improvement Project Coordinator
Supports: Eastern Montana/Dakotas BLM District Office, Miles City,
Havre, Malta, Glasgow, Lewistown Field Offices, Upper Missouri River Breaks
National Monument
Established 2022



Capacity Need:

- Manage and oversee the RCPP effort to meet overall project goals and objectives
- Guide existing committees through a collaborative process to support project and partner coordination
- Address gaps identified by the partnership in technical or financial support

The Coordinator was hired in April 2022. The Big Game Habitat Improvement Project is a collaborative initiative to implement landscape-scale conservation and restoration efforts from the Canadian border to the Musselshell Plains. The Coordinator facilitates partnership efforts to ensure project implementation occurs across ownership lines and streamlines interactions with NRCS and the partners.

Pheasants Forever received an RCPP grant with multiple partners matching the grant to deliver \$12.8 million in support to 16 million acres in north-central Montana, leaving lasting benefits for upland wildlife habitat and surrounding communities.

Although the Coordinator was only in the position for several months during FY 2022, the position made great strides in coordinating partners and guiding the local conservation committees through the collaborative process of funding projects. The Coordinator worked with partners to identify deficiencies in funding and pursue other funding sources for projects planned this next year.

Overview

Partners Engaged: 16
Total projects planned: 6
Total acres planned: 38,151



SAGE CAPACITY TEAM



Janyne Little
*Buffalo-Skedaddle
Sage Grouse
Working Group
Project Coordinator
-Susanville, CA*



Adrienne Hoskins
*Outcome-base
Grazing
Coordinator
-Pocatello, ID*



Katlyn Uhart
*Results Oriented
Grazing for
Ecological
Resilience
Facilitator
-Reno, NV*



Tracy Misiewicz
*Bi-State Local Area
Working Group
Coordinator
-Bishop, CA*



Brook Morgan
*Sage Grouse
Initiative Range
and Wildlife
Conservationist
-Burley, ID*



Kathy McKim
*New Mexico's
Coordinating
Wildlife Biologist -
Habitat Planning
and
Implementation
Specialist
-Chama, NM*



Jamie Nogle
*Northwest Colorado
Sagebrush
Conservation
Partnership
Coordinator
-Grand Junction,
CO*



Sean Claffey
*Southwest
Montana
Sagebrush
Conservation
Partnership
Coordinator
-Dillon, MT*



Julie Unfried
*Sage-Grouse
Local
Implementation
Teams
Coordinator
-Hines, OR*



Connor White
*Bruneau-Owyhee
Sage-Grouse
Habitat Project
Outreach
Coordinator
-Boise, ID*



Heidi Anderson
*Southwest
Montana
Sagebrush
Partnership
Project Manager
-Dillon, MT*



Alex Dohman
*Burns and
Lakeview
Oregon LIT
Coordinator
-Lakeview, OR*



Brenda Richards
*Idaho Rangeland
Conservation
Partnership
Coordinator
-Murphy, ID*



Desi Seal
*Montana Big Game
Habitat Improvement
Project Coordinator
-Hinsdale, MT*



Kaitlyn Yoder
*Arizona Strip
Wildlife
Biologist-
Habitat Planning
&
Implementation
Specialist
-St. George, UT*



Jason LeVan
*Sage Grouse
Initiative Range
and Wildlife
Conservationist
-Lander, WY*



Vacant
*Bristlecone
Project
Coordinator
-Ely, NV*





In FY 2022, the Partnering to Conserve Sagebrush Rangelands communications shop invested significant time into two diverse fields of outreach, one internal, the other more public-facing. The internal efforts were reflected in strategic communications planning and the launch of multi-agency conservation strategies and technical, scientific datasets. The large external projects included the release of three powerful videos crafted over the past two years. Each effort incorporated the full abilities of the IWJV's communications and sagebrush teams to bring partners together, organize regular meetings around large bodies of work, collaborate with scientists to elevate key messages and highlight important findings, craft delicate and defensible talking points, design fact sheets, work through extensive review and gain the support of federal external affairs staff, produce news releases and appropriate quotes, publish the results, and distribute communications products effectively and massively.

Website metrics for October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022

Total website unique page views for www.PartnersInTheSage.com:
39,837 pageviews (14% growth)

Top-performing Sagebrush Communications Projects

Three New Videos Launched in FY 2022

Early in this reporting period, the IWJV published three new videos featuring different aspects of our sagebrush partnerships: [Creating Miracles in the Desert: Restoring Dixie Creek](#), about mesic restoration in Nevada; [The Need for Flexibility: Exploring Innovation in a Public Land Grazing System](#), about a ranch piloting the OBG program in Oregon; and [Partnering in the New West](#), about partner biologist positions cost-shared by the Idaho BLM and USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife program. Review:

- The Dixie Creek video continues to astound us with its viral results. As of this report, it's been viewed 361,000 times and has over 700 comments. This video launched in November 2021 and features retired BLM fisheries biologist Carol Evans, who is seen as a respected and engaging public figure. There is something very powerful about beaver restoration that people gravitate toward, resulting in lots of sharing. Numerous commenters mentioned that YouTube's algorithm had recommended this video in their feed and that they enjoyed seeing how the "land can heal itself with a little human help." Here are further [analytics and thoughts on this video's success](#). We will continue to study this project's impact and learn from it.
- The OBG video launched in January 2022 has 1,500 views. Compared to the Dixie Creek video, this is a more complex topic with no before/after results, and it's more of an explanation of a technical government program. This video launched right about the time the Dixie Creek video was going viral, so viewers were likely drawn away from this product. This video's landing page has 2,247 page views, indicating more interest in the

written content than in the video. See the full [proposal guiding this video's development here](#).

- The partner biologist video launched in March 2022 has 7,400 views. This product also explains a governmental partnership, but it explores the increasingly prevalent challenge of the changing nature of the West's land ownership. See the full [proposal guiding this video's development here](#).
- We also experimented with paid social media promotions of the previous year's video [Playing with Fire](#), to bring more viewers into this video during the key fire month of July. This resulted in an additional 4,000 views, bringing the total viewership since publication to 5,900 views.



Invasive Annual Grass Dataset Summary Project

In May, the IWJV launched a communications campaign for the [Invasive Annual Grass Spatial Data Compilation and Synthesis Project](#). This is the result of a multi-year collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey, BLM, Colorado State University, USFWS, and the IWJV to collect and summarize spatial datasets that describe where and how much invasive annual grasses have infested the sagebrush biome. Numerous spatial datasets mapping invasive annual grasses exist; however, land managers often struggle to identify which of these products are most relevant to their work, or are unaware these resources exist at all. Experts collated invasive annual grass spatial datasets and identified similarities and differences among these resources. Further, they provided guidance to potential users on selecting appropriate spatial products.

- *Review:* the IWJV produced an extensive [communications plan](#) with partners around this project that guided the development of key messages, a news release, [FAQ](#), and two-part video walkthrough with lead researchers providing an [overview](#) and [dataviewer tutorial](#). In that this body of work is highly technical and only something a conservation project manager skilled in GIS and implementing spatial modeling as part of their regular work would use frequently, we explored what different users might learn from this. We are pleased to see that this project's landing page is one of the top 10 most-viewed pages on [www.PartnersInTheSage.com](#) in FY 2022 and something viewers regularly return to.

Sagebrush Conservation Design Framework

A *Sagebrush Conservation Design to Proactively Restore America's Sagebrush Biome* provides a prioritization and management framework that is part of a larger, ongoing effort to develop strategies for conserving the sagebrush biome and inform which treatments or other conservation actions are appropriate to that geography. The IWJV provided early communications leadership and continued support to a team that included numerous agencies and stakeholders over a seven-month timeframe as materials were prepared and finalized before launch in September 2022.

- *Review:* The following items were produced for the communications support of this framework: [inter-agency communications plan](#), external-facing communications plan, [information sheet](#), [landing page](#), and [news release with social media language](#).

Top-performing Stories

[From the Inside Out: Local Cheatgrass Treatment Aids in Landscape-Scale Habitat Resiliency](#)

Feature story published on February 28, 2022: 1,145 pageviews

To effectively treat cheatgrass across an entire landscape, partners must be able to work across property lines. This is where groups like the Mule Deer Foundation lean in and provide much-needed capacity to get projects done in creative ways. By aggressively treating the seed source on private and state lands—core habitat that isn't accessible to federal land management agencies—time and money can be saved down the road by ensuring that small pockets of cheatgrass don't remain after larger-scale treatments are done on public land.

[Takeaways from IWJV's "Storing Carbon in Sagebrush Rangelands" Report](#)

Report released on November 23, 2021: 1,052 pageviews

Carbon sequestration is a topic circulating throughout the conservation community. Rangelands are entering the carbon spotlight due to their sweeping extent and because they store relatively more carbon in soils than forests. The importance of keeping carbon out of the atmosphere is widely understood, but breaking down knowledge on how to protect carbon already stored in our ecosystems into actionable practices can be more difficult. Through the *Storing Carbon in Sagebrush Rangelands* report and companion resources, the IWJV aims to translate this science to an applicable scale for land managers and others across western rangelands.

[Community-based Capacity](#)

Landing page for Sage Capacity Team: 903 pageviews

This page houses profiles and links to additional stories about conservation and partnership accomplishments being realized by the Sage Capacity Team. This continues to be a popular page on the website and one we update regularly. Our partners and the conservation community as a whole are excited about these positions, and it's great to see continued visitation to this page.

From the Inside Out: Local Cheatgrass Treatment Aids in Landscape-Scale Habitat Resiliency

"Proactive, not Reactive."

This is the mantra of partners in Lemhi and Custer County, Idaho who are working to address cheatgrass and other non-native plants in sagebrush rangelands. These remote central Idaho counties contain some of the most intact, high-quality sagebrush habitat remaining in the state, often referred to as "core" habitat. Central Idaho's core sagebrush ecosystem ensures healthy habitat for wildlife and provides ranchers the forage needed to sustainably graze livestock.



Jessie Shallow marks a waypoint on priv...



Cheatgrass in Lemhi County



A fenceline between private and state-0...

[Bruneau-Owyhee Sage-grouse Habitat Project](#)

StoryMap launched on December 2, 2022: 888 pageviews

The BOSH project is a large conservation effort designed to improve and maintain sagebrush habitat by removing encroaching juniper to benefit the Greater Sage-grouse and other wildlife. Land managers from across the sagebrush sea are working in the BOSH area to better understand how conservation practices benefit wildlife, vegetation, and livelihoods across this project's landscape scale. We partnered with Sage Capacity Team member Connor White and the Boise District Fuels Program to create this StoryMap that spotlights how partners are utilizing the latest science and management practices to guide strategic conifer removal and improve sage-grouse habitat. This story map features historical imagery and production data from the Rangeland Analysis Platform.

[Introduction to Low-Tech Wet Meadow Restoration](#)

Tutorial collection published in previous fiscal year continues to see traffic: 663 pageviews

In this one-day virtual workshop, participants were introduced to: reading the landscape to recognize meadow conservation opportunities, various low-tech "Zeedyk" structures (e.g., One Rock Dams, Zuni Bowls), project planning, implementation, and monitoring. Regional instructors shared tips and lessons learned from implementing low-tech meadow restoration projects across the West, while Wyoming conservation partners discussed local opportunities and considerations. This page continues to be a valuable resource, even a year after the event.





As the information, data, and tools available to inform sagebrush conservation grow rapidly, so does the need for technical transfer. Technical transfer is particularly important and timely given unprecedented investment in the sagebrush biome, as evidence-based tools, practices, and prioritization frameworks must be used to ensure that conservation dollars maximize ecological, social, and economic benefits. To match these needs, our Partnering to Conserve Sagebrush Rangelands partnership invested substantially in growing our technical transfer capacity in FY 2022. As the IWJV built out our Science to Implementation Team, our BLM partnership saw increased capacity from IWJV's Science to Implementation Coordinator and Sagebrush Science to Implementation Specialist, both new positions in FY 2022. From websites to webinars to reports to one-on-one support, our partnership led and engaged in numerous efforts that further our ability to provide a niche to BLM and partners across the West.

Technical Transfer: Approaches to inform habitat conservation by providing partners with enhanced access, interpretation, and application of science, local and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, tools, and practices in order to strengthen on-the-ground outcomes.

Technical Transfer Projects Completed in FY 2022:

Tool: [Resilient Landscapes Resource List](#)

Our partners often find themselves lost in a sea of science and resources as they implement conservation across the Intermountain West. To assist partners with access to resources for project planning and assessment and to cut down on time spent searching for resources, we created a one-stop-shop for the top resources related to fire and invasive annual grasses, riparian and wet meadow restoration, grazing, woodland expansion, game corridors, and more: [the Resilient Landscapes Resource List](#). This curated resource will be periodically updated with the latest and most relevant science and evidence-based tools.

Report: [Storing Carbon in Western Rangelands](#)

Resilient western rangelands and grasslands are being recognized for their ability to store and protect carbon long into the future. As the climate warms and the West experiences more extreme weather events like drought and fire, as well as landscape-scale changes like conifer expansion and land-use conversion, it's more important than ever to promote management practices that protect existing carbon stored in rangelands. In order to get this important science into the hands of managers and decision-makers, we produced several resources to help our partners across the West understand how management actions affect carbon sequestration and stored carbon. To supplement FY 2021's full [Storing Carbon in Western Rangelands report](#), we produced a [two-page factsheet with takeaways from the report](#), and a [one-page visual resource](#).

Find these products housed on a [Partners in the Sage landing page](#), along with an [article emphasizing the takeaways of the report](#).

Website: Pinyon Juniper Encroachment Education Platform

Sagebrush ecosystems across the West are struggling to thrive amidst numerous threats, and these ecosystems are critical for biodiversity, wildlife habitat, rural livelihoods, economies, and traditional uses. Tree expansion into historic shrublands is among the primary threats to the sagebrush biome. The IWJV supported Working Lands for Wildlife and the University of Nevada, Reno, in developing the [Pinyon-Juniper Encroachment Education Project](#), a science-based resource to help people better understand the science and management around conifer expansion in sagebrush ecosystems. Efforts of the Sage Capacity Team and other Partnering to Conserve Sagebrush Rangelands partners are featured on the [Resilience in Action](#) page.



Report: Understanding Barriers to Invasive Annual Grass Management in the BLM

Invasive annual grasses are a severe and mounting threat to the sagebrush biome. Despite increasing focus in this area, barriers to successful invasive annual grass management still exist for public lands managers in the BLM, who manage a substantial area impacted by invasive annual grasses. Additional support is needed to address these barriers and strengthen on-the-ground efforts. The IWVJ conducted informal interviews with BLM State, District, and Field Offices across the West to identify barriers to effective invasive annual grass management and elevate needs in this area. We produced a full report and one-page summary of our findings to share with BLM partners and inform our future work.

Webinar: Pinyon Jay Science and Conifer Expansion: Common Ground with Sage-grouse Management

Given strong declines in populations of the woodland-obligate Pinyon Jay throughout the West, managers and policymakers are concerned about the impacts of vegetation management treatments aimed at improving habitat for sage-grouse and woodland-obligate species. To address these concerns and share recent and relevant science on this topic, we hosted Dr. Jason Tack (USFWS) and Dr. Brady Alred (University of Montana) for a virtual seminar in

November 2021. More than 55 participants joined the webinar, which was targeted to BLM staff. The presenters highlighted results from [new research](#) showing that conifer removal for sage-grouse habitat improvements largely avoids core areas for pinyon jays.

One-On-One Support: Technical Transfer Support to Sage Capacity Team

Growing technical transfer support for the Sage Capacity Team was a priority in FY 2022. As our on-the-ground capacity positions, the Sage Capacity Team links the IWJV to our partners and their work. The IWJV team supported the Sage Capacity Team in building their spatial data skills through webinars on using [Rangeland Analysis Platform](#) and [WAFWA Sagebrush Conservation Design](#) data to inform their work. We also engaged in one-on-one support and consultation to identify specific technical transfer needs—from developing prioritization methods to spatial data skills to factsheets—and are continuing to work to meet these needs. In addition to formal training, this one-on-one approach will continue to guide our work with the Sage Capacity Team because it maximizes benefits to ongoing on-the-ground conservation work.

Strategy: Riparian and Wet Meadow Restoration

Mesic habitats are rare but disproportionately important across western rangelands. Gully erosion and channel incision are widespread problems that degrade these mesic systems, reducing natural resiliency and water storage capacity, which negatively impact wildlife and working lands. While there is no shortage of degraded riparian areas and wet meadows that need help across the West, there is a shortage of time, experts, and funding to address these resource concerns. To support our partners in addressing degradation of important riparian and wet meadow systems, we developed our Riparian and Wet Meadow Restoration Strategy.



Figure 1. Various upland riparian and wet meadow systems, referred to as “green ribbons across the sagebrush sea.” Our work primarily focuses on meadows, bogs, springs seeps, ephemeral and intermittent streams. Diagram created by Jeremy Maestas, Ecologist, USDA-NRCS West National Technology Support Center.

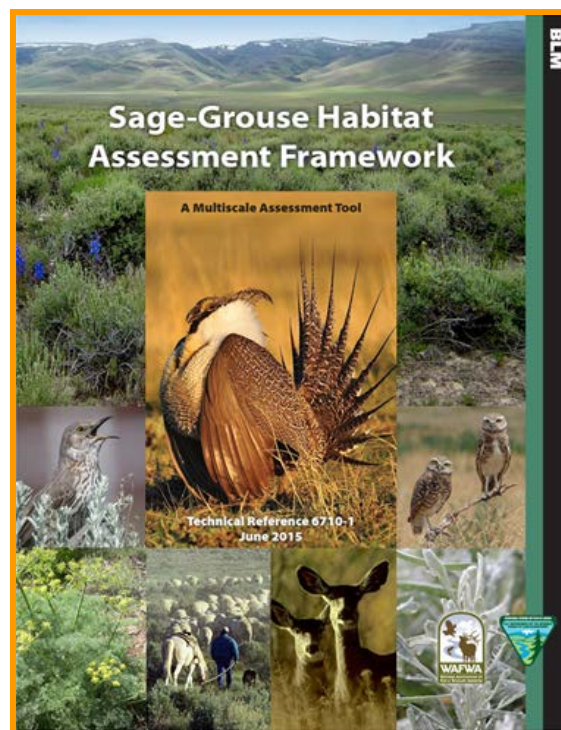
Workshop Development: Riparian and Wet Meadow Restoration

Through Partnering to Conserve Sagebrush Rangelands, the BLM funded planning for a virtual training and hands-on demonstration workshop covering wet meadow restoration techniques for

the state of Utah, to be held in FY 2023. Partners from the BLM, IWJV, NRCS, BIO-Logic, Utah State University Extension, USFWS Partners Program, and the Utah Division of Wildlife met in Price, Utah, to select sites and design restoration structures for the 2023 on-site training workshop. Additionally, project team members developed the online virtual training that will be offered to land managers from across Utah in spring 2023.

Capacity: BLM Sage-Grouse Habitat Assessment Framework

The BLM Habitat Assessment Framework is a multi-scale assessment of the status of sage-grouse habitat. The BLM implements this framework across the sage-grouse range in order to evaluate whether BLM-managed lands are meeting habitat needs for sage-grouse. To support the BLM in completing these assessments, the Sagebrush Science to Implementation Specialist provided support to the National Operations Center Sage-Grouse Team on report writing and facilitation for assessments in FY 2022.



Data Platform: Rangeland Analysis Platform Historical Imagery Project

As ecosystems change over time, imagery can provide a record of changes that are difficult to identify with the human eye. To give users a view into the past, providing context to landscape changes like land use alterations and conifer expansion, the BLM helped fund this Historical Imagery Project through the Partnering to Conserve Sagebrush Rangelands Partnership. This online platform, hosted on the Rangeland Analysis Platform webpage, provides a user-friendly way to visualize historical and modern imagery side-by-side by swiping left and right to compare historical and modern photos. As one example of how this tool can be used: we featured imagery from this project in our BOSH StoryMap to show how juniper expansion progressed over time.



FY 2022 marked the seventh year of this partnership. Together, the IWJV, BLM, and dozens of partners continued to build and promote collaborative efforts spanning the sagebrush biome. At the heart of this partnership is a shared vision: *we and our partners achieve effective and durable conservation outcomes by providing meaningful support to innovative, community-based conservation efforts.*

This partnership's continued dedication to building field delivery capacity, supporting science to implementation/technical transfer, and delivering strategic communications has continued to drive strategic landscape-scale conservation. This year demonstrated just that, as we added partnerships to now include 56 BLM State, District and Field Offices in 10 states and engage with more than 650 conservation partners across the West. These partnerships delivered coordinated, concerted on-the-ground projects, treating 145,180 acres in FY 2022. Also in FY 2022, BLM State, District, or Field Offices financed five Sage Capacity Team positions, building long-term support for these crucial sparks across the sagebrush range.

This profound partnership also led to the development of a new inter-agency agreement in FY 2022 with the BLM Fire Planning and Fuels Management Division. This new agreement will focus on mutual goals of reducing wildfire risk, battling invasive grasses, and restoring landscapes across the West. Expanding on the proven success of the BLM-IWJV's existing partnership, this agreement will attract new funding and partners to the table with its innovative, proactive, voluntary, community-based approach to achieving desirable conservation outcomes across boundaries.

"The partnership with Intermountain West Joint Venture allows BLM to quickly add capacity where we need it most, at the field level. Our new agreement focused on wildfire risk reduction will provide field capacity positions to work seamlessly across ownership boundaries to reduce wildfire risk to communities and promote landscape resilience to drought and wildfires. This cross-boundary approach builds on a proven model of success within the IWJV and is essential for scaling restoration efforts commensurate with the threats facing the sagebrush biome. We must continue to grow and strengthen partnerships to achieve transformational restoration outcomes in western landscapes." ~Molly Anthony, Division Chief (acting) Division of Fire Planning & Fuels Management National Interagency Fire Center

As western landscapes continue to receive immense pressure from daunting threats like invasive annual grasses, wildfire, and persistent drought, our partnership is crucial to leading innovative efforts to combat these challenges and expanding avenues for creative, collaborative conservation.

FY 2016–2022 Funding Accomplishments

New funding was added to support field delivery, communications and outreach, technical transfer, and other aspects of our work.

Source	Amount
BLM Headquarters	\$7,833,237
BLM State Offices/Other	\$565,883*
Partner Contributions	\$6,146,118
Capacity Total	\$14,545,238
Partnership Leverage (BLM:partners)	58:42
Total Project Funds reported by other agencies	\$38,169,347
Grand Total	\$52,714,585

**\$52,000 was provided by Idaho State Office, which is included in the BLM Headquarters total*



APPENDIX A

List of Acronyms

BIL	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BOSH	Bruneau-Owyhee Sage Grouse Habitat
FY	Fiscal Year
GIS	Geographical Information System
HAF	Habitat Assessment Framework
IRCP	Idaho Rangeland Conservation Partnership
IWJV	Intermountain West Joint Venture
LAWG	Local Area Working Group
LIT	Local Implementation Team
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
OBG, OBGA	Outcome-based Grazing, Outcome-based Grazing Authorization
RCP	Regional Conservation Partnership Program
ROGER	Results Oriented Grazing for Ecological Resilience
SMSP	Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
WAFWA	Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies