

RESTORING AMERICA'S SAGEBRUSH TO RESILIENCY THROUGH COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION

SAGEBRUSH RANGELANDS OCCUPY LESS THAN 55 PERCENT OF ITS HISTORICAL EXTENT.

The alarming trend of habitat loss and fragmentation is dramatically affecting the future of sagebrush systems due to the invasion of annual grasses fueling rangeland wildfire, encroaching conifers, and chronic pressures on water and wetland systems catalyzed by climate change.

Multiple public and private partners have been working for more than a decade to address these threats and restore the sage to resiliency through collaborative conservation.

In 2022, there is growing awareness about the escalating nature of these challenges and an urgency to work together. Coordinated and connected efforts are needed now more than ever to support communities who depend on the robust array of ecosystem services, biodiversity, natural and cultural resources of the sagebrush biome.

SAGEBRUSH PROVIDES HABITAT FOR 350+ SPECIES



THE GRAND CHALLENGE

- Cheatgrass, an invasive annual grass, fuels wildfire. We estimate **70 million acres are now infested by cheatgrass**. Medusahead and ventenata are two other invasive annual grasses marching across the West that have no forage value and also fuel rangeland wildfire.
- **Climate change represents an additional pressure** that hastens the frequency of disturbance to invasion and produces conditions more conducive to weeds.



- Most wildfire in the continental U.S. occurs on rangelands (56%). Within the Department of the Interior's jurisdiction, the number is even higher, where **73% of all acres burned are rangelands**.
- Between 2018-2021, **wildfires burned nearly 4 million acres of Greater Sage-grouse habitat**. More than 70% of these fires occurred on BLM and private lands.
- New sagebrush conservation design science indicates a **loss of ecological integrity on >26 million acres since 2001** (an average of 1.3 million acres per year) due to invasive annual grasses, pinyon-juniper woodland expansion, and resulting wildfires affecting habitat for sagebrush obligate and associated species.

UTILIZE DEFEND THE CORE, GROW THE CORE, MITIGATE IMPACTS FRAMEWORK* TO PRIORITIZE LANDSCAPE-SCALE RESTORATION THAT PROMOTES HEALTHY VEGETATION IN PLACES THAT NEED IT MOST:

1) RANGELAND WILDFIRE AND INVASIVES

Defend uninvaded core areas from annual grass conversion, grow core areas with restoration actions, and mitigate severe impacts from wildfires. Invest early before infestations become widespread using seeding, targeted grazing, and herbicides. Reduce fuel loads and fire risk near communities through preventative efforts to break the fire-cheatgrass cycle.

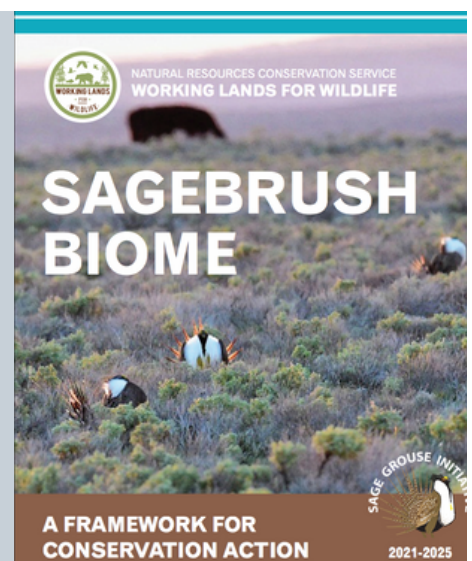
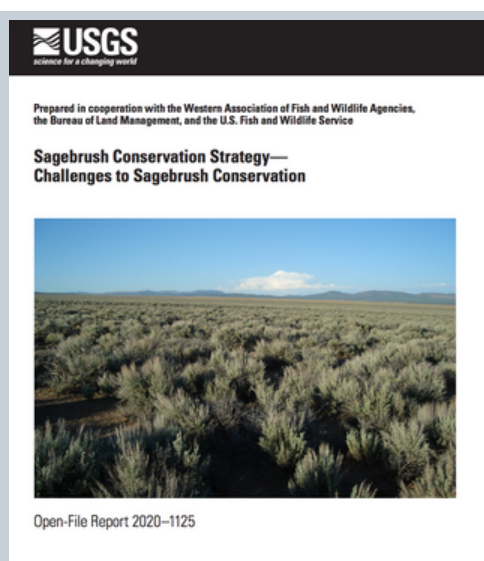
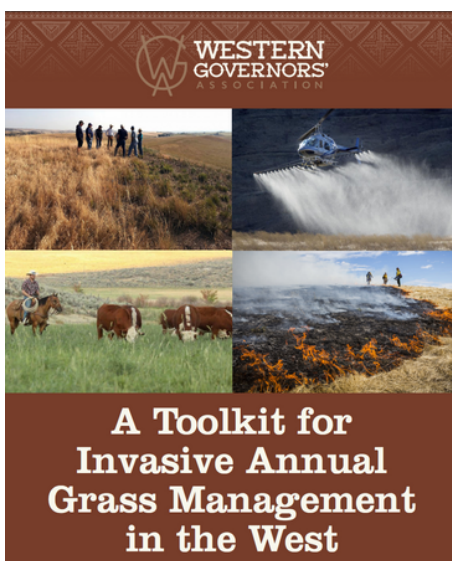
2) PINYON-JUNIPER AND OTHER CONIFERS

Increase targeted invasive conifer removal to prevent the loss of sagebrush habitat and wildlife species. Utilize the latest science to craft management prescriptions based on ecological site potential and historical stand conditions to address the needs of multiple species, including woodland obligate species like pinyon jays.

3) MESIC RANGELAND RESOURCES

Expand and scale up low-tech restoration of working wet meadows and mesic rangelands in multiple states and landscapes. Emphasize collaboration with place-based watershed groups and collaboratives that seek to protect water resources in the face of drought and decreased water availability. Notably, mesic biomes provide greater potential for carbon sequestration.

*The following resources are helping guide strategic conservation approaches across boundaries (click on each to access).



Additionally, multiple states have created partnerships to address invasive annual grasses. [Learn more here.](#)



A diverse and growing coalition of partners seek your support to:

1) Implement a strategic approach to conserving sagebrush rangelands using the latest science and outcome-based evaluations—emphasize restoration to resiliency.

In the West, multiple agencies and partners are working together to prioritize sagebrush conservation with laser-like focus on preventing the spread of invasive species, treating and restoring degraded habitat, reducing wildfire risk, and shoring up core areas of habitat. Invest resources in developing *actionable science* that addresses barriers to on-the-ground effectiveness and implementation. Elevate ecocultural restoration and land management that utilizes Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and other forms of local knowledge.

2) Invest new federal funding resources in proven collaborative models that support associated project implementation.

Western state-led and collaborative conservation models and leadership are working together to build trust and relationships with local communities and leverage grassroots resources. Work through existing regional, state-led, and collaborative conservation efforts that take into account the perspectives and interests of rural communities, Tribal Nations, and beneficiaries of these landscapes.

3) Scale up on-the-ground treatments in the right places with the right actions for the right amount of time.

Addressing threats in the sage will take deliberate and multi-year focus with targeted treatments, coordination across jurisdictional boundaries, and adaptive management. Bolster field capacity to support local communities, Tribal Nations, and coordinate partnership efforts for durable conservation.

**PARTNER WITH COMMUNITIES IN THE WEST
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS!**



THERE IS A GROWING SAGEBRUSH PARTNERSHIP THAT COLLABORATES ACROSS MULTIPLE SCALES. THESE PARTNERS INCLUDE PRIVATE LANDOWNERS, TRIBAL NATIONS, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, CORPORATE PARTNERS, RECREATORS, ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS, AND COMMUNITIES.

JOIN THE COALITION BY CONTACTING US!



Ali Duvall, IWJV Director of Strategic Partnerships
ali.duvall@iwjv.org | 406.370.5047

San Stiver, WAFWA Sagebrush Initiative Coordinator
san.stiver@wafwa.org | 928.899.3732

This document is a product of the Intermountain West Joint Venture Sagebrush Conservation Committee and Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Sagebrush Executive Oversight Committee.

SAGEWEST

[Click here to learn more about SageWest, powerful communications network.](#)

THE 3-BILLION BIRD DECLINE

Data shows that since 1970, the U.S. and Canada have lost nearly 3 billion birds, a massive reduction in abundance involving hundreds of species, from beloved backyard songbirds to long distance migrants. Many sagebrush birds are among those declining.

[Access this study here.](#)



**PLAYING
WITH
FIRE**

