

2009 Budget Update



By the Numbers

Oregon-Idaho-Nevada Cooperative Shrub-Steppe Restoration Partnership

Planned Treatments

- Number of acres of vegetation to be treated on public land: **23,000**
- Number of acres of vegetation to be treated on non-BLM land: **3,900**
- Number of miles of stream to be improved: **65**
- Number of riparian improvement projects: **75**

The Oregon-Idaho-Nevada Cooperative Shrub-Steppe Restoration Partnership is a coordinated, landscape-level program involving multiple partners working together to maintain shrub-steppe health where it currently exists and to strategically restore areas critical to wildlife. The Partnership will accelerate implementation of the three states' sage-grouse conservation plans. Sagebrush shrub-steppe habitat is vital to ensure viable populations of sage-grouse and thus preclude the need to list this and other sagebrush obligate species.

due to increased fire fuels buildup from invasive species such as cheatgrass and vast shrub areas that provide a continuous fuel source.

Cheatgrass is locally abundant and supports a vicious cycle of wildfires that prevents the recovery of the shrub-steppe habitat. This hinders efforts to restore sagebrush habitat and sets the stage for the spread of more aggressive invasive species that further threaten the native landscapes.

Meeting both our energy and land health goals requires integrated, landscape-scale habitat protections and resource management. Our initiative combines investments in habitat protection with policy improvements that will protect 800 species, including the sage-grouse.

Secretary Dirk Kempthorne

The Shrub-Steppe Restoration Partnership Area provides a stronghold for sagebrush-dependent wildlife species. This three-state area encompasses 53.5 million acres, roughly 50 percent of the remaining sagebrush-steppe habitat in the Great Basin. The diversity and integrity of the plant communities in this area support crucial habitat for large populations of sage-grouse, mule deer, antelope and numerous sagebrush-dependent birds. At the same time, this area is important to the livelihood of local communities. These lands provide significant economic benefits to local communities from livestock grazing to hunting, mineral extraction, and recreational uses.

What is the Healthy Lands Initiative?

Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne launched the Healthy Lands Initiative (HLI) in 2007 to accelerate land restoration, increase productivity, and improve the health of public lands in the Western United States. The goal of the Initiative is to preserve the diversity and productivity of public and private lands across the landscape. The Initiative will enable and encourage local BLM managers to set priorities across a broader scale and mitigate impacts to an array of resources in ways not previously available to them.

The President's 2009 budget includes an increase of \$10 million for HLI over the level enacted in Fiscal Year 2008. The effort has focused on landscape-level restoration effort on southwest Wyoming; northwest and southeast portions of New Mexico; south-central Idaho; southwest Colorado; Utah; and a three-corner area of Idaho, Oregon, and Nevada. In FY 2009, areas in northwest Colorado and parts of California would be added.

Increasing Threats to the Shrub-Steppe Landscape

The Partnership area is experiencing a tremendous increase in large wildfires



In the higher elevations, sagebrush steppe habitat is being degraded by the increasing expansion of pinyon pine and juniper woodlands. A rapidly growing regional population is increasing human impacts.

Restoration at the Landscape Level

The highest priority is to maintain sagebrush steppe habitat followed by strategically restoring fragmented habitat. This action will conserve habitat for at-risk wildlife species, such as sage-grouse, that are dependent on large sagebrush communities.

What We Know

- Large wildfires will continue to occur in this area, but the frequency and extent can be reduced with appropriate fuel-management treatments.
- Invasive species will continue to spread and reduce the health of shrub-steppe communities.
- Increasing use by growing populations in the region will further strain the ecological integrity of native plant communities.
- Maintaining healthy sagebrush-steppe contributes to the economic and ecological needs of communities.

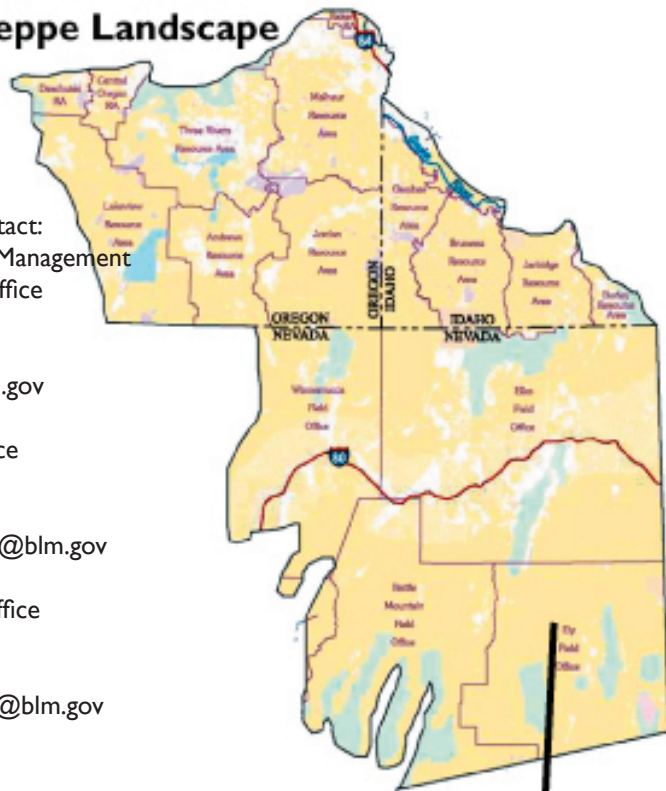
Partnership Goals

- Join local sage-grouse working groups, Federal agencies, and the scientific community in efforts to accelerate implementation of habitat restoration projects identified in state and local sage-grouse conservation plans.
- Engage tribes, conservation organizations, and other state and Federal agencies to strategically select and implement land treatments to maintain and restore the upland and riparian components of these shrub lands.
- Build upon existing programs and initiatives, such as the BLM's Great Basin Restoration Initiative, to implement a landscape-restoration strategy.
- Leverage funds to build on current successes to maximize the positive benefits of restoration at the largest scale.

Current Successes

- **Izzenhood Fire:** Seeded 2,034 acres to provide winter habitat and reduce the potential for large wildfires on intact sage-grouse habitat.
- **Northwest Sheep Fuels Project:** Treated 709 acres to provide seasonal habitat and reduce the potential for large wildfires on intact sage-grouse habitats.
- **Boone Peak Juniper Cut:** The Boise District's Owyhee Field Office completed 2,200 acres of juniper control adjoining key sage-grouse habitat. The project will improve local sage-grouse habitat by eliminating potential perches for avian predators and by maintaining sagebrush-steppe characteristics on the landscape.
- **Battle Creek Allotment:** Improved about 30,000 acres by hand cutting western juniper trees that were encroaching into key sage-grouse habitat.
- **South End Wildfire Complex:** 10,811 acres were seeded to encourage the recovery of native plant communities important to the sage-grouse and redband trout. Also, noxious weed treatments are being implemented on 7,715 acres in areas occupied by sage-grouse and other obligate species.

Oregon-Idaho-Nevada Shrub-Steppe Landscape



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Surface Jurisdiction	Total Acres
Bureau of Land Management	37,170,276
Bureau of Reclamation	39,026
Department of Defense	77,567
Other Federal Agencies	90,273
US Forest Service	4,350,396
Fish and Wildlife Service	467,822
Indian Reservation	421,784
National Grasslands	14,064
National Park Service	77,040
Private	9,910,505
State	927,034
Total	53,545,786

