



Featured Friend

Harney County Soil & Water Conservation District

Where Cattle Outnumber People, The Odds are Good For Sage Grouse

In the largest county in Oregon, cattle outnumber people 14 to 1. Harney County's high-desert sagebrush landscape supports about 500 ranches and farms. Most of those landowners have worked with the Harney County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) at least once.

By working in close partnership with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service-led Sage Grouse Initiative and other partners, the SWCD leverages diverse cost-share opportunities to help landowners conserve sagebrush range. "We're not talkers, we're doers," says district manager Marty Suter-Goold.

For instance, Harney County SWCD is the first SWCD in the nation to hold a programmatic Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Greater sage-grouse. So far, 71 landowners have signed up with the SWCD to conserve 580,000 acres of sage grouse habitat under this agreement.

Plus, in 2014 the SWCD received a Regional Conservation Partnership Program award from the NRCS (shared with seven other counties with sage grouse in Oregon), which complements a host of state and federal programs aimed at conserving sagebrush country.

The SWCD is also adept at working across fence lines so that landscape-scale projects—like conifer removal or invasive grass treatments—span both private and public lands. Their recipe for collaborative conservation is improving the odds for both sage grouse and ranchers in southern Oregon.

"The ingredients for conservation success include trust, good relationships, and the right people in the right places."

~Marty Suter-Goold, SWCD District Manager



Carol Dunten is the chairman of the Harney County SWCD. She and her husband Alfred are 5th generation conservationists, and proud advocates of voluntary programs like the Sage Grouse Initiative.

Meet the Harney County Soil and Water Conservation District

The Harney County SWCD, governed by a board of seven elected local representatives, provides technical assistance, educational outreach, and other conservation services to landowners, managers, and citizens in southeast Oregon.

Role With Sage Grouse Initiative

By working in close partnership with private landowners and a host of state and federal partners, the Harney County SWCD is a key player in building trust and putting sage grouse conservation programs on the ground. The district adds great value by bringing more resources to the table to conserve sagebrush habitat on a landscape scale.

Contact

541.573.6446 x 101, Marty.Suter@nacdn.net
www.harneyswcd.org

Learn More



The Sage Grouse Initiative, led by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, is a partnership-based, science-driven effort that uses voluntary incentives to proactively conserve America's western rangelands, wildlife, and rural way of life.