



For Immediate Release:
August 17, 2015

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NEVADA RECEIVES \$2M AWARD FROM DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR SAGE LANDS HABITAT PROJECTS

Win-win for military readiness, sagebrush habitat and sage-grouse

CARSON CITY, NV —The Department of Defense announced more than \$2 million in funding from the Military Services' Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program for the sage lands habitat collaboration, a multi-agency partnership aimed at enhancing, restoring and protecting the sagebrush ecosystem around Naval Air Station Fallon's aviation training ranges.

The award will leverage more than \$4 million in partner funding to protect over 11,000 acres of prime greater sage-grouse habitat underneath the Fallon Range Training Complex's (FRTC) 13,000 square miles of training airspace. Partners of the REPI proposal include the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), Naval Air Station Fallon, the Nevada Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, the Nevada Conservation Districts Program, the Bureau of Land Management and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"This unique partnership between the military and environmental partners is the first of its kind in Nevada, and I appreciate having the military as a new partner in our efforts to protect sagebrush habitat and the greater sage-grouse," said Governor Brian Sandoval.

"We are thrilled to be able to move forward at an increased pace to protect parcels of greater sage-grouse habitat, thanks to the REPI Challenge award and the commitment by so many partners," said NDOW Director Tony Wasley.

This is the first time Nevada partners have applied for the REPI Challenge, which allows the Military Services to enter into unique cost-sharing partnerships with state and local governments and private conservation organizations to preserve compatible land uses around military installations and to conserve natural landscapes in support of military readiness.

The purpose of Nevada's REPI Challenge project is to cooperatively leverage partnering funds to reduce the potential for the greater sage-grouse listing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and prevent the future encroachment by proactively reducing habitat loss and fragmentation (via purchase of conservation easements), restoring prime habitat areas and conducting research and monitoring to guide future conservation efforts.

With REPI Challenge funding, participating organizations will work with landowners and land management agencies who own and manage sage-grouse key habitat to remove threats and enhance habitat through pinyon and juniper removal, spring restorations, fencing improvements, appropriate grazing techniques and conservation easement protection.

A restored ecosystem provides a greater amount and improved quality of sage-grouse habitat while also enhancing grazing lands for the cattle. Furthermore, research projects provide the scientifically-based documentation to direct future investment and conservation activities.

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The listing of a species as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act can introduce a significant new source of encroachment restrictions for military installations and operating areas when the species or its habitat is present. Currently, no federally listed species are known to reside permanently at the FRTC, an essential military training asset encompassing over 234,000 acres in northern Nevada. The USFWS will soon be deciding whether or not to proceed with listing of the greater sage-grouse, and cumulative conservation actions must be shown to both stabilize and protect habitat and populations of a warranted/candidate species or it is at risk of being listed.

About REPI

Conserving the land necessary to adequately protect military bases threatened by incompatible development requires DoD and its partners to “do more with less” and approach REPI partnerships with flexibility, creativity, and innovative thinking. To this end, the REPI Program designed the REPI Challenge, an annual competition aiming to:

- Cultivate projects that conserve land at a greater scale and test promising ways to finance land protection.
- Help the REPI Program meet its ambitious goals with limited funding (projects must have at least a one-to-one funding match).
- Demonstrate benefits above and beyond normal requirements for REPI projects for important military missions and natural resources.
- Harness the creativity of the private sector to access and leverage unconventional sources of funding, philanthropic sources, and market-based approaches.

For more information about the REPI Program and the REPI Challenge, visit:
<http://www.repi.mil/AboutREPI/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.aspx>

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