



Featured Friend

South Dakota Sage Grouse Local Working Group

Local Voices Put Conservation Where It's Needed Most

On the easternmost edge of greater sage-grouse range, the sagebrush steppe blends into prairie. Here in South Dakota, land ownership is a checkerboard of private and public lands. Since sage grouse require vast areas of intact habitat to thrive, cross-boundary partnerships yield a better return on investment for conservation programs.

That's why locals in Butte and Harding counties formed the South Dakota Sage Grouse Local Working Group. Members of the group play a vital role in identifying the most pressing threats to sage grouse, and work together to address those threats. Ranchers, biologists, community members, nonprofit groups, and government agencies all contribute valuable insights and site-specific experiences that inform which tools and practices are the best fit on this unique piece of the range.



Accomplishments of the group include: acquiring grants to install fence markers; putting together monitoring packets for SGI-enrolled ranchers; vetting new tools like riparian assessments; exploring potential cost-share opportunities for landowners; and facilitating community outreach around the greater sage-grouse.

Thanks to this wonderful collaborative model, conservation activity in the area is at an all-time high.

“Working together, we can tackle the toughest challenges facing our landscape and find solutions that benefit the habitat, ranchers, and wildlife.”

~Corissa Krueger, The Nature Conservancy



Partners in South Dakota put in place projects that restore and protect important habitat, like wet meadows and riparian areas.

Meet the South Dakota Sage Grouse Local Working Group

About

The South Dakota Sage Grouse Local Working Group formed in 2013 to ensure conservation efforts in core habitat areas are targeted and coordinated. The group gives diverse stakeholders a voice in identifying and implementing priority conservation projects. This group includes a wide variety of participants, including local agricultural producers, conservation districts, federal and state government agencies, nonprofit organizations, watershed groups, and members of the public.

Role With Sage Grouse Initiative

The South Dakota Sage Grouse Local Working Group enhances SGI programs by leveraging technical expertise, past experience, and site-specific knowledge to identify, use, and track conservation tools. By coordinating all efforts related to greater sage-grouse, the group makes sure conservation projects go in the right place and in the right way to benefit birds, agricultural producers, and the sage-steppe as a whole.

Contact

Mitch Faulkner, Rangeland Management Specialist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 605.892.3368 ext. 125
 Mitch.Faulkner@sd.usda.gov
www.sd.nrcs.usda.gov