



Featured Friend

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Coordinating the Largest Landscape Conservation Effort in the West

In the vast expanse of sagebrush country, sage grouse hopscotch between ranches and over state lines. But hopscotching across boundaries is far more difficult for the humans working to help those birds recover. Along with fences, legal challenges and bureaucratic barriers sometimes impede large-landscape conservation.

The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) helps overcome those challenges. Its Sagebrush Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) connects and coordinates conservation efforts across the 11 western states and 2 Canadian provinces where sage grouse live.

In 2006, WAFWA drafted a cooperative strategy for cross-boundary, whole-ecosystem conservation. Leaders from dozens of participating state and federal agencies, including the NRCS-led Sage Grouse Initiative, meet quarterly through the EOC to: 1) Discuss the progress made toward achieving shared conservation goals, and 2) Identify where and how agencies can work cooperatively to maximize rather than duplicate efforts.

Thanks in part to this careful coordination, WAFWA estimates that partners invested a combined \$750 million in sagebrush conservation between 2005-2015 and will likely double that amount by 2020. The EOC's collaborative model benefits the vast rangelands that support ranchers, communities, and 350 species in the American West.

“Collaboration is the key to pulling off the largest conservation success story in the West.” ~Virgil Moore, Director of Idaho Fish and Game & Chairman of Sagebrush Executive Oversight Committee



Collaborative efforts to conserve sagebrush landscapes led by WAFWA's Ecosystem Oversight Committee are helping greater sage-grouse and 350 other species. Photos: Jeremy Roberts (l), Tatiana Gettelman (r).

Meet the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Established in 1922, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies represents 19 states and 4 Canadian provinces. WAFWA supports sound resource management to conserve native wildlife, including the greater sage-grouse.

Role With Sage Grouse Initiative

WAFWA provides the invaluable service of coordinating all state and federal partners involved in sagebrush conservation. The Sage Grouse Initiative began attending EOC meetings in 2010 after the NRCS committed Farm Bill funds for proactive, voluntary sage grouse conservation on private agricultural lands.



Contact

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Learn More

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