



## Greater Sage-Grouse

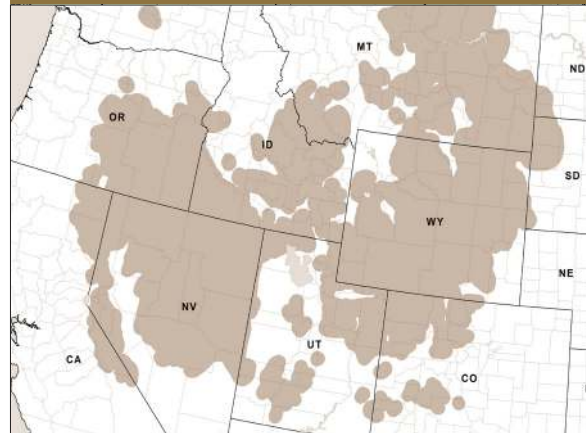
The greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), an iconic ground-dwelling bird native to the arid sagebrush plains of the American West, experienced significant population declines over the last 50 years. The population declines have resulted from habitat loss and fragmentation associated with land conversion, energy development, urbanization, wildfire, conifer encroachment and invasive species. NRCS is working with local, state and federal partners to reverse this trend by reducing threats to sage grouse.

### NRCS and the Sage Grouse

NRCS launched the Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) in 2010 to strategically focus conservation efforts to maximize biological benefits to sage grouse populations. NRCS' sage grouse efforts are part of Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW), through which NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to help ranchers restore and protect habitat for sage grouse. WLFW also provides ranchers with regulatory predictability under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which ensures regulatory compliance for ranchers who continue to manage their ranches using NRCS-prescribed conservation practices for up to 30 years.

This conservation work includes establishing conservation easements to prevent working ranches from being subdivided, implementing sustainable grazing systems to improve hiding cover for birds, removing invasive conifers from grasslands to allow birds to re-colonize otherwise suitable habitat, and marking or moving "high-risk" fences near breeding sites to reduce bird collisions.

### Focus Areas



### Actions

- Remove encroached conifers, improving habitat for sage grouse and other wildlife and increasing forage availability for livestock.
- Improve grazing systems management, increasing rangeland plant diversity, cover for birds and forage availability for livestock.
- Identify and mark fences where sage grouse collisions are likely, reducing accidental mortality caused by fence strikes.
- Increase connectivity of existing core habitat.
- Improve weed and invasive species management.
- Restore and promote healthy, productive springs and seeps.

### Outcomes and Impacts

WLFW is enhancing NRCS' ongoing conservation efforts to support sage grouse recovery by strategically focusing resources to promote healthy grazing lands management. Anticipated long-term outcomes of this initiative are improved rangeland health, greater connectivity of core sage grouse habitat, and stabilization or recovery of sage grouse populations.

Fiscal Year 2015 Sage Grouse Initiative  
NRCS Financial Assistance (FA) and Active and Completed Contracts through WLFW

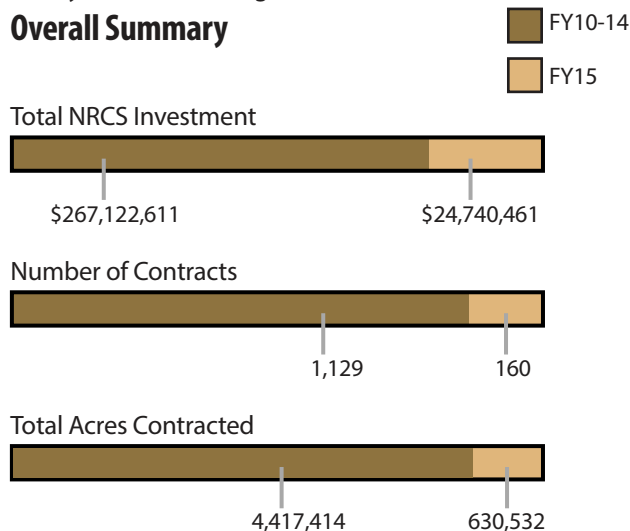
State	Environmental Quality Incentives Program			Agricultural Conservation Easement Program		
	Acres	NRCS Investment	Contracts	Acres	NRCS Investment	Contracts
California	13,346	\$953,278	6	0	\$0	0
Colorado	13,447	\$347,953	8	1,805	\$1,200,000	4
Idaho	27,753	\$2,235,203	15	945	\$361,500	1
Montana	89,527	\$1,756,817	5	0	\$0	0
Nevada	46,051	\$904,378	13	2,785	\$2,325,000	2
N. Dakota	9,042	\$256,054	8	0	\$0	0
Oregon	37,083	\$3,977,658	40	0	\$0	0
S. Dakota	24,962	\$586,644	2	0	\$0	0
Utah	108,037	\$5,061,077	36	4,081	\$2,791,125	2
Washington	7,514	\$422,139	6	0	\$0	0
Wyoming	244,154	\$1,561,634	12	0	\$0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>620,916</b>	<b>\$18,062,836</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>9,616</b>	<b>\$6,677,625</b>	<b>9</b>

Data source: NRCS Resource Economics, Analysis and Policy Division, October 2015.

**NRCS GOALS**

Through SGI, NRCS works with ranchers to restore and protect habitat for sage grouse to increase populations, provide habitat for other sagebrush-dependent species and provide predictability to ranchers, ensuring they can continue managing their working lands. NRCS is working to address these three goals by addressing six threats to sage grouse. By 2018, NRCS aims to reduce wildfire threat by removing invasive plants from 2.17 million acres; remove invading conifers from 246,000 acres; protect 320,000 acres from exurban development through easements; protect 921,500 acres from cultivation through easements; protect 14,675 acres of mesic areas; and mark 1.2 million feet of fences to prevent collisions. These milestones are part of the agency's Sage Grouse Initiative 2.0 investment strategy for fiscal years 2015 through 2018.

**Overall Summary**



**SGI 2.0 Milestones:  
Addressing Sage Grouse Threats**

