



Sage Grouse Planning Efforts in Nevada & California

The decline of the greater sage grouse and loss of habitat across the West has resulted in petitions for listing of both range-wide and local populations of sage grouse in California, Nevada, Washington, Utah and Colorado as an endangered species.

The listing of the greater sage grouse as an endangered species would have a significant impact on affected states. Since the species is found statewide in Nevada, except in Clark County, land development and use, water use and recreational activities would be affected, impacting local economies in the process.

In response to these concerns, Nevada Governor Kenny Guinn called together a diverse group of interested parties in August of 2000 to develop a statewide sage grouse conservation plan. Called the Governor's Sage Grouse Conservation Team, and representing the diverse interests of the state, this group prepared and implemented a planning system that provided local communities with the tools, resources and scientific information to formulate sage grouse conservation plans that emphasized local involvement and decision-making.

To date, seven Local Area Planning Groups are active in Nevada and California. They are the Washoe-Modoc Planning Group in northwest Nevada and northeast California, the North-Central Planning Group in the Winnemucca area, the Northeast Nevada Stewardship Group in northeast Nevada, the Lincoln County Group, the White Pine County Group, the South-Central Group for all of southern Nevada, and the Bi-State Group for south-western Nevada and the southeastern border of California. These seven planning groups have developed local plans which outline threats to sage grouse and methods to offset the impacts that may occur.

Currently, all seven groups are in some stage of the implementation phase of sage grouse conservation planning, and completing unfinished Population Management Unit plans. Current planning efforts are focused on doing projects that protect or enhance sage grouse habitat, including range restoration efforts, riparian protection, changes in seasons and use of grazing in sage grouse areas, and changes in how resource agencies apply fire prescriptions, pinyon-juniper controls, and a myriad of other management activities that affect sage grouse habitat.

Traditionally, the responsibility for species and habitat management has been divided between various authorities that have often worked independently, producing mixed results. Development of sage grouse conservation plans through local collaborative planning processes has provided a critical

Produced by the Sage Grouse
Communications Committee:

Bureau of Land Management, Nevada Department of Agriculture, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service & our partners including the Cattlemen's Association, the Nevada Farm Bureau, and the Rangeland Resources Commission. 2005



Sage Grouse Planning Efforts in Nevada & California

opportunity to coordinate current land and bird management activities through a single integrated process, using adaptive management techniques. By working together, stakeholders have the opportunity to develop and implement an effective sage grouse conservation program that will balance the needs for sagebrush habitat, sage grouse populations, and economic considerations.

About the Bird

Sage grouse are the largest of the North American grouse. Males range from 27 to 34 inches in length and weigh five to seven pounds, while females are 18 to 24 inches in length and weigh from two to three pounds. They are a grayish-brown bird with a dark belly and long, pointed tail feathers.

Sage grouse are found in all of the western states except Arizona and New Mexico. They are distributed throughout Nevada wherever sagebrush is found. The bird is considered a “landscape-scale” species, meaning that they require vast tracts of acceptable habitat to fulfill their life history requirements. Sage grouse populations in Nevada have generally declined over the last 40 years from peaks experienced in the late 1970s. However, some populations have exhibited some short-term increases. The distribution of the species in Nevada has experienced some contraction, but not to the level that Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Utah have seen.

How You Can Help

The Sage Grouse Conservation Team is asking you to help with this important effort. The Governor has asked local governments and community members to get involved with and support implementation of local area plans. They need your participation, knowledge, and ideas in order to be successful. Local Area Planning Groups have learned about sage grouse and identified species’ needs and human needs in their area. The goal now is to take action on the ground to restore sage grouse, provide for public input at the local level and keep land use options flexible.

Get Involved!

If you would like to become involved, please contact Katie Simper at (775) 688-1915 to join in the effort to support sage grouse habitat and the state’s sage grouse populations.

Produced by the Sage Grouse
Communications Committee:

Bureau of Land Management, Nevada Department of Agriculture, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service & our partners including the Cattlemen’s Association, the Nevada Farm Bureau, and the Rangeland Resources Commission. 2005