

SGI 2.0

Discover what's *on the horizon*
to improve rangeland health



Oregon

SGI: The Foundation for Success

The Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) formed in 2010 as a partnership of ranchers, agencies, universities, and nonprofit groups working together with a shared vision of achieving wildlife conservation through sustainable ranching. Thanks in large part to their hard work and commitment to restoration, in 2015 the U.S. Interior Secretary announced the greater sage grouse is not warranted for protection under the Endangered Species Act. This marks not only a major success for SGI, but also a turning point in the approach to sage-steppe restoration. A new strategy, known as SGI 2.0, builds on the success of SGI, while expanding its scope to address a wide variety of threats to rangeland health.

SGI 2.0 Strategies for Oregon:



INVASIVE CONIFER ENCROACHMENT

Continue scaling-up conifer removal by sustaining action on private lands and supporting partnerships to treat adjacent public lands to achieve landscape-scale effects.



EXOTIC ANNUAL GRASSES

Prevent the spread of invasive annual grasses through early detection and eradication of small infestations in otherwise healthy rangelands.



LONG-TERM PROTECTION & ENHANCEMENT

Protect what's already good by utilizing long-term rental agreements or easements to protect intact, core habitats not in need of significant restoration or management from fragmenting threats.



COMPREHENSIVE RANCH PLANNING TO ADDRESS THREATS

Provide technical assistance to develop custom ranch plans that comprehensively address threats to sage grouse while strengthening sustainable ranching operations.

INVASIVE CONIFER ENCROACHMENT



The removal of Western juniper yields significant benefits for both ranchers and sage grouse alike. As rangeland is consumed by these invasive trees, it becomes increasingly unsupportive of not only sage grouse communities, but also livestock.

Since 2010, nearly two-thirds of the conifer threat has been removed in priority sage grouse habitats in Oregon. Efforts to address the remaining threat continue through the 2014 Farm Bill. Interested participants may be eligible to receive financial incentives and technical support through the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**, a voluntary program that helps producers implement structural and management practices. Sign-up deadlines are announced regularly throughout the year.

EXOTIC ANNUAL GRASSES



Exotic annual grasses present a significant threat to the maintenance of a healthy sagebrush ecosystem, and, as such, threaten both sage grouse habitat and forage production for livestock. Annual grass invasions also increase the risk of frequent wildfires.

With SGI 2.0, efforts have been increased significantly, with financial incentives available through the **EQIP** to assist in the eradication and prevention of exotic annual grasses.

LONG-TERM PROTECTION & ENHANCEMENTS



SGI 2.0 encourages the maintenance of large and intact grazing lands by coupling restoration and enhancement with conservation easements. Easements allow for the protection of working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of these lands. Easements are available through the **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**. The **Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)** component of the program is designed to benefit working rangelands.

COMPREHENSIVE RANCH PLANNING TO ADDRESS THREATS

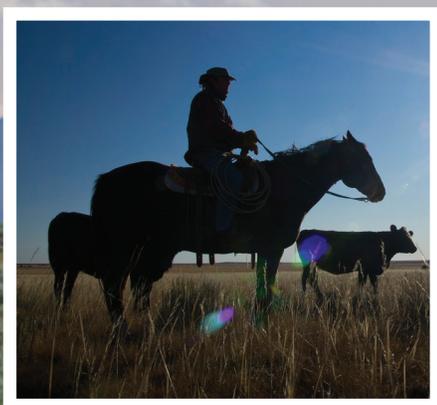


Conservation technical support is available to adapt working lands management plans to value both sage grouse habitat and sustainable ranching operations. Along with improving wildlife habitat, the conservation practices outlined in these plans strive to improve rangeland health in valuable sagebrush landscapes. This includes working with other agencies and partners to support efforts such as Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs). Supporting Farm Bill Programs include the **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**, the **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**, **EQIP**, and **ACEP**.

To learn more about SGI 2.0 in Oregon, please refer to the Oregon Natural Resources Conservation Service website at:

www.nrcs.or.usda.gov

Photo by Jeremy Roberts, *Conservation Media*



NRCS offers conservation technical support and financial incentives to help ranchers install rangeland conservation practices through the Sage Grouse Initiative 2.0. Contact your local USDA Service Center for more information.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.