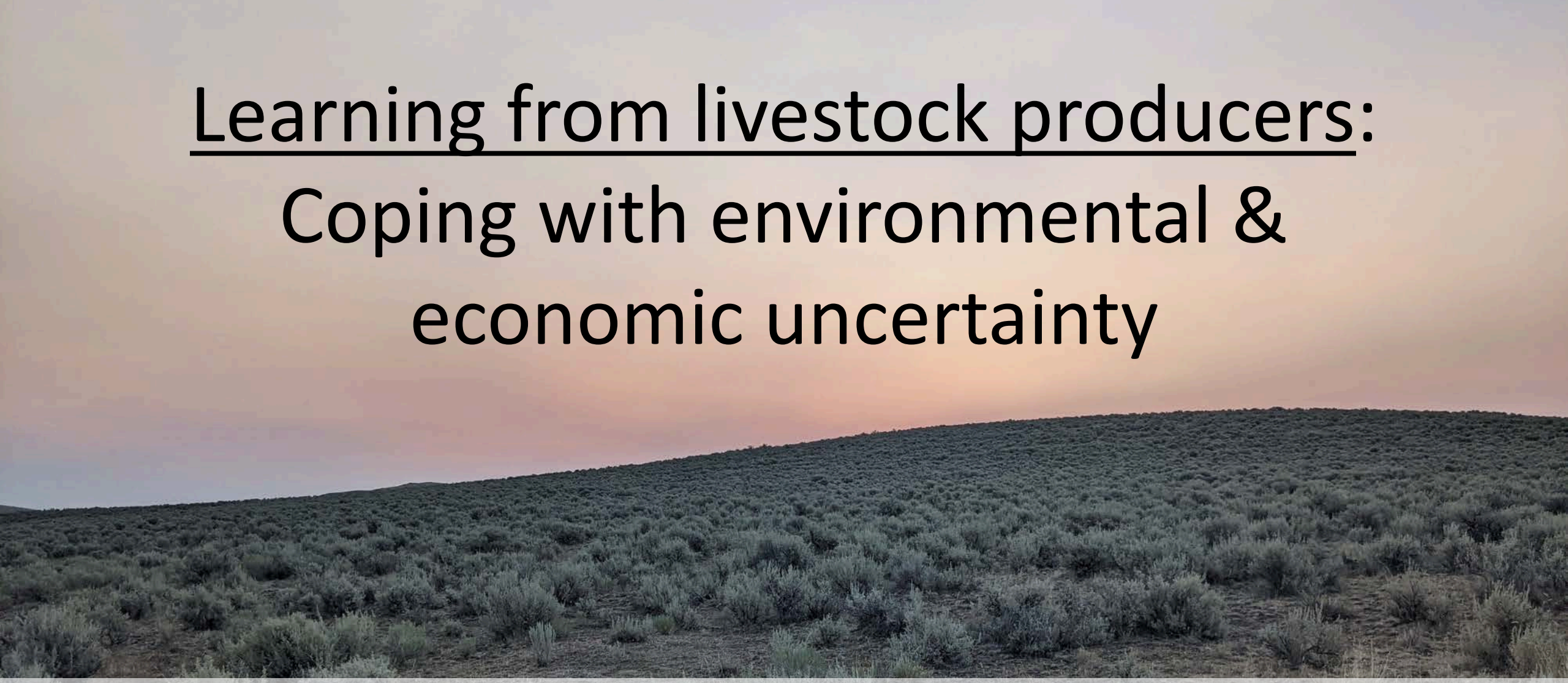
Learning from livestock producers:
Coping with environmental & economic uncertainty



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The SageCon Partnership

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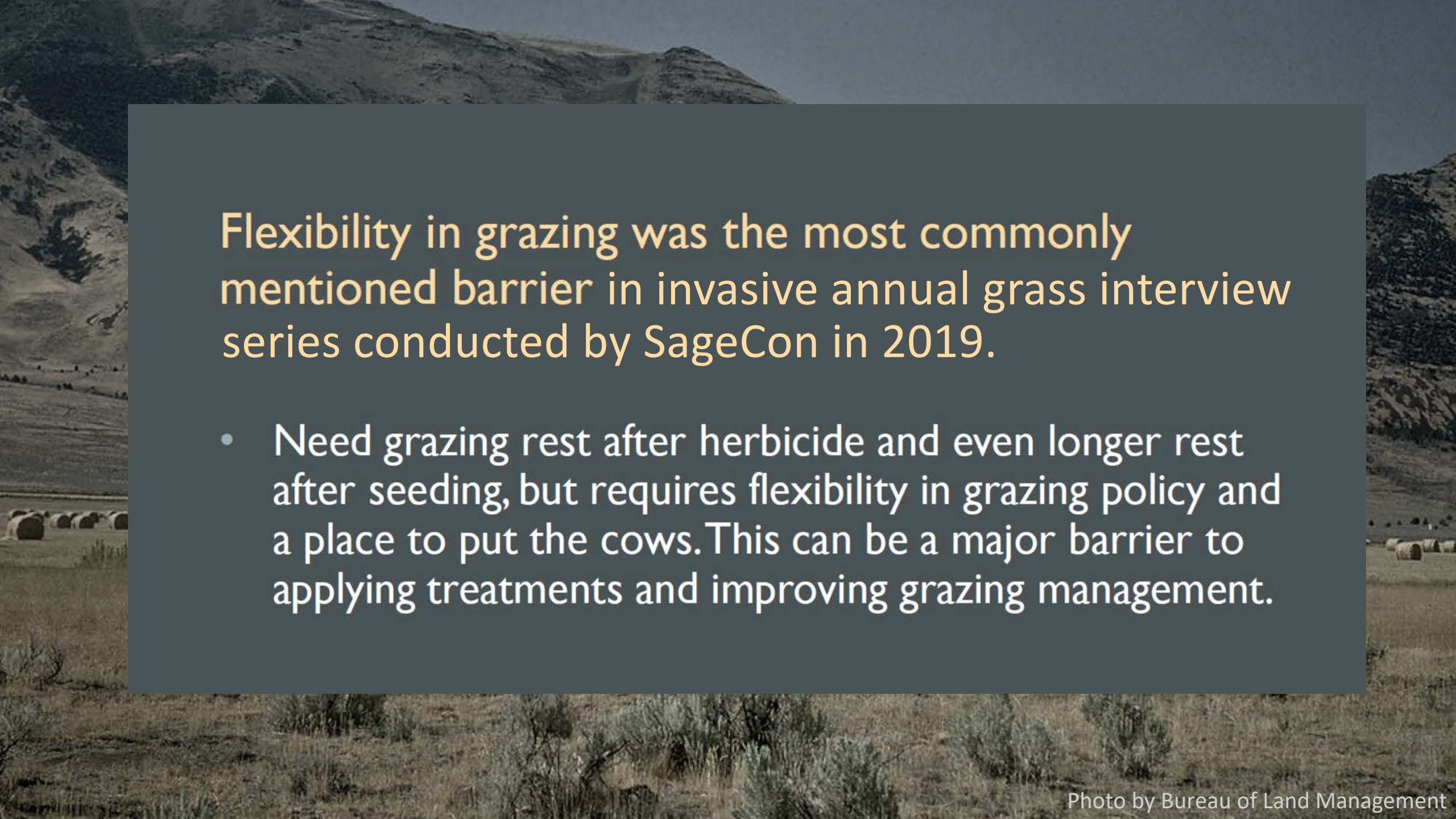
We work together to build resilience in Oregon's sagebrush rangelands.

Our focus is on building **ecological resilience** by addressing the threats to sage-grouse populations and sagebrush ecosystem health from fire, invasive species, woodland expansion, and other stressors.

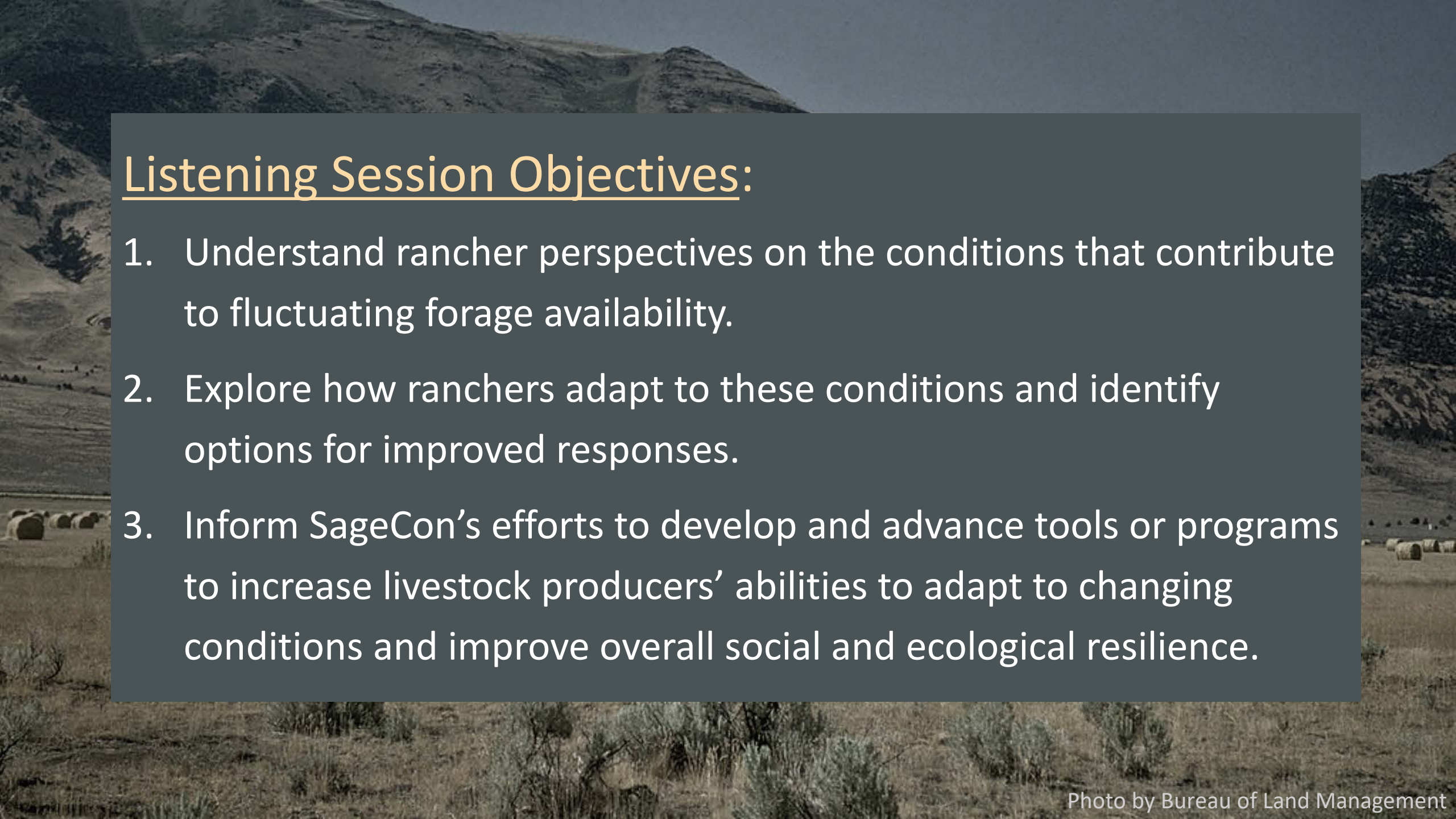
This work relies on **social and economic resilience** — thriving local communities with the power, capacity, collaboration, and resources for responsible stewardship.



Flexibility in grazing was the most commonly mentioned barrier in invasive annual grass interview series conducted by SageCon in 2019.

- Need grazing rest after herbicide and even longer rest after seeding, but requires flexibility in grazing policy and a place to put the cows. This can be a major barrier to applying treatments and improving grazing management.

Photo by Bureau of Land Management

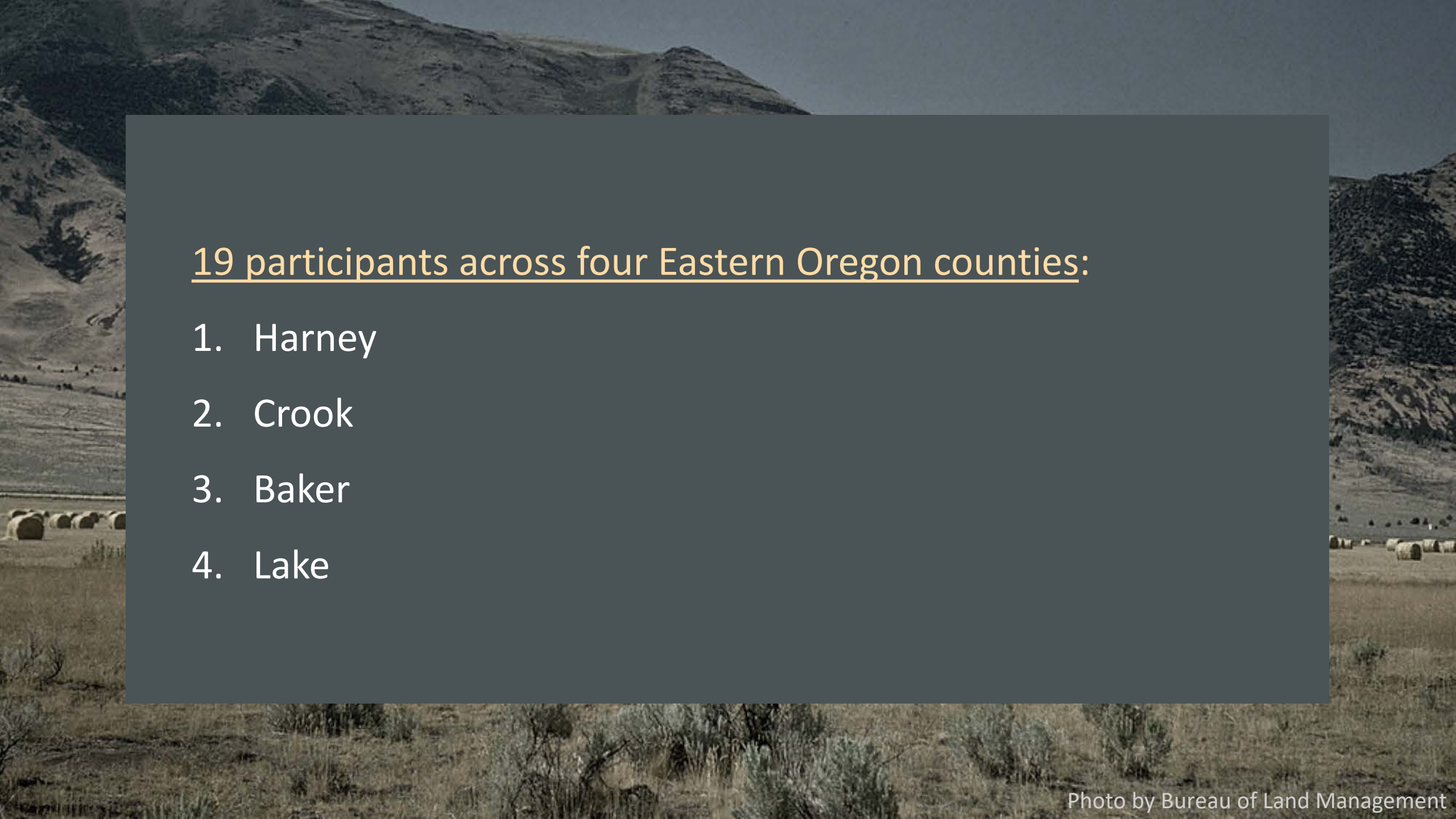


Listening Session Objectives:

1. Understand rancher perspectives on the conditions that contribute to fluctuating forage availability.
2. Explore how ranchers adapt to these conditions and identify options for improved responses.
3. Inform SageCon's efforts to develop and advance tools or programs to increase livestock producers' abilities to adapt to changing conditions and improve overall social and ecological resilience.

Photo by Bureau of Land Management


This strategy focuses TNC resources
on catalyzing shifts in livestock
grazing and rangeland management that
promote ecological and community resilience to
invasive plants, large-scale wildfires and
Ecological Resilience
Community Resilience



19 participants across four Eastern Oregon counties:

1. Harney
2. Crook
3. Baker
4. Lake

Photo by Bureau of Land Management

Solutions?

- Refuge open to more grazing, summer could relieve other areas (currently capped @ 6% of 130,000 AUMs)
- This drought is making it difficult to break even
- Unpredictable to know if you get access or not
- Desire to use local resources
- Used to have cost-share programs to grow oats/grains, then grazed off
- Double cropping refuge hay would have multiple benefits
- $$$ to drill wells, buy seed, brushbeating
- solar project to get another income source
- FSA programs? what strings will be attached?

Hauling water - 2022 - time, cost

- cut numbers based on water availability
  - not as frequently before
- haul water to meadows
- hay shortage - everyone affected by drought
- Grazing Plan - start December + make adjustments in spring + onward
  - hard to tell based on snowpack/weather until early spring
  - using old growth early on - leave enough to graze early spring
  - Rest rotation + stockpiling
- NEPA requirements - water trough placement
  - also roads, access
- Forage Insurance - stability
  - problems w/ weather variability
- Weather variability/climate change
  - spatial variability
  - 2022 - no precip Jan-April

- Current dry year ⟷ Plan a year ahead
- Get set up for another dry year
  - body condition → very little growth
  - early weaning (July) → dried out quick
- Paying constant attention → ~2 months ahead of cycle in pasture rota
- Do the best you can
  - pull calves off early, eve though they were light

Hay was expensive!

- Helped stretch things

late 80's/early 90's drought ⟶ lessons

One yr. is t a drought

- have a plan / preparation
- faith, family, LAND
- Be flexible, adjust num

prioritize healthy rangelands

- Stockpile standing forage / stacked hay
- Money in the bank

Pacific Northwest

Eastern Oregon ranchers work to hang on to cattle herds in wake of summer wildfires

Updated: Oct. 30, 2012, 5:25 p.m. | Published: Oct. 30, 2012, 4:25 p.m.

Drought prompts continued dread

By JAYSON JACOBY, RONALD BOND,

BENNETT HALL and JOHN TILLMAN EO Media Group Apr 23, 2022 Updated Aug 23, 2022

Oregon and the West may be stuck in perpetual drought, study says

By Bradley W. Parks (OPB)

March 17, 2022 5 a.m. **Updated:** March 18, 2022 10:04 a.m.

What's now considered a long and intense drought in Oregon and parts of the American West is becoming the norm, according to new research.

Burns Times-Herald

Covers Harney County Like The Sagebrush

Twenty-Two-Year 'Megadrought' Experienced Throughout The West

Agriculture News March 30, 2022

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1984 FLOODING OF MALHEUR-HARNEY LAKE, HARNEY COUNTY, SOUTHEASTERN OREGON

Common Challenges

- Operational constraints
- Livestock water availability
- Administrative challenges
- Social uncertainty

In a below-average production year (i.e., less-than-average rainfall yields below-average grass growth in a given pasture): operations must absorb the costs of, for example, supplemental feed or lower livestock weight gains.

In an above-average year (i.e., abundant forage is available): operations may be unable to quickly respond to capitalize on abundant forage to, for example, maximize livestock gains or improve rangeland health through rest.

Common Challenges

- Operational constraints
- Livestock water availability
- Administrative challenges
- Social uncertainty

Operational Planning

- Experience
- Observation
- Constant adjustment

Adaptation Tactics – forage shortage

- Rely on stockpiled forage
- Adjust pasture rotations
- Wean early
- Adjust herd numbers

Photo by Bureau of Land Management

Adaptation Tactics – forage surplus

- Stockpile forage
- Increase rest
- “Use it while you have it”
- Stockpile hay

Photo by Bureau of Land Management

Tools & Programs

- Pasture, Range & Forage Insurance
- USDA FSA Emergency Livestock Relief
- NRCS Cost-Share Programs
- Shared understanding with agencies and research partnerships

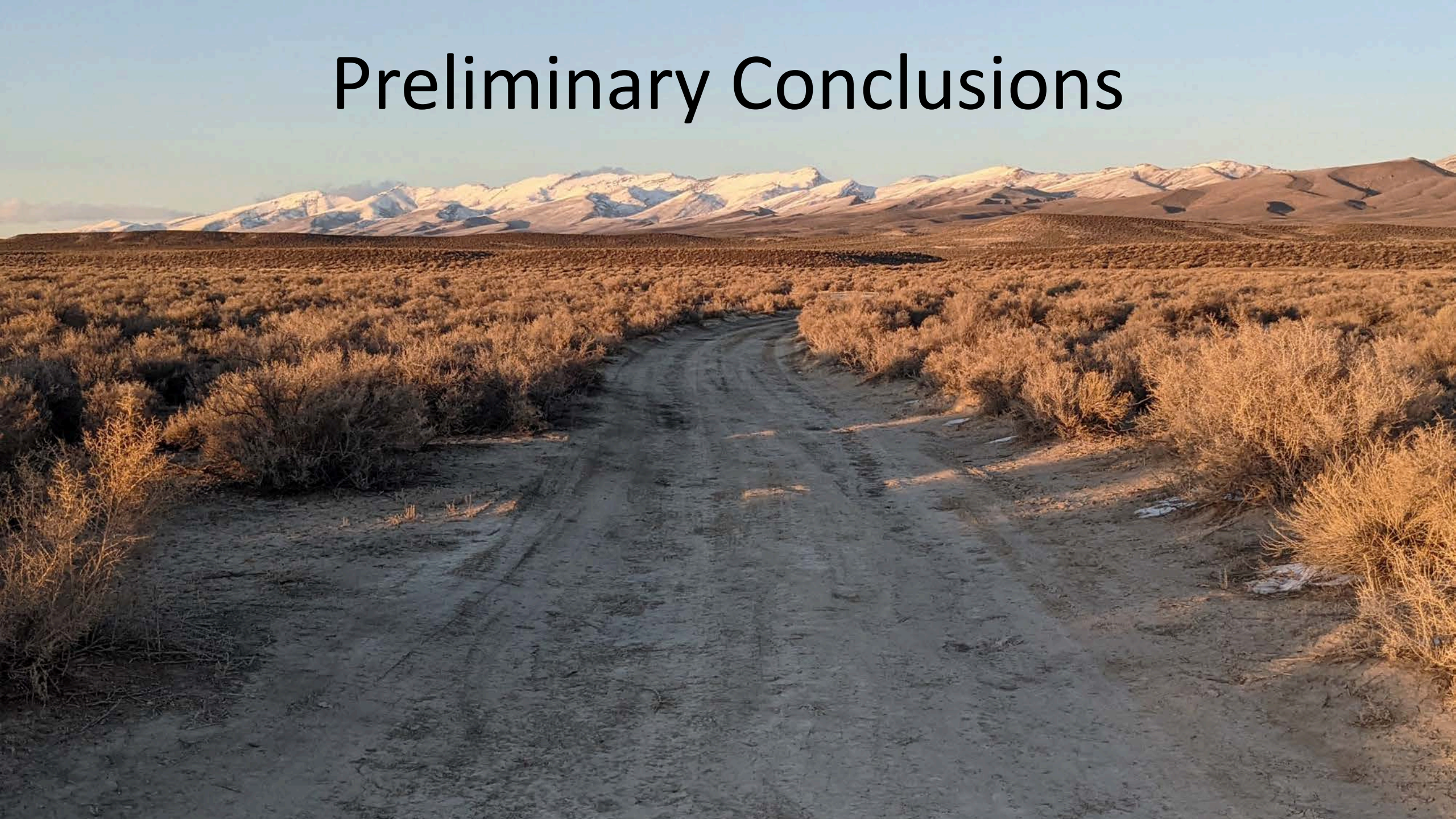
Producer Recommendations:

If resources weren't limited, operators would like to:

- Install fencing & water developments to improve distribution
- Implement vegetation treatments to enhance forage
- Source alternative forage

Photo by Bureau of Land Management

Preliminary Conclusions



Thank You

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