



Sagebrush Conservation Strategy

Part I – Challenges to Sagebrush Conservation



Prepared in cooperation with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Sagebrush Conservation Strategy— Challenges to Sagebrush Conservation



Open-File Report 2020- 1125

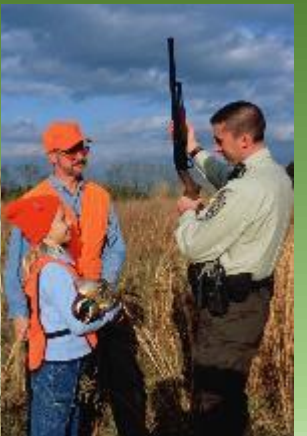
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey



Sagebrush Conservation Strategy

Part II: Strategies for Sagebrush Conservation


- Review models of collaborative conservation successfully addressing threats across the west.
- Present non-regulatory strategies developed through a stakeholder engagement process to overcome these challenges. “Protect the core, grow the core”.
- Conservation design and network governance recommendations



SageCon – A View From the Outside



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Now Sagebrush Science Coordinator
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Problems we are facing seem intractable; invasive annual grasses, fire, conifer expansion, wild horses, mining and energy development on 160 million acres over 14 states.

Coordination on Science has led us to approaches on how to “eat the elephant”.

- Conservation design around ecosystem integrity
- Partnership model to set objectives, coordinate actions
- Strategic implementation of conservation strategies to address threats

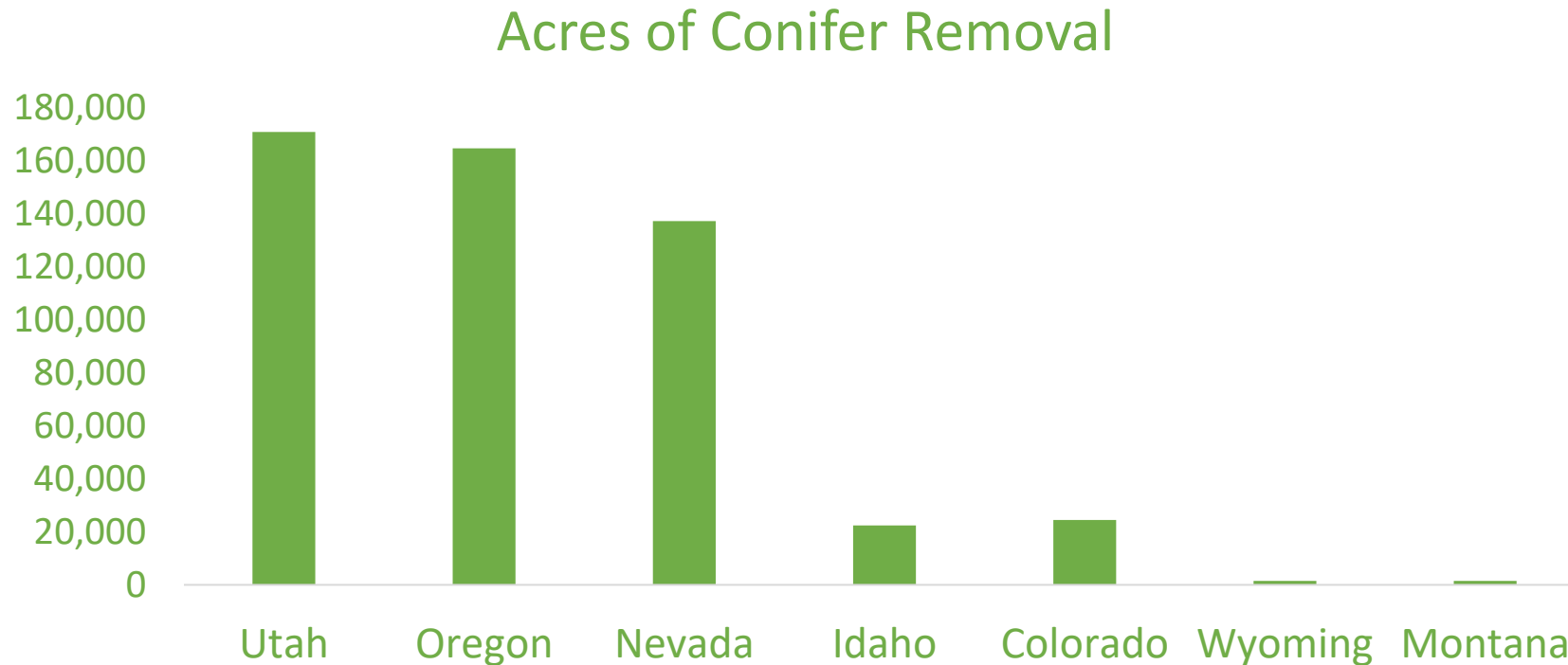
SageCon is Doing it, and Doing it Right!

- Governance/Partnerships – Inclusive
 - SageCon
 - High Desert Partnership
 - Harney County Wildfire Collaborative
- Action Plan, Quantitative Objective for Sage-Grouse & Sagebrush
- Focus on Ecosystem, threat-based models, Ecostates (SCIENCE)

A!

SageCon is Doing it, and Doing it Right!

- Implementation
 - Conifer removal (Comparative data from Reinhardt et al. 2020, through 2016)



SageCon is Doing it, and Doing it Right!

- Land Use & Mitigation

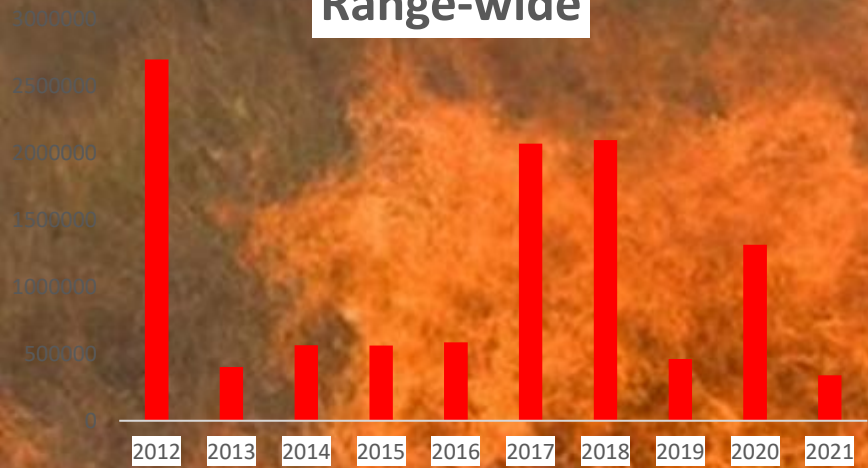
“The Action Plan, OARs, and BLM ARMPA set limits on the amount of development in core sage-grouse habitat across public and private lands. State OAR 660-023-0115 limits “large-scale development” and other “conflicting uses” **to 3% of the total area in each core area**, with any increase capped at 1% per decade.”

B+

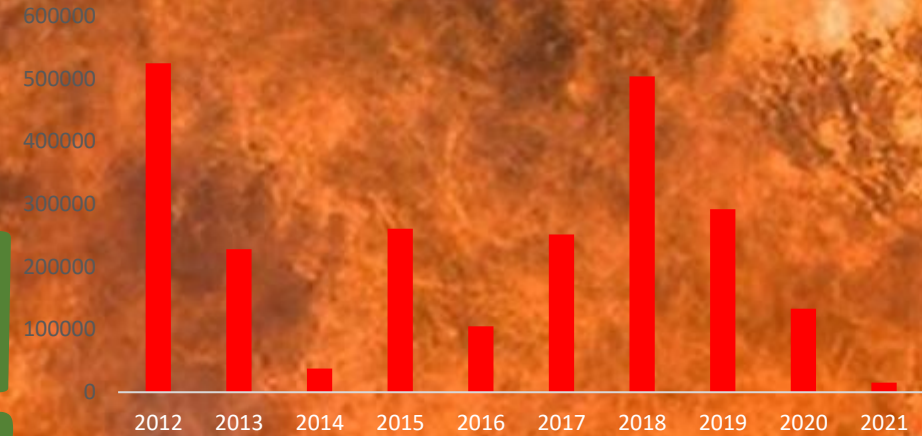
Compensatory Mitigation: Where development impacts cannot be avoided or minimized, the developer must offset residual impacts to sage-grouse habitat with compensatory mitigation. Oregon offers three compensatory mitigation options: 1) permittee responsible mitigation (includes habitat restoration, maintenance and protection), 2) **payment into an in-lieu fee fund managed by ODFW**, or 3) purchase of credits from an ODFW approved sage-grouse mitigation bank.

Impact of RFPAs (etc.)

Range-wide



Idaho

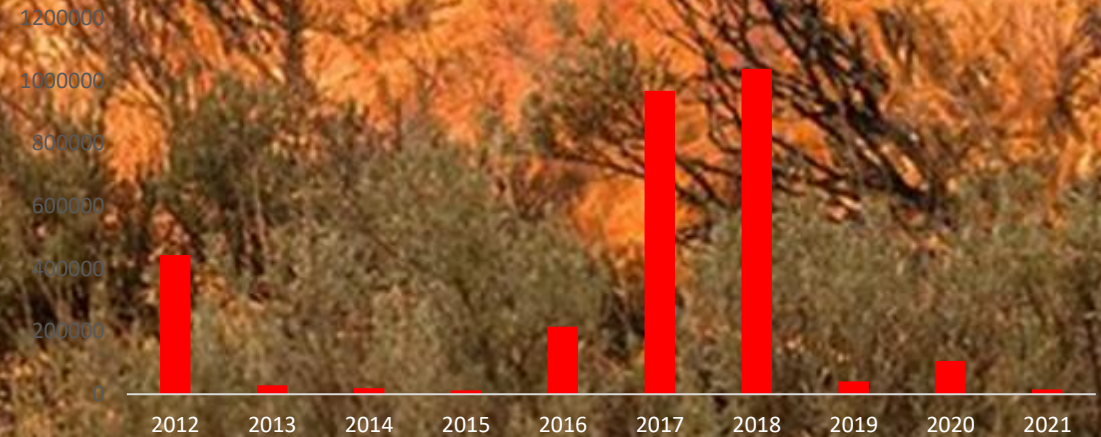


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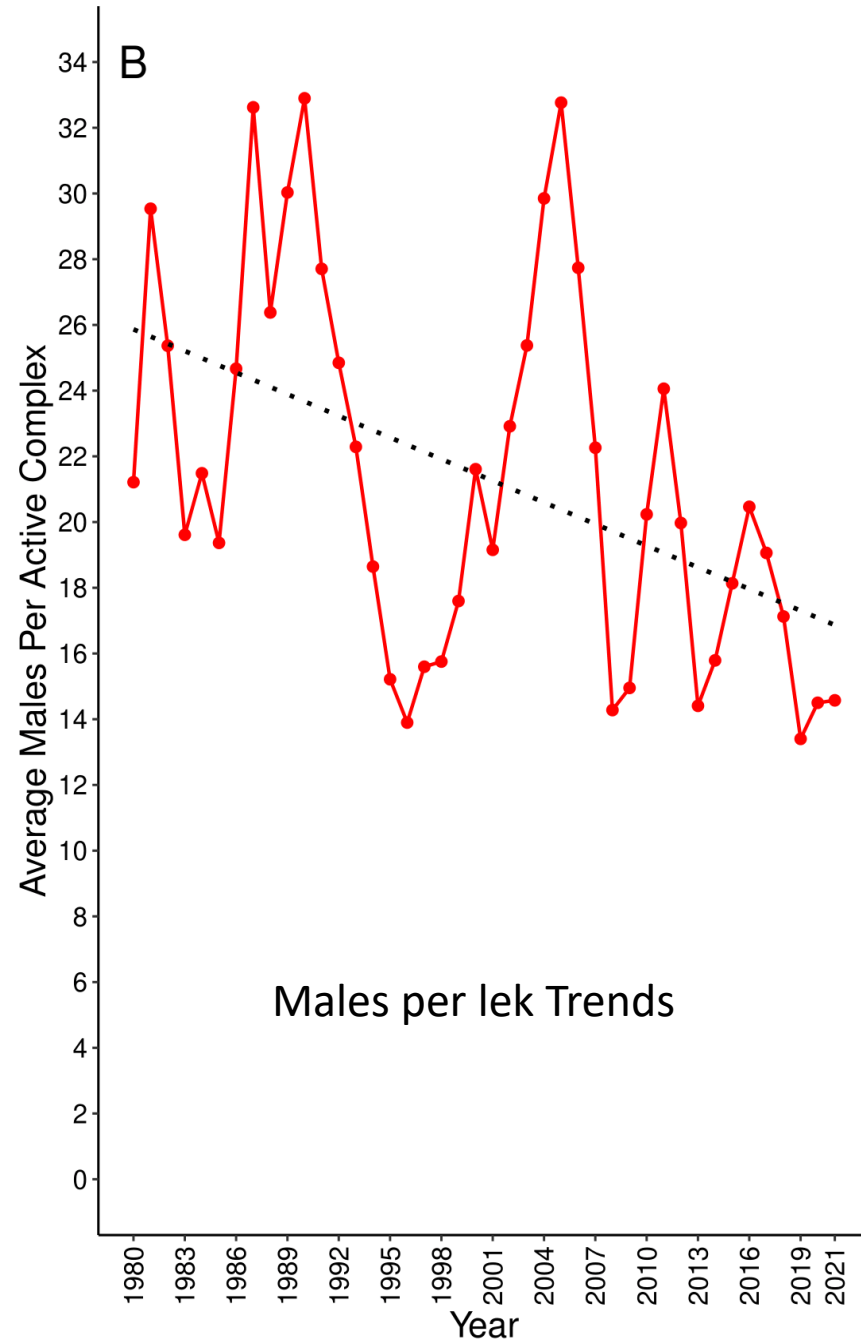
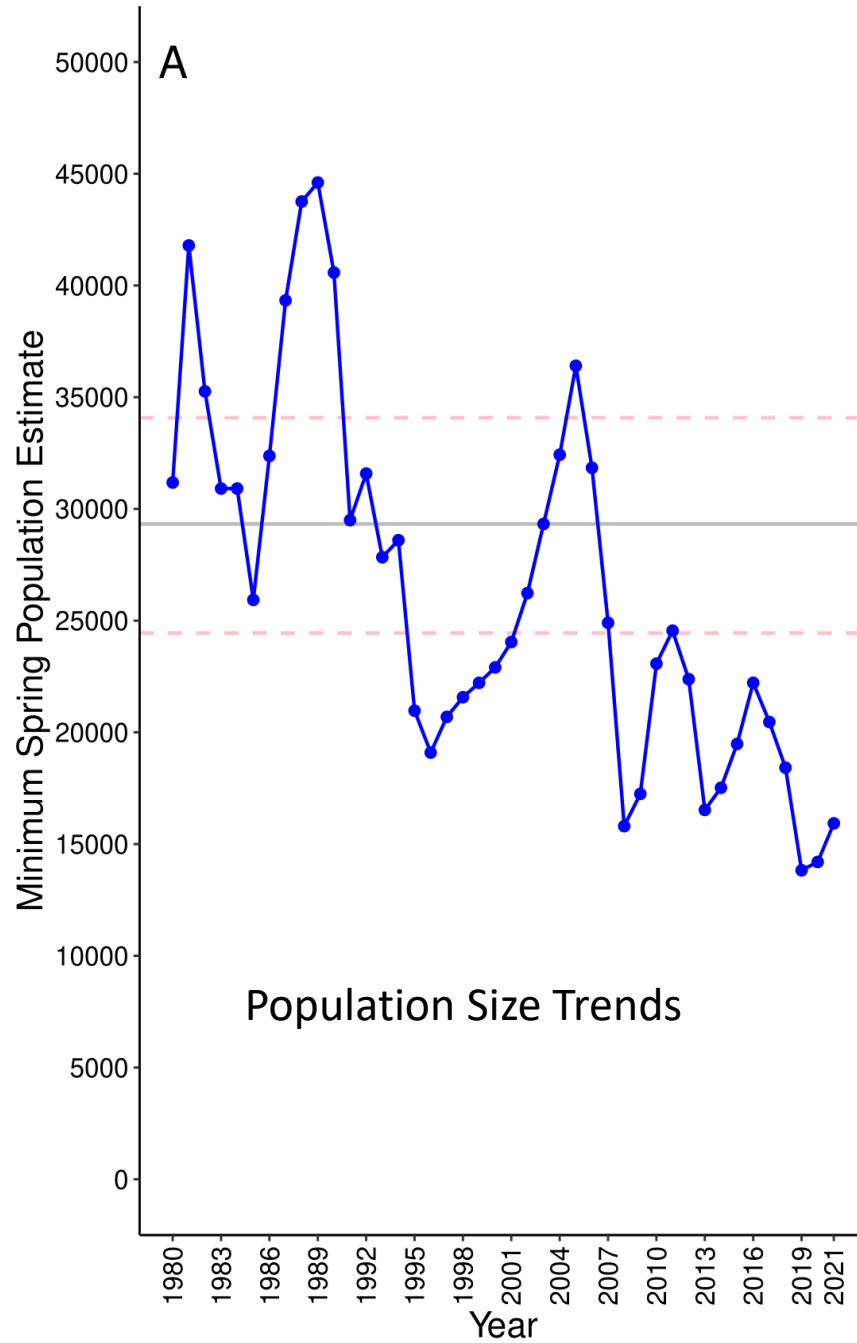
Oregon



Nevada



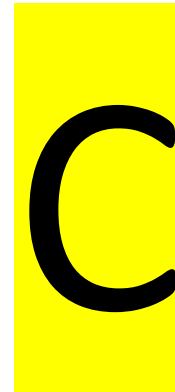
Work To
do....



b. Monitoring and Adaptive Management

“Monitoring is an essential feature of this Action Plan and is critical to successful ***implementation of an adaptive management approach*** designed to benefit sage-grouse populations.”

Adaptive Management – JUST DO IT!



Advice:

- Develop a model to relate amount and quality of sagebrush habitat to sage-grouse population size
 - Don't like models? already have one: *retain at least 70% of sage-grouse range as sagebrush habitat in advanced structural stages-sagebrush class 3, 4, or 5 = 30,000 grouse*
 - Use population/habitat model to revisit sage-grouse population goal
 - Evaluate viability (stop the bleeding/defend the core vs. grow the core)
 - How much sagebrush habitat do you need to restore to what level to reach 30,000?
 - Reset as a range, not a point
 - Always above or below a point goal
 - Sage-grouse populations fluctuate +/- 40% from highs to lows, point not realistic
- Establish a time frame by which it will be met