



Identification of Conservation Priorities for and Threats to Palouse Grassland and Canyon Grassland Remnants in Idaho, Washington, and Oregon

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AND OREGON

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Abstract

This report summarizes the results of Phase 1 of a project designed to assess threats to Palouse Grassland and Canyon Grassland communities and associated sensitive plant taxa and to increase the number of high quality occurrences of these elements that are protected through private conservation agreements. This work was funded through a challenge cost-share agreement between the Bureau of Land Management, Cottonwood Resource Area, and the Palouse Land Trust of Moscow, Idaho.

Data on element occurrences of plant communities and rare or endemic plant taxa associated with Palouse Grasslands or Canyon Grasslands of Washington, Oregon, or Idaho were obtained from the Idaho Fish and Game Conservation Data Center, the Washington Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Program, and the Oregon Division of State Lands/Oregon Nature Conservancy Natural Heritage Program. A total of 308 of these elements occurred on sites that currently are not protected. These sites were ranked in terms of size, proximity to other occurrences of Palouse or Canyon Grassland elements, number of elements at the site, and quality of occurrence. Twenty sites were identified as conservation priorities that are currently unprotected. In addition baseline monitoring at five sites, reconnaissance visits to eight sites, and comparisons with data obtained at three sites a minimum of 35 years ago, indicated that exotic species are a widespread threat to Palouse and Canyon Grassland communities.

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