



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

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Media Advisory

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Secretary Jewell, Gov. Otter to Make Major Announcement Regarding Sagebrush Lands Threatened by Rangeland Fire

BOISE, ID – On Tuesday, May 19, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Idaho Governor Butch Otter will make a major announcement regarding collaborative strategies to address the intense wildfires that are damaging vital sagebrush landscapes and productive rangelands in the Great Basin region of Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Oregon and California. Earlier this year, Secretary Jewell issued [Secretarial Order No. 3336](#) to address these issues in a comprehensive and collaborative strategy.

The Secretarial Order is a result of the November 2014 conference [The Next Steppe: Sage-grouse and Rangeland Fire in the Great Basin](#), convened by Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Janice Schneider, which brought together fire experts and land managers at the federal, state and local levels for better coordination and collaboration in fighting wildfire at the landscape level. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, James Lyons, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget Kris Sarri have been working with federal and state partners to achieve this collaboration and will also be on hand to announce the final strategy.

Rangeland fires in the Great Basin have increased in size and intensity in recent years, accompanied by the accelerated invasion of non-native annual grasses, in particular cheatgrass. In addition, ongoing drought and the effects of climate change have combined to increase the threat of rangeland fires to the sagebrush landscape and the more than 350 species of plants and animals – such as mule deer and pronghorn – that rely on this western landscape.

These conditions also pose a significant threat to the greater sage-grouse in that portion of its remaining range, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering whether protections under the Endangered Species Act are warranted.

WHO: **Sally Jewell**, U.S. Secretary of the Interior
Butch Otter, Idaho Governor
Jeff Foss, Idaho Acting State Director, Bureau of Land Management
Jim Hubbard, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, State and Private Forestry

Mike Guerry, Three Creek Rangeland Fire Protection Association

WHAT: Important announcement on rangeland wildfire strategies

WHEN: Tuesday, May 19, 2015
12:00 p.m. MST - Opportunity for b-roll during trail walk
1:00 p.m. MST - Press Conference

WHERE: Hulls Gulch Interpretive Trail parking area (Please click [this link](#) for directions)
8th Street Road
Boise, ID 83702

MEDIA: Credentialed members of the media are encouraged to [RSVP here](#). Media members are welcome to take b-roll and photos during a Hulls Gulch trail walk and briefing at noon prior to the press conference.