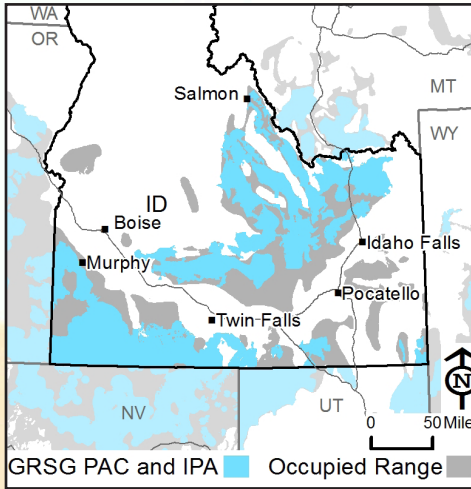




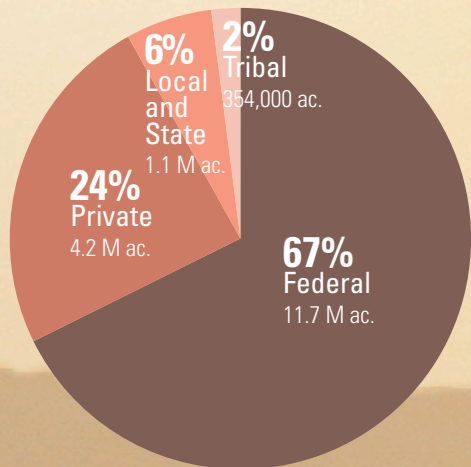
# Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation in Idaho



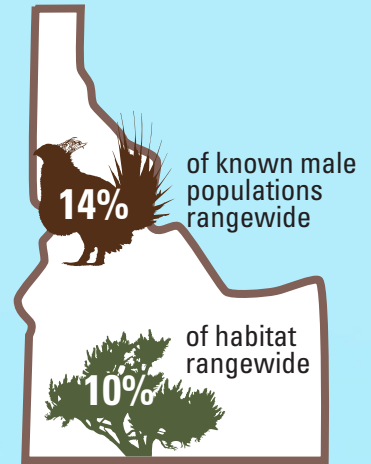
## Important Conservation Areas and Occupied Range for Greater Sage-Grouse in Idaho

### Land Ownership

Total Occupied Range: 17.4 million acres



Idaho has been an active partner in the collaborative, science-based conservation campaign to protect the greater sage-grouse and the sagebrush ecosystem. Due to the collective efforts of federal, state and private partners across its range, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has found that the greater sage-grouse does not warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act. Greater sage-grouse will continue to be managed by Idaho Fish and Game.



## Greater Sage-Grouse in Idaho

With an estimated 14 percent of the rangewide breeding population and 18 percent of the rangewide priority areas of conservation within its borders, Idaho plays an important role in the health of greater sage-grouse.

Located at the northern edge of the Great Basin, Idaho has a cluster of priority habitat areas in the central part of the state that functions as a hub for genetic connectivity between the eastern and western portion of the species' range.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service's Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) has made significant gains in securing conservation easements in key private inholdings a mosaic of privately owned and public lands. Significant cheatgrass incursions and frequent wildfires are primary threats to greater sage-grouse persistence.

### Primary Threats

Loss and fragmentation of sagebrush-steppe habitat primarily caused by wildfire and invasive annual grasses.

# Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategy in ID

## FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS



Minimize New Surface Disturbance

## STATE AND PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION

### Overview of State Actions

- In May 2015 Idaho's Governor signed an Executive Order adopting Idaho's Sage-grouse Management which directs all state agencies to apply the elements of the state plan to all land ownerships across the state, to the extent consistent with existing state law.
- The plan provides wildfire suppression guidance to complement Department of the Interior Order Number 3336 on rangeland fire and commits the state to assist with fire rehabilitation and implementation of fuel breaks, weed control and conifer removal in mixed state and federal ownerships.
- Idaho also recently completed a plan aimed at greater sage-grouse conservation on 600,000 acres managed by the Idaho Department of Lands.
- Since 2002, Idaho local working groups reported completing close to 400 greater sage-grouse conservation projects, including fire restoration, fuel breaks, fence marking and removal, conifer removal, weed control and sagebrush planting.

### NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative

SGI has been a catalyst for sagebrush conservation across the West. SGI's vision of wildlife conservation through sustainable ranching provides win-win solutions for ranchers, greater sage-grouse and 350 other species. With more than 1,120 participating ranches in 11 western states, SGI and its partners have invested \$424.5 million in greater sage-grouse conservation on 4.4 million acres of private ranchlands.

Conservation easements are an effective mechanism for removing the risk of development and keeping working ranches intact. In central Idaho, SGI worked with the Pioneer Alliance to conserve the connectivity of 2.4 million acres of public land by acquiring conservation easements on 65,400 acres of intervening private lands.

Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA)				
Name	Location	Covered Area Size	Land Uses	Date of Completion
Programmatic CCAA for Greater Sage-Grouse	West Central Planning Area	645,000 acres	Ranch management (ranch operations and development, rangeland treatments, recreation)	2/1/ 2010
Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCA)				
CCA for Greater Sage-Grouse on the Idaho National Laboratory site	INL site in SE Idaho	569,000 acres	Maintenance and operations related to DOE activities on the site; Does not include grazing managed by BLM	10/2/2014

## RANGELAND FIRE STRATEGY



The Idaho plan will help reduce the threat of rangeland fire by placing added priority on the prevention, suppression and restoration of sagebrush habitat threatened by rangeland fire through improved federal-state-local collaboration and coordination.

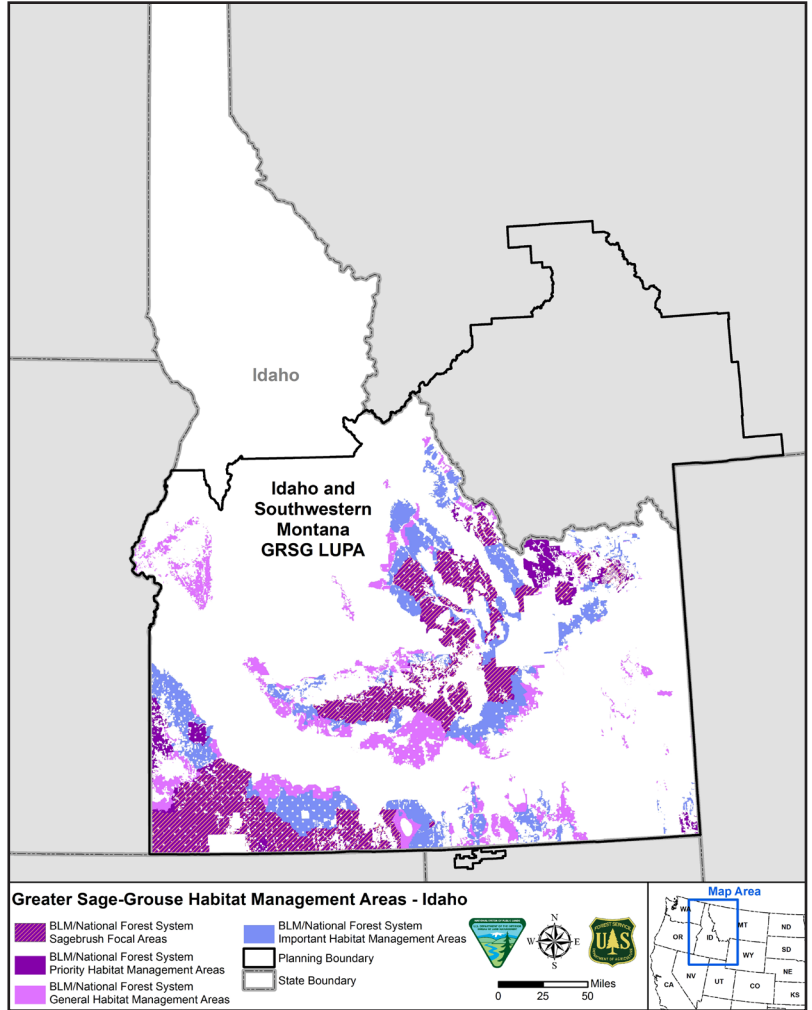
In Idaho, the Bureau of Land Management is working with the State of Idaho's Department of Lands to support the formation and ongoing operations of rangeland fire protection associations which help protect sagebrush habitat. The State will require authorized lessees and permittees to develop and be prepared to implement a fire prevention and emergency response plan that covers all aspects of operations.

Idaho received \$1.78 million in targeted Fire and Invasives Assessment Tool funding for a variety of treatment projects, including one that will clear fuel breaks along major transportation corridors in southwest Idaho, Oregon and Nevada. The fuel breaks will assist firefighters in reducing the threat of wildfires on sagebrush habitat.

# BLM-USFS Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plans in ID

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) amended the land-use plan in Idaho to address threats to the greater sage-grouse. The BLM-USFS plans provide a three-tiered habitat management approach that focus protections on the areas of highest importance to the species:

- ▶ The highest levels of protections are applied to Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFA), which are landscapes with high breeding population densities of sage-grouse, high-quality sagebrush habitat and a preponderance of federal ownership or protected areas that serve to anchor the conservation value of the landscape. These areas are prioritized for habitat improvement and vegetation management efforts and proposed for locatable mineral withdrawal.
  - ▶ Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA), equivalent to Core Areas, are managed to avoid and minimize further disturbance. Surface energy and mineral development is limited in these areas. Development is capped with limits on the amount and density of disturbance allowed. All of the SFAs are incorporated within PHMA.
  - ▶ Important Habitat Management Areas (IHMA) have moderate-to-high conservation value for greater sage-grouse populations. While IHMA is managed less-conservatively than PHMA, more protection allocations may be instituted through the adaptive management strategy.
  - ▶ General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA) provide greater flexibility for land use activities. Mitigation and required design features ensure that impacts from development are avoided, minimized and mitigated in GHMA.



SFA Acres	PHMA Acres	IHMA Acres	GHMA Acres
3.8 million acres	4.5 million acres	3.1 million acres	2.3 million acres

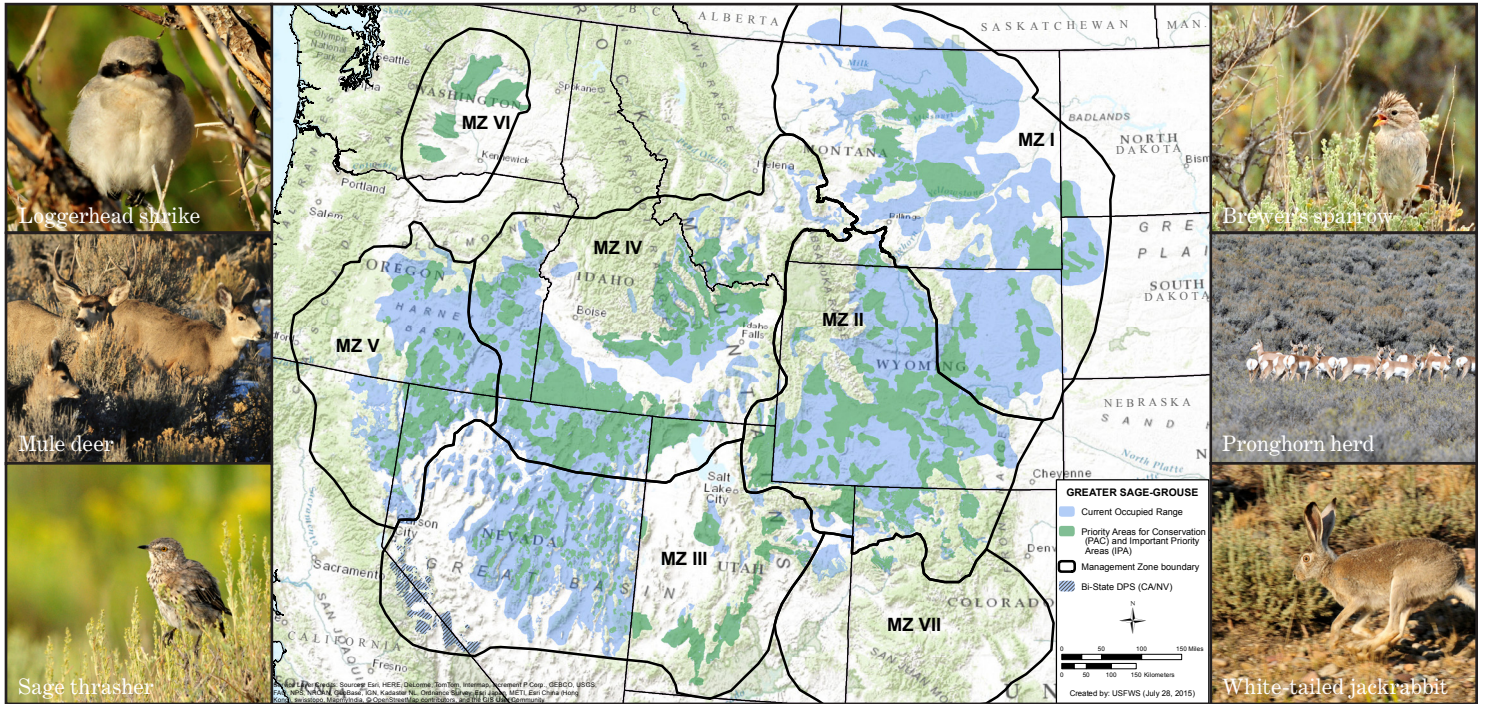
- The plans respect valid, existing rights, including those for oil and gas development, renewable energy, rights-of-way, locatable minerals and other permitted projects.
- During grazing permit renewals and modifications on lands within greater sage-grouse habitat, the BLM will incorporate locally developed management objectives for sage-grouse habitat and rangeland health standards, consistent with ecological potential. The BLM and USFS will prioritize monitoring for compliance, review and processing of grazing permits in important areas for greater sage-grouse first, SFA, followed by PHMA with a focus on lands containing riparian areas and wet meadows.

All of the federal lands with high and medium gas potential in Idaho are outside of federally managed priority conservation areas. There is no high and medium oil potential in Idaho.

Acres of High & Medium Oil and Gas Potential and Lease Status on Federal Lands and Minerals within PHMA								
State	High/Medium Oil Potential				High/Medium Gas Potential			
	Within PHMA Already Leased	Within PHMA Subject to BLM/USFS RMP Decisions for Priority Habitat	Outside of PHMAs	Total High/Medium Oil Potential	Within PHMA Already Leased	Within PHMA Subject to BLM/USFS RMP Decisions for Priority Habitat	Outside of PHMAs	Total High/Medium Gas Potential
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,000	10,000



# The Future for Greater Sage-Grouse in ID



## Redefining the Future of Conservation

FWS is confident that the unparalleled conservation effort by federal, state, and private partners has addressed the major threats to greater sage-grouse by putting the right protections in the most important places. A sustained commitment to sagebrush conservation is needed to ensure effective conservation for greater sage-grouse and the hundreds of other wildlife that depend on sagebrush habitat.

## Implementation

Partners will now begin to implement their commitments whether under state and federal plans, individual conservation agreements, or the Rangeland Fire Strategy. The BLM and USFS plans will be implemented in close coordination with state and local partners, as well as through continued collaboration with the Sage Grouse Task Force and local working groups. FWS will remain an active partner in the sagebrush conservation effort, funding new research, providing on-the-ground support for private landowners, as well as federal, state, industry and conservation partners.

## Enduring Benefits for All

Restoring the greater sage-grouse will benefit hundreds of other native plants and animals and communities across the West. What's more, these conservation efforts are led and strengthened by effective partnerships – ensuring that the gains we make for the greater sage-grouse will endure.



Sagebrush in Idaho

All photos credit to and courtesy of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service unless specified otherwise.

## Sage Grouse Initiative 2.0

Since 2010, SGI has focused on arresting habitat loss in the highest priority areas for conservation from ex-urban development and conifer encroachment, and on reducing greater sage-grouse collisions with high-risk fences.

NRCS has committed to invest another \$211 million in SGI 2.0, with an expanded mission of addressing the synergistic problems of invasive weeds and wildfires, on slowing the loss of sagebrush to agricultural conversion and on protecting wet meadow habitat critical for brood-rearing. The program's goal is to bring the total amount of private land under conservation to 8 million acres.

SGI 2.0 will complete Idaho's easement campaign in the Pioneer Mountains by 2018 with procurement of the final 40,000 identified acres. SGI 2.0 also marks a scaling up of fire and invasives threat reduction in eight states including Idaho, primarily by assisting BLM on comingled private lands.