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# Pine Nut Land Health Project

## Quarterly Update

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## Project Overview

The Sierra Front Field Office (SFFO) signed a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact on the Pine Nut Land Health Project Environmental Assessment (EA) on April 29, 2014. The Pine Nut Land Health Project will treat approximately 24,564 acres and will be implemented over a 10 to 15 year period.

A large focus of the project is the complete removal of pinyon-juniper trees in sage-brush areas in order to maintain and/or create additional sage-grouse habitat and movement

## Partners

The actions will build upon previous fuel hazard reduction projects and expand the scope of vegetation treatments to address an entire landscape in an integrated approach. Project partners include:

- Nevada Department of Wildlife
- Great Basin Institute (GBI)

## Annual Project Meeting

The annual meeting is an opportunity to coordinate all upcoming project activities with BLM and project partners. An agenda will be developed and sent out by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of January 2016. Please let us know if you have any agenda items. Feel free to invite other potential project partners.

When: Thursday, January 28, 2015  
9:00 am to 11:30 am

Where: Carson City District Office  
5665 Morgan Mill Road  
Carson City, NV 89701

RSVP: Coreen Francis

corridors. This may occur on up to 15,000 acres in areas where sage-grouse have been identified as present by recent telemetry studies. The other prescription proposed for medium and high density woodland stands (9,500 acres) is selective thinning to achieve the following goals:

- Fuel hazard reduction
- Riparian stand health and hydrologic function
- Woodland stand health and diversity
- Forest product removal as a by-product of treatments
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- Great Basin Bird Observatory
- United States Geological Survey (USGS)



Figure 1. Member of the public collects firewood off the Sunrise Pass Stewardship treatment unit.

## Completed treatments



Unit Name	Treatment Type	Date Completed	Acres
Mill Canyon 1	Sage-grouse	Dec 2014	2210
Illinois EQIP	Sage-grouse	Dec 2014	177
Lyon EQIP	Sage-grouse	Dec 2014	969
Crest EQIP	Sage-grouse	Sep 2015	770
Sunrise Roadside 1	Woodland Thinning	Nov 2014	69
Ruhenstroth Well/Como	Woodland Thinning	Nov 2015	30
Ruhenstroth	FHR Thinning	Nov 2015	189
Sunrise 1	FHR Thin/Sage-grouse	Dec 2015	660
Illinois 1	Pile Burning	Nov 2015	78

## On the horizon

### Sage-grouse Treatments

Hand removal treatments will continue in 2016 on the remaining 2,412 acres of the Mill Canyon unit and 583 acres of the Bald Mtn unit. Approximately 447 acres of the Mt. Siegel unit will be treated in the fall of 2016. Small trees will be removed from the previously treated Mill Canyon unit (completed in 2010) in the fall of 2016. The Slater unit was funded in FY15 but will not be treated until the fall of 2017 due to capacity to treat delayed and planned units.

### Fuel Hazard Reduction

Depending upon funding, approximately 537 acres of the Mineral/Illinois unit will be treated in the fall of 2016.

### Woodland Health Thinning

The Great Basin Institute completed 90% of the 80 acre Sunrise Pass Stewardship unit and work will

resume on this unit in May of 2016. Roadside thinning in the Sunrise Pass, Ruhenstroth Well, and Como areas will resume in the fall of 2016.

### Riparian Restoration

The contract was awarded for 415 acres of treatments in the the El Dorado and Hackett Canyon units and work will begin this summer/fall. Treatments are ongoing in the Pipeline Canyon unit but it is expected that the 106 acres will be completed in the next month, weather dependent.

### Monitoring

Since 2011, USGS has been actively collaring sage-grouse to track their movement in the Pine Nut Mountain Range. This will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of sage-grouse habitat enhancement treatments. Other monitoring includes vegetation response and migratory bird nesting and foraging use.

### Seasonal Weather Has Arrived!

Many of the treatment units scheduled for completion this fall have been suspended due to early seasonal weather making them inaccessible. Mill Canyon, Bald Mtn, Sunrise Pass Stewardship and the El Dorado/Illinois Canyon Units are delayed until summer/fall 2016.



Fig. 2. Mill Canyon Sage-Grouse Lek Area - After Treatment