SAGE-GROUSE CONSERVATION TEAM
IMPLEMENTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

2004-2005 Sage-grouse Conservation Action/Project Selections

The following is a list of projects that were selected by the Implementation Subcommittee (IS) using a standard selection criteria developed by the IS team to evaluate projects identified in Appendix F of the First Edition of the Sage-grouse Conservation Plan for Nevada and Eastern California (plan) or articulated within PMU plans submitted and included in the plan.

These projects will be presented to Nevada's Congressional delegation and sponsored specifically by Senator Harry Reid's office for funding in 2006-2007. These projects may also be subject to other funding sources based on allocations.

The Sage-grouse Conservation Team and IS Team need input from pertinent local working groups regarding the projects that were selected to determine various important project attributes such as budget and timelines. This input will be integral to submitting the most complete proposal possible. IS Team members, and/or Shawn Espinosa (Sage-grouse Staff Biologist), will attend upcoming LACP meetings to discuss projects that were selected, questions raised during the evaluation process, and needed information. The following are not in any particular priority order.

Desert Creek Pinyon/Juniper Reduction

- This project will treat approximately 3,389 acres
- The proposed project will treat areas within two miles of existing leks and are considered in Phase I or II of Pinyon/Juniper encroachment
- The proposal includes seven sites for treatment
- Partnerships still need to be established for full implementation
- The USFS will monitor implementation and habitat parameters
- NDOW will continue to intensively monitor sage-grouse leks

Bodie Hills Pinyon Removal and Management

- Evaluate the current extent of Pinyon and Juniper relation to sage-grouse habitat needs, fire ecology, and sagebrush associated plant community health
- Map and compare current Pinyon and Juniper extent with historic distribution
- Remove Pinyon and Juniper in and adjacent to currently occupied breeding habitat
- Five project sites identified near leks 9 and 10 as well as Mormon Meadows, Rancheria Gulch, and Big Alkali within the Bodie PMU

Desert Creek Pinyon Removal from Meadows

- The objective of this project is to remove encroaching pinyon trees from riparian habitat that supports wet to dry meadow vegetation
- The project will be conducted on USFS lands – Bridgeport Ranger District
- Project consists of four sites at this time including:
    1. Dead Ox Spring
    2. Long Doctor Spring
    3. Upper Dalzell Canyon
    4. Portions of Frying Pan Creek

Butte/Buck/White Pine Spring Improvements

- Improve spring flow and water availability along with improving riparian and upland habitat
- The project will involve mechanical treatment to remove pinyon and juniper trees in the vicinity of springs
- The projects are on USFS lands – Ely Ranger District
- Four spring improvements planned in the White Pine Range

Lone Willow Winter Habitat Enhancement and Protection of Quality (R-0) Habitats

The objective is to treat the interface of previously burned areas (winter habitat for Lone Willow PMU) and quality sagebrush habitats (spring/summer/and fall habitats) to help protect those sagebrush habitats from future fires and facilitate a transition from an exotic annual dominated community to a sagebrush/perennial grass/forb mixed community.

Desert Creek Leks Limited Access

- This project will close public access to the Desert Creek lek sites during the breeding and nesting season (March 1st to May 30th)
- This project will establish a Wildlife Viewing Area along State Route 338 for the Desert Creek lek that is a safe distance from the lek to eliminate disturbance
- Educational information will be available at the site
- The project will also identify winter use areas of sage-grouse to determine if there are any conflicts with winter recreational uses

Bodie Hills Fire Protection

Objectives:

1. Protect key sage-grouse habitats in the Bodie Hills PMU from direct loss from wildfire
2. Ensure that future wildfire suppression and fuels management actions promote the maintenance or improvement of sage-grouse habitat

Actions:

1. Identification and protection of key seasonal habitats
2. Priorities for fire suppression and compatible fire suppression techniques
3. Priorities for fire rehabilitation and criteria for rehabilitation efforts
4. Prescribed fire and fire surrogate treatments for fuels management and habitat improvement
5. Fire prevention to reduce human caused starts
6. Identification of sagebrush associated plant communities at risk of cheatgrass conversion

Steptoe/Cave/Lincoln Crested Wheatgrass Field Trial

The objective of this project is to determine the best mechanical method to increase perennial grass and forb density in an established crested wheat seeding where sagebrush is re-establishing itself. Conducting this field trial will give land managers information on the most expedient method to establish perennial grasses and forbs into large seedings.

The following treatment will be implemented on a 244 acre crested wheat seeding in the South Steptoe Valley Watershed:

- Seeding using a rangeland drill
- Broadcast seeding
- Broadcast seeding followed by land imprinter
- Broadcast seeding followed by Dixie harrow
- Dixie harrow followed by broadcast seeding

Expansion of Massacre Avian Predator Control

- The objective of this effort is to determine why recruitment within the Grassy-Stevens Camp area continued to be low during the majority of a predator control effort even though nest success rates were relatively high compared to control areas.
- A greater emphasis will be placed on habitat condition assessment and utilization of pre-laying, nesting and early brood rearing habitat by sage-grouse
- Data collected from the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge and the Lone Willow PMU need to be incorporated into this work