FY 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

PARTNERING TO CONSERVE

SAGEBRUSH RANGELANDS

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SAGEBRUSH
RANGELANDS

Annual Report
October 1, 2019–September 30, 2020

Access electronic digital copy here: www.PartnersInTheSage.com/2020-annual-report

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The purpose of this document is to provide a FY 2020 Annual Report on the partnership accomplishments of the intra-agency agreements between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV). The first intra-agency agreement was signed in June 2016 and provides $4,448,000 through June 2022. A second agreement was signed in August 2019 to expand partnership work for an additional five years (FY 2019-2024).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

INTERMOUNTAIN WEST
JOINT VENTURE

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Executive Summary

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) entered into a formal partnership in June 2016 to coordinate conservation practices on private and public lands. The purpose of the partnership is to increase voluntary, incentive-based collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries for people, wildlife, and local communities. We are using an "all hands, all lands" approach to conserving this nationally significant sagebrush ecosystem.

As we enter our fifth year of this partnership, the following 2020 Annual Report captures the major accomplishments of the BLM, IWJV, and hundreds of partners. The report summarizes activities of two intra-agency agreements. The first agreement was signed in June 2016 to deliver sage grouse and sagebrush habitat conservation that supported the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the BLM, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) for the period FY 2016–2022. It provided $4,448,000 in federal funds and has been leveraged with $3,647,298. The second intra-agency agreement was signed in August 2019 to expand upon the proven success of the BLM-IWJV partnership in achieving community-based sagebrush habitat conservation through diverse public-private partnerships for the period FY 2019–2024. The second intra-agency agreement provided federal funding of $1,349,010 leveraged with more than $813,004. An additional $332,779 has been contributed through state BLM funds. In sum, this public-private partnership has resulted in **$10,590,091** in funding for sagebrush rangeland conservation.

The current agreement focuses on the following six priorities of the Department of the Interior and the BLM:

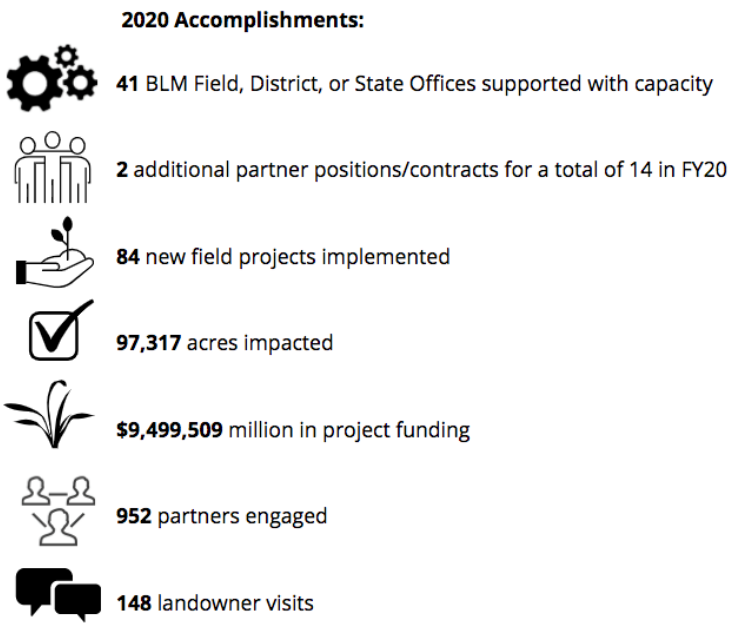
a. reduce catastrophic rangeland wildfires;
b. prevent and control noxious and invasive weeds;
c. restore wet meadow and riparian habitats;
d. remove conifers that have expanded into sagebrush habitat;
e. implement range structural improvements; and
f. coordinate habitat protection and restoration actions associated with big game migratory corridor efforts.

The central part of our work involves providing resources to the field to help the BLM and its partners achieve public and private land conservation goals. Equally important, the IWJV brings specific communications, outreach, and technical transfer tools to support the BLM's need for collaboration with partners on persistent large-scale threats like catastrophic wildfire in rangelands, annual invasives, conifer encroachment, and climate change.

The intra-agency agreements provide a mechanism to work across multiple states, districts, and field offices. We focus on building relationships, identifying common priorities, overcoming hurdles in sagebrush rangeland conservation, pooling funding and other resources for the benefit of western communities, grazing permittees, tribal partners, sportsmen and sportswomen, and land managers.

Overview of FY 2018–2020 Accomplishments:

91,004 acres of conifer removal
4,587 acres of fuels treatment
14,415 acres of annual/noxious weeds treated
54,578 acres of vegetation treatment/enhancement
52,491 acres of improved grazing practices
1,242 acres of wet meadows restored
720 mesic structures installed
226,643 acres impacted14 field delivery capacity positions created



New and Noteworthy Achievements:

- Increased field delivery capacity positions from 12 to 14 positions to assist BLM offices across eight states with implementing sagebrush habitat projects and treatments in collaboration with partners; also, recruited and hired an additional six positions, resulting in a fully staffed Sage Capacity Team.

- Expanded efforts in the southern portion of the sagebrush biome, including establishing our first migration corridor position—the Arizona Strip Wildlife Biologist, who focused on the northern portion of the Kaibab Plateau mule deer herd—and scoped efforts for a brand-new position in Chama, New Mexico.

- Released our second video, "Up in Smoke," calling attention to the issue of rangeland fire and invasive annual grasses with key statistics about the scale and gravity of the fire-invasives cycle.

- Launched an Outcome-based Grazing Authorization (OBGA) communications landing page on PartnersInTheSage.com with permittee profiles, a map of the ranches involved in the demonstration project, and associated social media.

- Re-broadcasted Addressing Flexibility Through Outcome-based Grazing, a Society for Range Management symposium hosted by Kathryn Dyer, BLM National Lead of OBGA.

- Advanced decision support for rangeland productivity and carbon data on the Rangeland Analysis Platform, a science effort led by NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) and the University of Montana.

The IWJV is committed to supporting proactive, voluntary, incentive-based conservation that benefits wildlife habitat, natural resources, communities, and the public lands that the BLM manages in the West. We are pleased to share the following 2020 Annual Report with BLM leadership and agency staff, the IWJV Management Board, and the incredible array of partners who have played a crucial role in this effort.

The vision for this multi-year effort is to use an "all hands, all lands" approach to help conserve the sagebrush ecosystem and the nationally significant wildlife, cultural, and economic resources it supports. We use strategic science to focus our efforts on creating field capacity that accelerates, coordinates, and streamlines conservation actions and treatments across fence lines. The IWJV builds relationships with BLM field, district, and state office personnel to determine their needs and establish additional field-based support. Investments from BLM Headquarters in partner positions are leveraged with additional partner (public and private) funding to increase efficiency and outcomes.

Sage Capacity Team

As of FY 2020, funds in the BLM-IWJV partnership support 14 field positions in eight states including: Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming (learn more about the positions here). These positions are referred to as the *Sage Capacity Team*; they are non-federal positions that are hosted by non-governmental organizations or other institutions. Each position helps to coordinate rangeland health and wildlife projects across public and private boundaries; address challenges in rangeland conservation; track projects; facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue and forums; and communicate success stories.

FY 2020 Accomplishments in the Field

The following narrative includes the accomplishments of 13 positions (an additional position was hired in fall 2020 and will report on accomplishments in FY 2021). In addition to creating two new positions this year (#3 and #12 below), the team worked with hosting entities to recruit and hire six new staff members to fill positions that had been established or needed to be backfilled.

COVID-19 impacted numerous efforts throughout FY 2020; however, during this global crisis, the IWJV, BLM, and Sage Capacity Team focused on building relationships remotely and continuing to implement projects across the sagebrush landscape. The Sage Capacity Team positions help maintain the vitality of local communities and natural resources by concurrently reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires, improving wildlife habitat and migration corridors, and conserving working lands and livestock operations. Their projects and partnerships also benefit recreational activities, like hunting and wildlife viewing. This year, the team started incorporating evaluation criteria to highlight how these partnerships and positions contribute to community and socioeconomic outcomes in local landscapes across the West. We anticipate deeper engagement with private landowners, tribal partners, and communities that generates an ethic of conservation through trust and respect.

Overview of Capacity		*Partnership Accomplishments*	
Total Projects Planned	**33**	**Conservation Easements (acres)**	**4,100**
Total Projects Completed	**84**	**Conifers Removed (acres)**	**59,757**
Total Acres Impacted	**97,317**	**Annual/Noxious Weeds Treated (acres)**	**11,382**
Total Project Funding	**$ 9,499,509**	**Vegetation Management/Habitat Enhancement (ac)**	**20,233**
Partners in Network	**952**	**Prescribed Grazing (acres)**	**1,554**
Landowner Visits	**148**	**Fence Modification (miles)**	**28**
Meetings/Field Tours	**140**	**Wet Meadows Restored (acres)**	**291**
Outreach/Volunteer Events	**21**	**Seedlings Planted**	**142,815**
		Mesic Structures Installed	**131**

1. PROJECT DELIVERY
Bi-State Local Area Working Group (LAWG) **Bishop, CA**
Data & Communications Coordinator
Supports: BLM Bishop Field Office
Established 2018

Capacity Need:

- Increase effectiveness and efficiency in meeting reporting and accountability requirements
- Broaden outreach within the Bi-State community
- Add agency capacity to implement priority projects on-the-ground
- Coordinate actions across ownership boundaries for seamless conservation

The Bi-State Sage Grouse Data and Communications Coordinator position was established in 2018 to support the Bi-State LAWG. The Coordinator works across jurisdictional boundaries to monitor Bi-State sage grouse populations and improve sage grouse habitat. This collaborative conservation network contains a diverse group of stakeholders that includes federal, state, and local government agencies, as well as tribal members and representatives, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners. This year, more than ever, the Bi-State Coordinator role was necessary to ensure partner coordination continued success in light of the pandemic. Through virtual meetings, the Coordinator completed the 2019 Bi-State Sage-Grouse Accomplishment Report to direct work and prioritize future conservation efforts. The Coordinator organized multiple outreach and community events as well as environmental education programs for elementary school students.

As the vast majority of sage grouse habitat in the Bi-State is located on public lands, the Coordinator worked closely with the BLM, engaging with the Carson City District Office, Stillwater, Sierra Front, and Tonopah Field Offices in Nevada as well as the Bishop Field Office in California. The Coordinator worked with field managers, biologists, botanists, vegetation specialists, range management specialists, and recreation technicians. The Bi-State Coordinator helps to ensure that staff on all levels are on the same page when it comes to sage grouse conservation efforts. The increased capacity allows BLM staff members to contribute to sage grouse conservation efforts in a coordinated way, streamline data collection and reporting, and maintain a central point of contact for sage grouse-related activities.

Overview
Total Projects Planned:*
Total Projects Completed: 56
Partners Engaged: 670
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 24
Outreach Events: 12
Total Acres Impacted: 17,768

Partnership Accomplishments
Conifers Removed: 11,091 acres
Annual/Noxious Weeds Treated: 722 acres
Conservation Easements: 4,100 acres
Veg Management/Hab Enhanced: 13 acres
Prescribed Grazing: 1,554 acres
Wet Meadows Restored: 288 acres
Seedlings Planted: 18,790
Total Project Funding (Completed): $2,833,935
Total Project Funding (Planned):*

**information will be available in FY 2021*

2. PROJECT DELIVERY
Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage Grouse Working Group **Susanville, CA**
Project Coordinator
Supports: BLM Bishop Field Office
Established 2020

Capacity Need:

- Support the Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage Grouse Working Group for the collaborative conservation, management, and restoration efforts of promoting long-term conservation of sage grouse, the sustainability of sagebrush ecosystems, and working rural landscapes
- Use adaptive management to scale up on-the-ground projects
- Build effective collaboration at the local level to promote and support landscape-scale conservation planning and enhance partnerships

The Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage Grouse Working Group Project Coordinator was hired in July 2020. By building capacity and enhancing the efforts of the Buffalo-Skedaddle Working Group, partners hope to promote not only the long-term conservation of sage grouse but also the sustainability of sagebrush ecosystems and working rural landscapes. In the short two and a half months of the 2020 fiscal year that the Coordinator was on board, she helped foster collaboration across ownership boundaries and amongst stakeholders. One notable accomplishment was finding creative, innovative ways to build new partnerships and sustain existing ones, such as hosting field meetings. By doing this, the group was able to safely discuss agenda items in person, while also getting boots on the ground to evaluate resource issues. The Coordinator played an instrumental role in scaling up projects that cross ownership boundaries. She worked with several private landowners to clear juniper on private land associated with BLM land, creating a contiguous landscape-scale project.

Overview
Partners Engaged: 45
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 1
Landowner Visits: 1

Partnership Accomplishments
Conifers Removed: 40 acres

3. PROJECT DELIVERY
Bruneau-Owyhee Sage Grouse Habitat (BOSH) Project Outreach Coordinator **Boise, ID**
Supports: Boise District BLM
Established 2020

Capacity Need:

- Provide range and wildlife technical assistance targeting conservation efforts on public and private lands to assist with BOSH project coordination, management, and success
- Enhance coordination among partners
- Implement strategic outreach/communications

The BOSH Project Outreach Coordinator position was established in July 2020. The Coordinator provides support to the Boise BLM and partners' landscape-level BOSH project. The position was established to strategically treat junipers across 617,000 acres of sagebrush rangelands over a 14-year period.

Juniper removal treatments on BOSH commenced in October 2020. As such, there are no completed acres to report in FY 2020. The Coordinator helped plan over 26,000 acres of conifer removal for FY 2021. Additional treatments are identified through FY 2023. During the fall 2020, the Coordinator assisted BLM in partner outreach to adjacent landowners explaining the upcoming BOSH work. The Coordinator also assisted BLM staff with project inspections of juniper treatments. The partners received a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to further expand the BOSH project; the Coordinator assisted the BLM and partners by advertising a request for proposals, selecting a contractor, and conducting all of the project inspections during implementation. The Coordinator deeply understood the immense implications that this landscape-scale project has for pinyon-juniper and conifer treatments across the West and is working with IWJV staff to explore possible research opportunities.

Overview
Total Projects Planned: 2
Total Projects Completed: 0
Partners Engaged: 10
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 1

Partnership Accomplishments
Conifers Removed (Planned): 26,535 acres
Total Project Funding (Planned): $696,163

4. PROJECT DELIVERY
NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) Shared Position **Burley, ID**
Range and Wildlife Conservationist
Supports: BLM Burley Field Office
Established 2018

Capacity Need:

- Support shared partnerships and projects that fulfill the intent of the NRCS-BLM-USFS MOU
- Landscape-level conservation and habitat enhancement between private and public lands

The Burley SGI position continued to implement cross-boundary conservation projects within south-central Idaho. This position received broadscale support from local and state partners, and it continues to attract large project dollars to further assist the work being done. The position has been critical for maintaining open lines of communication and coordination between partners and funding entities over the past year. Over the past fiscal year, the position played vital roles in project planning, implementation, and management for Utah juniper removal, range seeding, sagebrush planting, annual grass treatment, and mesic restoration projects that spanned various land ownerships.

The individual who had been in the position since 2015 took a new position as the BOSH Coordinator in late July 2020 and continued to provide support for ongoing projects through FY 2020 until the Burley position was refilled in November 2020.

Overview
Total Projects Planned: 6
Total Projects Completed: 10
Partners Engaged: 10
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 6
Landowner Visits: 15
Total Acres Impacted: 12,842

Partnership Accomplishments
Conifers Removed: 12,411 acres
Veg Management/Hab Enhanced: 431 acres
Seedlings Planted: 124,025
Total Project Funding (Completed): $1,670,944

5. PARTNERSHIP FACILITATION
Idaho Rangeland Conservation Partnership (IRCP) Coordinator **Statewide**
Supports: BLM Idaho State Office/Owyhee Field Office
Established 2018

Capacity Need:

- Create an overarching entity that works across organizations with vision and focus
- Build consensus around needed rangeland management practices, research, and policies
- Leverage resources (e.g., ideas, knowledge, and financial capital) to implement conservation practices in sagebrush ecosystems

The IRCP Coordinator continued efforts in collaborative conservation, shared success stories, and developed messages and education about the role healthy rangelands play in the social, economic, and ecological well-being of communities. The Coordinator played a key role in delivering information and connecting partners and private landowners around landscape-scale, outcome-based management plans. The second annual meeting was held in Boise, Idaho, creating the opportunity to learn, discuss, share, and highlight rangeland topics and conservation efforts. Over 160 attendees gathered from state and federal agencies, conservation groups, landowners, university representatives, scientists, and other interested stakeholders representing Idaho's conservation of rangelands. This year focused on three topics: access, outcome-based land management, and beavers and beaver dam analogs.

Additional accomplishments include:

- Collaborated with the Idaho State BLM and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture to create a short video and news release promoting the use of Survey 123, the new photo monitoring data collection app that was developed by the USDA.
- Continued to promote outcome-based land management, including engagement with the University of Idaho Rinker Rock Creek Ranch grazing planning committee, which is moving towards permit renewal and a ranch plan.
- Was a member of the pioneering Idaho Cheatgrass Challenge team and helped fine-tune the scope of work and specific projects.
- Partnered with the University of Idaho Rangeland Center, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, and the Idaho State BLM to plan four monitoring workshops in various locations. With the pandemic, they were only able to host one in Owyhee County, but it proved to be well attended and successful.

Learn more about the Idaho Rangeland Conservation Partnership here.

Overview
Partners Engaged: 69
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 29
Landowner Visits: 2
Outreach/Education/Volunteer Events: 9

6. PROJECT DELIVERY
Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership (SMSP) **Dillon, MT**
Sagebrush Conservation Coordinator
Supports: BLM Dillon Field Office/Western Montana District Office
Established 2018

Capacity Need:

- Enhance coordination among partners (e.g., schedule, organize, and facilitate meetings)
- Improve project management (e.g., define priorities and implement coordinated actions across jurisdictional boundaries)
- Build strategic outreach/communications (e.g., build relationships outside southwest Montana, develop brochures for landowners, and communicate success stories)

The Sagebrush Conservation Coordinator helped members of the SMSP coordinate and fund projects to restore and enhance sagebrush habitat and enhance field delivery of conservation actions across southwest Montana. Partners include the BLM, the NRCS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Red Rocks Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Montana, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Montana Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Montana Conservation Corps, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, Beaverhead Watershed Committee, and more. Three primary accomplishments in FY 2020 include:

- Increased community awareness around conifer expansion via a communications campaign in partnership with the Gravelly Landscape Collaborative—a diverse coalition of landowners, conservation organizations, and area agency leads in the Ruby Watershed—to share the importance of sagebrush and grasslands restoration activities in southwest Montana. The goal was to inform local communities about important actions being taken across public lands.
- Connected private and public partners across ownership boundaries through addressing shared resource concerns. These actions accelerated the number of acres impacted, resulting in the highest number of conifer removal acres treated in one year with a dramatic increase in acres completed on private lands. The pace of conifer removal projects being implemented across boundaries by multiple agencies warranted the production of a Conifer Removal Contract Inspection Protocol.
- Employed local community members in conifer removal contracts, which not only provided much needed flexibility but also educated them about natural resource management. This effort provided employment for community members needing work due to Covid-related loss of income. Read the complete story here.

Overview
Total Projects Planned: 8
Total Projects Completed: 15
Partners Engaged: 21
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 8
Landowner Visits: 11
Total Acres Impacted: 4,792

Partnership Accomplishments
Conifers Removed: 4,792 acres
Wet Meadows Restored: 3 acres
Mesic Structures Installed: 131
Total Project Funding (Completed): $439,684
Total Project Funding (Planned): n/a

7. PROJECT DELIVERY
Bristlecone BLM Field Office Range and Wildlife Biologist **Ely, NV**
Project Implementation Coordinator
Supports: BLM Bristlecone Field Office and Ely District Office
Established 2020

Capacity Need:

- Provide range and wildlife technical assistance targeting conservation efforts on public and private lands to assist with overall project coordination, management, and success
- Enhance coordination among partners (e.g., schedule, organize, and facilitate meetings)
- Build strategic outreach/communications

The Bristlecone BLM Field Office Project Implementation Coordinator was hired in May 2020. The Coordinator worked with BLM habitat biologists and fire management specialists to provide "boots on-the-ground" assistance with conifer removal projects on BLM-administered lands. The Coordinator met with contractors to communicate specifications required in the scope of work and completed work quality inspections and compliance checks for projects. The duties carried out by the Coordinator helped further delivery and implementation of conservation efforts by BLM field staff and contracting officers at the BLM Nevada State Office. This allowed lead contacts to focus on other conservation planning and project prioritization. Due to this position being hired in the midst of FY 2020, project deliverables will be reported beginning in FY 2021.

Overview
Partners Engaged: 14
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 9
Landowner Visits: 3

8. PARTNERSHIP FACILITATION
OBGA Demonstration Coordinator **Regional**
Supports: BLM Nevada State Office/Lakeview, Oregon Field Office
Established 2018

Capacity Need:

- Facilitate communications between the permittees and BLM on 11 OBGA projects
- Develop relationships with Rangeland Management Specialists in BLM field offices (associated OBGA pilots)
- Assist permittees in developing their ranch sustainability objectives
- Provide technical assistance to BLM in developing appropriate monitoring protocols that BLM can use in measuring whether operational objectives of the OBGA pilot are being met over the life of the permit

The OBGA Coordinator was hired in 2018 to assist the National OBGA Demonstration Projects and move them forward. As of FY 2020, five of the original 11 OBGA projects are in the implementation stage, with the other six projects in the development phase. One notable outcome was that the OBGA Coordinator assisted the communications support team in creating short biographies of each of the 11 National OBGA Demonstration pilot ranches. The BLM National OBGA Project Lead presented at the 2020 Society for Range Management (SRM) Conference in Denver, Colorado. Both the bibliographies and the OBGA SRM presentations can be found on *Partners in the Sage* website. Learn more about OBGA progress by reviewing this presentation that was created for the Management Oversight Group in July 2020.

The OBGA program is currently under a transition from focusing on the 11 pilot projects to scaling the program across the West. The OBGA Coordinator recently resigned to pursue his passion in operating a ranch in Nevada. The position will be refilled. This is a core position that supports BLM's range efforts and vision for grazing partnerships into the future.

9. PARTNERSHIP FACILITATION
Results-Oriented Grazing for Ecological Resilience (ROGER) **Reno, NV**
Facilitator
Supports: BLM Nevada State Office
Established 2020

Capacity Need:

- Future coordination and facilitation of the Results-Oriented Grazing for Ecological Resilience group

The ROGER Facilitator position was filled in August 2020. The ROGER is a collaborative group that formed in 2016 to achieve land management objectives that improve overall ecological resilience, landscape health, productivity, and support ranching. Over the past four years, this group has strived to create avenues to bring various parties together to communicate, share information, ask the "hard" questions, work through disagreements, and learn together to develop solutions to the issues at hand. This group functions as an information, learning, and communication venue that supports individuals and groups to find new and adaptive land management techniques. This collaborative model of doing business allows for creative, innovative ways for numerous stakeholders to collaborate across ownership boundaries to find solutions and common ground to landscape-scale issues. The Facilitator was hired part-time to help coordinate the group's future endeavors.

10. PARTNERSHIP FACILITATION
Nevada Collaborative Conservation Network (NVCCN) **Statewide**
Supports: BLM Nevada State Office
Short-Term Contract for Meeting Facilitation in 2018

Capacity Need:

- Develop, refine, and implement the NVCCN concept (multi-tier, state-wide network designed to initiate, support, and incentivize community-based conservation efforts).
- Increase facilitation capacity in Nevada to promote coordination amongst partners.
- Provide a forum to bring together members of various community-based conservation efforts to share information, learn from each other and improve coordination at multiple scales.
- Explore opportunities to expand outreach, project funding, facilitation capacity, and increased communication and coordination between various parties.

This contract was filled and completed in FY 2018.

11. PARTNERSHIP FACILITATION
Local Implementation Teams (LIT) Coordinator **Deschutes, Crook, and Malheur Counties, OR**
Supports: Prineville District Office/BLM Central Oregon Field Office/Vale District Office/Malheur Field Office
Established 2019

Capacity Need:

- Build effective collaboration at the local level to promote and support landscape-scale conservation planning
- Reinvigorate and provide support to two LITs (Prineville and Malheur)
- Work with BLM to create Comprehensive Threat Reduction Plans

The LIT Coordinator is housed in the Hines District Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife office. Over the past year, the Coordinator made great strides with both the Prineville and Vale LITs. The Prineville LIT established collaborative protocols for prioritizing conservation efforts in FY 2021. Other notable accomplishments include the establishment of a collaborative structure, which consisted of developing a team charter and mission statement and an advisory committee with partner roles and responsibilities. This collaborative structure will help to improve communication by allowing all partners to provide input and express their interests and concerns. The LIT Coordinator assisted with guiding the teams in developing timelines with associated benchmarks for future work. She also helped identify funding and led the Prineville LIT in identifying comprehensive threats lists (developed by local partner knowledge and interactive mapping tools) for sage grouse. The completion of this task was a significant asset as it assists the LIT group in prioritizing threats and actions on the ground. The Coordinator also found ways to continue delivering technical tools and knowledge to local partners by hosting a technical tool discussion led by the SageCon partnership. This discussion and learning session was pertinent in helping the Prineville LIT understand and share various resources to utilize when developing a strategy to address threats to sage grouse and their habitat. For additional information, visit the LIT webpage or the Prineville LIT webpage, or view the full report here.

The Coordinator shifted her focus to the Vale LIT following the pandemic by focusing on staying engaged with participants at a one-on-one level. She spent immense time talking to and learning from partners. The information gained was a vital step in assisting the group in developing their path forward as an LIT. From the information obtained, the Coordinator developed a one-page handout summarizing the various financial and technical assistance opportunities available to landowners and other land managers/administrators. She also identified opportunities to secure funding that could be utilized by LIT participants to convey why partners might want to engage in the collaborative over the long term.

Overview
Partners Engaged: 51
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 24
Landowner Visits: 106 (via phone calls)
Total Project Funding (Planned): $108,302

12. PROJECT DELIVERY
Arizona Strip Wildlife Biologist **St. George, UT**
Habitat Planning and Implementation Specialist
Supports: BLM Arizona Strip District Office
Established 2020

Capacity Need:

- Provide range and wildlife technical assistance targeting conservation efforts on public and private lands to assist with overall project coordination, management, and success.
- Enhance coordination among partners (e.g., schedule, organize, and facilitate meetings)
- Implement strategic outreach/communications

The Arizona Strip Wildlife Biologist Habitat Planning and Implementation Specialist was hired in June 2020. This position provided a key role as a liaison maximizing the benefits of financial resources to develop substantive proposals and projects for improving wildlife habitat, increasing the economic viability of permit holders, and building cross-boundary relationships that will enable landscape-level restoration of sagebrush and strengthen the conservation ethic in the communities on the Arizona Strip.

The Wildlife Biologist built relationships within the BLM and the Arizona Game and Fish Department, identified areas that would benefit from collaboration and further partnerships, and on-boarded with an understanding of current and proposed projects. She fills an important gap in personnel at the BLM office as there is currently not a geospatial modeler on staff. Using her geospatial analysis skills, she's contributed to project planning and wildfire recovery decisions. Following the Pine Hollow Fire, she used satellite imagery to analyze burn severities. The burn severity estimates were then used to help make decisions for the emergency stabilization and rehabilitation plan. She also assisted in getting new mule deer migration data to the Arizona Strip BLM staff to assist in their planning efforts in the highly visible mule deer migration corridor for the Paunsaugunt and Kaibab mule deer herds. The data also assisted in planning efforts for ES&R efforts following the Pine Hollow wildfire. She also actively collaborated with the local BLM in developing a plan to use the transition to Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring (AIM) to implement watershed level management. This will ultimately assist in moving the district to a collaborative approach to management. Due to this position being hired in the midst of FY 2020 project implementation, project deliverables will be reported in FY 2021.

13. PROJECT DELIVERY
Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance (SEA) **Tremonton, UT**
Landscape Coordinator
Supports BLM Salt Lake City Field Office/West Desert District Office
Established 2017

Capacity Need:

- Increase field capacity for collaborative sagebrush conservation
- Improve cross-agency and cross-partner conservation and communication
- Increase efficiencies in managing public land uses and implementing restoration projects in sagebrush ecosystems

The Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance was created in 2017. This position provided support to BLM, the West Box Elder Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Group, the Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative, the Utah Department of Natural Resources, NRCS, Utah State University, and ranchers in West Box Elder County. Additionally, the Coordinator facilitated securing $4,554,945 in funds to impact nearly 62,000 acres during FY 2020.

Overview
Total Projects Planned: 6
Total Projects Completed: 2
Partners Engaged: 62
Partnership Meetings/Field Tours: 38
Landowner Visits: 10
Total Acres Impacted: 61,872

Partnership Accomplishments
Conifers Removed: 31,423 acres
Veg Management/Hab Enhanced: 19,789 acres
Fence Modification: 28 miles
Annual/Noxious Weeds Treated: 10,660 acres
Total Project Funding (Completed): $4,554,945
Total Project Funding (Planned): $395,390

14. PROJECT DELIVERY
NRCS SGI Shared Position **Lander, WY**
Range and Wildlife Conservationist
Supports: BLM Lander Field Office
Established in 2018; Position Vacant and Refilled in 2020

Capacity Need:

- Support shared partnerships and projects that fulfill the intent of the NRCS-BLM-USFS MOU
- Landscape-level conservation and habitat enhancement between private and public lands

The Lander SGI position was vacant between April 2019 and May 2020. This shared position was refilled in June 2020. The Range and Wildlife Conservationist was brought on board and directed to focus on landscape-scale, partner-based, science-driven conservation efforts across both private and public lands. During the summer and fall of 2020, this position concentrated on learning more about the local landscape, understanding the USDA SGI program and the previously completed projects, and introducing himself to community partners and private landowners. This shared position will continue to provide field support for cross-boundary conservation project implementation and partnership development, and he will pursue future collaborative conservation opportunities in western Wyoming.

FY 2020 SAGE CAPACITY TEAM

Janyne Little
Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage Grouse Working Group Project Coordinator
-Susanville, California

Sean Claffey
Southwest Montana Sagebrush Conservation Partnership Coordinator
-Dillon, Montana

Brenda Richards
Idaho Rangeland Conservation Partnership Coordinator
-Murphy, Idaho

Duane Coombs
Outcome-base Grazing Coordinator
-Battle Mountain, Nevada

Amy Sturgill
Bi-State Local Area Working Group Coordinator
-Bishop, California

Kelli Dobrescu
Bristlecone Project Coordinator
-Ely, Nevada

Katlyn Uhart
Results Oriented Grazing for Ecological Resilience Facilitator
-Reno, Nevada

Calee Garn
Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance Coordinator
-Tremonton, Utah

Julie Unfried
Sage-Grouse Local Implementation Teams Coordinator
-Hines, Oregon

Samantha Lange
Sage Grouse Initiative Range and Wildlife Conservationist
-Burley, Idaho

Connor White
Bruneau-Owyhee Sage-Grouse Habitat Project Outreach Coordinator
-Boise, Idaho

Jason LeVan
Sage Grouse Initiative Range and Wildlife Conservationist
-Lander, Wyoming

Kaitlyn Yoder
Arizona Strip Wildlife Biologist-Habitat Planning & Implementation Specialist
-St. George, Utah

The unprecedented events of 2020 brought a suite of new opportunities to our sagebrush communications efforts, some challenging and some highly positive. We shifted to almost all digital communications tools and products, including virtual methods of meeting with partners. This shift brought a number of new tools to test in the hopes of enhancing our communications in a virtual world. Over the course of the year, we experimented with a variety of meeting applications to make virtual meetings more stimulating and useful to ourselves and our partners. We also experimented with webinars to increase technical transfer and new, in-house video creation tools as a result of recognizing a higher demand for this type of content.

We began organizing our communication activities into a three-year strategic sagebrush communications plan that will be updated annually in alignment with the priorities determined for each fiscal year. We will use this document to promote our vision for sagebrush communications and marketing of our efforts with partners. This identifies specific work priorities for the fiscal year, builds off past successes and lessons learned, and justifies annual budget/time investments.

Below are highlights of our most significant accomplishments and products in FY 2020.

Partners in Sage Website Metrics: October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020

Total website unique page views: 25,775

Most popular stories/pages:
"Up in Smoke" video landing page: 2,975 views
"Meet the Participating Ranches" OBGA profiles: 1,001 views
"Reading the Landscape: Low-tech restoration webinar: 902 views
Five New Sage Capacity Team Members: 647 views
SageWest Landing Page: 566 views

Selection of newly developed/refreshed pages:
https://www.partnersinthesage.com/our-partners
https://www.partnersinthesage.com/good-for-people-and-wildlife
https://www.partnersinthesage.com/community-based-capacity

Top-Performing Sagebrush Communications Projects

"Up in Smoke" Video Released

One of the larger efforts and most expensive projects to date, this video has received excellent reviews. This video focused on calling attention to the issue of rangeland wildfire and invasive

annual grasses by highlighting key statistics about the scale and gravity of the fire-invasives cycle. The target audience for this video was decision-makers, policymakers, and funding partners who are key to supporting a strategic approach to wildfire and invasives, increasing funding, and strengthening coordination across sagebrush rangelands. Extensive preparation and strategy development went into the planning of this video.

Results: With a large distribution plan for this product and significant partner support, we calculated that this video had the potential to be viewed by 186,000 people. Note that not all those people watched this video from start to finish, but our strategy worked to broadly share its content. The landing page for this video received significant engagement and was the highest-performing page on our website. We also worked with the producer, Wild Agency, to promote the video with paid advertising to reach audiences outside of our immediate audiences by targeting Facebook ads to people that live in large urban areas around the West and have an interest in conservation and outdoor recreation.

OBGA Profiles, Landing Page, and Content Production
The IWJV contracted with a writer to produce profile articles of each of the participating permittees in OBGA as part of their permit renewal process. Those profiles are housed on a landing page established as a platform for presenting this type of content as well as future communications about OBGA.

Results: This OBGA landing page is the second-highest-performing page on PartnersInTheSage.com, with 1,100 views in FY 2020. Our audience is highly interested in OBGA content, and the range leads in the BLM are relying on the IWJV to produce and house all content about OBGA. We promoted each of the profiles written about the permittees individually through social media, which likely generated the views on the landing page. BLM public affairs also promoted the landing page on their platforms. In FY 2021, we will incorporate a large suite of OBGA communication products with the hopes of continuing to capture large viewership and supporting the BLM in this programmatic area.

Key Feature Stories and Other Communications Products

Web Portal Post - *Gambling Grouse: Private Wet-Meadows or Public Mesic Rangelands* was written by John Carlson, then Sage Grouse Implementation Lead for BLM Montana/Dakotas; Patrick Donnelly, IWJV Spatial Ecologist, and Hannah Nikonow, IWJV Sagebrush Communications Specialist. This feature summarized Donnelly's research for field practitioners working on public and private land conservation.

SageWest Series - *Summer Series 2020: Fire & Invasives* ran through May and June 2020 with a weekly dissemination of communication products on fire and invasives in sagebrush rangelands. Over this eight-week period, members of the SageWest network contributed 17 products on this topic to heighten awareness about this issue prior to the 2020 fire season. These stories ranged from in-depth articles on invasive annual plant identification to the use of native seed in post-fire restoration.

Social Media Paid Ad - *Prevent the Weeds from Burning Up the West! Four Ways How* was a clickbait style article posted on PartnersInTheSage.com with paid social media advertising behind it to reach new audiences. From August 4th to October 3rd, 2020, two ads on Facebook promoted this article listing ways for recreators to prevent rangeland fires and stop the spread of invasive annuals

while encouraging them to watch the video "Up in Smoke." The post was shared 142 times with a reach of 97,680 impressions.

Rebroadcast of Society for Range Management - *Addressing Flexibility Through Outcome-based Grazing* was a symposium hosted by Kathryn Dyer, BLM National Lead of OBGA. This provided an overview of the OBGA program and the variety of projects involved with speakers from the BLM as well as some of the public land permittees enrolled in this pilot program.

Web Portal Post - *Back from the Brink* is a feature story highlighting how the sage grouse conservation efforts on California's Clear Lake National Wildlife Refuge is a microcosm of sagebrush conservation around the West. This story detailed how the sage grouse population here is being supplemented by translocated birds and how partners are doing conifer removal, wet meadow restoration, and grazing improvements, as well as addressing invasives and wildfire.

Partners in the Sage Forum - *Finding Common Ground on a Complicated Landscape* is a summary of the 1st Annual Sagebrush Collaborative Forum wherein participants learned more about the wide impact and breadth of the Sage Capacity Team and the partners they support.

Increasing Funding for Rangeland Wildfire Fact Sheet - *Rangeland Wildfires and Invasives Endanger the Future of Western Communities and Economies* was produced by the Sagebrush Conservation Committee, the action-oriented arm of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Sagebrush Executive Oversight Committee. (While this product was not funded by the BLM-IWJV partnership, our critical relationship with Jolie Pollet, BLM Fire and Aviation, Division Chief – Fire Planning and Fuels Management, guided content and messaging development and played an important role in communicating the need to increase funding for rangeland wildfire and funding.)

Funding from the initial intra-agency agreement supported science projects coordinated by NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife Science Advisor, Dr. David Naugle at the University of Montana, along with a team of scientists from other cooperating universities. The overall goal was to conduct science-based evaluations to spatially prioritize conservation treatments, measure the biological response of sage grouse and sagebrush obligate species to conservation treatments, monitor collective efforts to determine outcomes, and support adaptive management of conservation programs and projects. The following six projects were funded. (Three projects were completed in FY 2019; the remaining three projects are still in progress.)

Status of Projects

Joint Tracking of Conifer Removal Across the West	**Completed**
Wetland Resilience and Resistance in Sagebrush Ecosystems (Mesic)	**Completed**
Conifer Removal for Songbirds on Public Lands	**In Progress**
Interactive Web Application	**Completed**
Ecosystem Services: Quantifying Trends in Rangeland Health	**In Progress**
Outcome-based Evaluation of Conifer Removal in Lakeview, Oregon	**In Progress**

See the list of legacy science products funded from this partnership here.

Below is a summary of FY 2020 accomplishments that increased our collective scientific knowledge and ability to implement sage grouse and sagebrush habitat conservation.

Conifer Removal for Songbirds on Public Lands

Tree expansion among historic grassland and shrubland systems is a global phenomenon that dramatically influences ecosystem processes and wildlife. In the western U.S., pinyon-juniper woodlands have expanded by as much as six-fold among sagebrush steppe landscapes since the late nineteenth century, with demonstrated negative impacts to behavior, demography, and population dynamics of species that rely on intact sagebrush landscapes. Greater sage grouse are unable to tolerate even low density of conifer cover—one to two trees per acre—which results in population-level declines. Removal of expanding conifer has been shown to increase sage grouse population growth by 12 percent and sagebrush obligate songbird counts by 55–80 percent. Advances in

restoring sagebrush habitats have been met with concern about unintended impacts to songbird species that rely on conifer woodlands, particularly pinyon jays, whose population declines are distinctive among birds breeding in pinyon-juniper woodlands, which are generally increasing in trend.

In FY 2020, the NRCS, the WLFW, the USFWS, and the University of Montana continued multi-year efforts to quantify the large-scale impacts of conifer removal on avian communities. In one scientific evaluation, these partners used a systematic conservation planning approach to compute spatial optimizations, which prioritize areas for conifer removal across the sage grouse range while incorporating a number of different songbirds, including Brewer's sparrow, the green-tailed towhee, the sage thrasher, and the pinyon jay.

In addition, they modeled occurrence and abundance in relation to multi-scale habitat features for nine songbirds reliant on both sagebrush and pinyon-juniper woodlands for breeding. Comparing predicted distributions of declining species to conifer removal targeted for sagebrush restoration under the umbrella of sage grouse revealed that management has largely aligned with distributions of declining sagebrush obligate songbirds and avoided that of pinyon jay. Because conifer removal is barely keeping pace with expansion, they hypothesize that the transition of heterogeneous conifer stands to persistent woodlands, rather than management, may be limiting pinyon jay populations, similar to how encroachment is impacting sagebrush-obligates.

- *Manuscript:* Reinhardt, J., et al. 2021. Conservation planning in context: maximizing benefits to sagebrush- and woodland-obligate birds. In review.
- *Manuscript:* Tack, J.D., et al. 2021. Decision-support tools for migratory songbirds in sagebrush-steppe: is management complementarity for sagebrush obligates and pinyon jay possible? In review.

Ecosystem Services: Quantifying Trends in Rangeland Health

In September 2018, the Rangeland Analysis Platform (RAP) was created by the University of Montana and the NRCS and supported with funding from the BLM-IWJV partnership. This public online application provides simple and fast access to geospatial data characterizing western U.S. rangelands. The tool was developed to provide landowners, resource managers, conservationists, and scientists access to data that can inform land management planning, decision-making, and the evaluation of outcomes. Its datasets allow users to monitor trends and changes at the pasture, landscape, or regional scales from 1984 to present. BLM staff across the West have been using RAP outputs for range and wildlife habitat assessments. The tool has been discovered by offices on a case-by-case basis. The RAP team continues to work with the BLM to improve outreach and training for BLM staff so as to identify best practices and additional modifications to the tool to meet specific BLM needs.

In FY 2020, additional advancements, updates, and rangeland productivity data were added to the platform. The RAP provides the following information:

- **Vegetation biomass**: Annual and 16-day aboveground biomass from 1986 to present of: annual forbs and grasses, perennial forbs and grasses, and herbaceous (combination of annual and perennial forbs and grasses).
- **Vegetation cover**: Annual percent cover estimates from 1984 to present of: annual forbs and grasses, perennial forbs and grasses, shrubs, trees, and bare ground. The estimates were produced by combining approximately 60,000 field plots from the BLM AIM datasets and NRCS National Resources Inventory (NRI) with the historical Landsat satellite record.

- **Annual herbaceous cover in the sagebrush biome**: Estimated percent cover of herbaceous annuals at 30m resolution on rangelands across the sagebrush biome. These data are a weighted average of three large-scale datasets, providing land managers with estimates of recent (2016–2018) annuals cover across western rangelands. This data layer was developed by a cheatgrass committee convened by the Western Governors Association-appointed Western Invasive Species Council as part of a new toolkit for invasive annual grass management across the western U.S. See https://rangelands.app/cheatgrass/.
- **Categorical tree cover in the sagebrush biome**: Annual categorical tree cover across the sagebrush biome. Class categorization was performed with the rangeland cover product at 30m resolution.
- **Ecosystem resilience and resistance in the sagebrush biome**: This data provides a tool for rapid risk assessment across the range of sage grouse using an index of sagebrush ecosystem resilience to disturbance and resistance to cheatgrass ("R&R"). Potential ecosystem R&R depends in part on the biophysical conditions an area is capable of supporting. Soil temperature and moisture regimes can be used to depict this gradient (Chambers et al. 2014, 2016, 2017; Maestas et al. 2016).

RAP Google Analytics: October 1, 2019–September 30, 2020

- 8,642 unique users; 14,716 sessions; 31,822 page views
- Average session duration is 2:49 minutes; use of the actual app averages 5:29 minutes
- 58% of users directly type the URL, 24% search online, 16% are referrals, 2% are social media. Top six referrals are: nrcs.usda.gov; consbio.org; sagegrouseinitiative.com; beefmagazine.com; farmers.gov; and noble.org

Data download statistics: June 24, 2019–January 24, 2021

- 10,702 unique visitors
- 126.3 TB (terabytes) of data downloaded
- 17,882,956 total requests

Peer-Review Science

- *Manuscript:* Allred, B.W., et al. 2020. Guiding principles for using satellite-derived maps in rangeland management. In press.
- *Manuscript:* Allred, B.W., et al. 2020. Improving Landsat predictions of rangeland fractional cover with multitask learning and uncertainty. Pre-print available online; manuscript in peer review.
- *Manuscript:* Jones, M.O., et al. 2020. Annual and 16-day rangeland production estimates for the western United States. Pre-print available online; manuscript in peer review.
- *Manuscript:* Jones, M.O., et al. 2020. Beyond inventories: emergence of a new era in rangeland monitoring.

Outcome-based Evaluation of Conifer Removal in Lakeview, Oregon

The overall objective of this study conducted by Oregon State University and partners has been to expand the existing database and provide a longer-term assessment of the effects of juniper removal on sage grouse habitat use and demography. The specific objectives that have reached conclusion are: 1) modeling of sage grouse habitat selection during nesting and brood-rearing, before and after juniper treatments; 2) modeling the demographic and population response of sage grouse to juniper management; and 3) modeling landscape resistance to sage grouse movements in

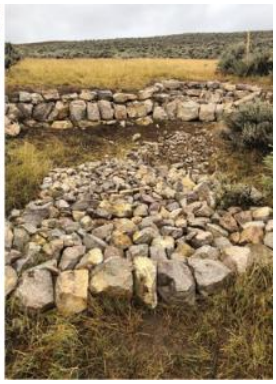
relation to juniper. The study area is located in the Warner Mountains in Lake County, Oregon; Washoe County, Nevada; and Modoc County, California. Learn more about outcomes here.

Project objectives for 2018–2022 shifted to: 1) establishing a baseline characterization of thermal environments for sage grouse broods; 2) establishing temporal variation in space of broods and how it relates to conifers; 3) examining the effects of conifer avoidance on chick survival; 4) examining the impact of juniper removal on the forage quantity and quality of surrounding vegetation and on species richness and abundance of surrounding invertebrate communities, and 5) assessing the impact of time since treatment on vegetative and invertebrate communities.

Reports and Peer-Review Science

- 2020 Warner Sage Grouse Field Season Report
- *Manuscript:* Olsen et al. 2020. Reversing tree expansion in sagebrush steppe yields population level benefit for imperiled grouse. In press.
- *Manuscript:* Olsen et al. 2020. Reversing Tree Encroachment Increases Usable Space for Sage-Grouse.
- *Manuscript:* Olsen et al. Conifer removal reduces landscape resistance for greater sage-grouse. In review.





In FY 2020, the BLM directed the IWJV to continue bridging the gap between science production and science application. As such, the IWJV invested in developing a concept for its potential niche and role in technical transfer into the future. Technical transfer is a multi-layered process designed to *access, interpret, and apply science* through three connected pathways, including: 1) existing or future *co-produced science*, 2) *tools* designed to translate the science into action and address needs identified by partners, and 3) *partnerships* with implementers, managers, and decision-makers interested in utilizing the science. This past year was marked by continued partnership with the NRCS WLFW, the University of Montana, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the SRM, and other science agencies and collaborations. We implemented the following technical transfer projects:

"Reading the Landscape" Webinar
Event: Webinar
Dates: July 2020
Audience: 402 conservation partners
Outcomes/Products: Recorded presentation

The webinar "Low-Tech Wet Meadow Restoration: Reading the Landscape" was presented on July 22, 2020. The webinar was a joint project with NRCS WLFW and approved for continuing education units by the SRM.

There were 623 people signed up and 402 real-time participants involved in this webinar! The co-presenters, Jeremy Meastas, Ecologist, USDA-NRCS, and Shawn Connor, Restoration Ecologist, Biologic Inc., showed participants to how to use Bill Zeedyk's principles of "Reading the Landscape and Thinking Like Water" to recognize and prioritize wet meadow restoration. They also introduced several simple, low-tech restoration methods using sticks and stones to provide effective tools for protection and restoring meadow systems. A PDF of this presentation and the low-tech practices can be found here.

There was a Q&A session following the presentations, so organizers created a PDF of the questions that were answered in the last 30 minutes of the webinar as well as those we didn't have time to answer during the webinar. This was a great project that shared key information about mesic restoration and brought in a lot of new sign-ups to the partner database. As an example of virtual online education during COVID-19, we created a professional interactive system with various staff promoting the event, running webinar tech in the background, laying the foundation for the presentation, introducing the speakers, participating in aspects of the conversation, and leading the Q&A session. Since this has been recorded and posted on IWJV's YouTube, it has been viewed nearly 500 times!

Invasive Annual Grass Risk Assessment Datasets and Tools
Event: USGS Science
Dates: June 2020–June 2021
Audience: Invasive annual grass stakeholders and managers
Outcomes/Products: PDF of product-specific summaries, SageDAT (online) collection of invasive annual grass spatial data resources, and Spatial Data Comparison Cheatsheet (in process)

The USGS, Colorado State University, and partner organizations are conducting a comparison of mapping products for three invasive annual grasses (cheatgrass, medusahead, and venenata). The purpose is to provide users of invasive annual grass spatial data/maps with useful, relevant information about available products and help them make informed decisions on how to best select and use those data for their intended purposes. To do this, they compared methods and attributes among spatial data products and summarized key similarities and differences. BLM and IWJV helped create a "co-production" process, including: the development of a stakeholder work group and survey to advise and create review of datasets and products, as well as engaged the Sagebrush Communications Specialist, who will help communicate final products in FY 2021. The project will result in the following:

1. Journal article, including:
    a. Full spatial data comparison database as an appendix or data release.
    b. PDF of product-specific summaries: 1-page description per product including key criteria, a thumbnail of the spatial extent, and links to journal article, comparison database, SageDAT spatial data collection, and annotated bibliography.
2. SageDAT (online) collection of invasive annual grass spatial data resources: An organic search or curated listing of spatial data products that links to science base and source data.
3. Spatial Data Comparison Cheatsheet: A concise, simplified, and plain language description of key spatial data resources, as well as similarities and differences among them. Includes very brief 'use' examples that describe how data products have been used.

In addition to funding from the BLM-IWJV agreement, BLM Headquarters, USFWS, and USGS provided funds to support this project.

Facilitating Actionable Science
Event: Internship
Dates: June 2020–September 2020
Audience: BLM decision-makers and implementers, including the SCT
Outcomes/Products: Two reports - **Facilitating Actionable Science: Recommendations for the BLM**, and **BOSH Project: Review of Current Science**

Mariah McIntosh joined the sagebrush team as a summer intern in 2020 to support capacity building for science and technical transfer related to sagebrush restoration. Mariah completed two reports that synthesized valuable information to help move science into the hands of field managers. In the first effort, the team held meetings with 12 BLM state, district, and field offices as well as SCT partner positions in seven states to address the adequacy of available science and research; identify needs relating to increasing access to research and science-based tools and improving co-production of science; and clarify the role of the IWJV to further support BLM partners to inform strategic decisions, specifically regarding conifer and pinyon-juniper encroachment (see: **Facilitating Actionable Science: Recommendations for the BLM**).

The second report was a synthesis of current science efforts within the BOSH project. A primary need identified by BLM staff (in the above assignment) was assessment of the effects of conifer removal treatments on sage grouse, other wildlife, plant communities, and ecosystem processes. Due to the landscape scale of the BOSH project (one of the largest conifer removal treatments undergone to date), this effort represents a unique opportunity to understand more broadly the effects of conifer removal treatments. This work helps to identify where strategic future research collaborations could address gaps in knowledge relating to conifer removal treatments in the West (see: **Bruneau-Owyhee Sage-Grouse Habitat Project: Review of Current Science**).

Mariah is now continuing to provide valuable support to the IWJV as our newest sagebrush team member. Her part-time position is hosted by the University of Montana.



From the sagebrush biome to regions to state boundaries to community scales, the power of this partnership is that the IWJV interfaces with the people that are the future of this nationally important ecosystem. Sagebrush collaboratives are being established in landscapes across the West.

Our partnership network includes 952 entities that work together to develop innovative approaches to landscape conservation resulting in ecological, social, and economic outcomes for communities across the West. Visit this Partnerships In Action Story Map to learn more.

Here is a snapshot of the partnership work that was accomplished in FY 2020.

Funding Accomplishments

New funding was infused into field delivery, communications and outreach, technical transfer, and other aspects of our work.

Specific highlights include:

- Total BLM Headquarter funds contributed to the intra-agency agreements to date is **$5,797,010**.
- Total other BLM funds contributed to capacity investments is **$332,779**.
- Total funds and in-kind services leveraged is **$4,460,302**.
- Total capacity funding through FY 2020 is **$10,590,091**.
- Total project funding in FY 2020 is **$9,499,509.**
- Partnership leverage ratio averages **57:43** (BLM:partners) surpassing the original goal of a 75:25 ratio.
- IWJV's long-time corporate partners, ConocoPhillips and PacifiCorp, each committed new funding in FY 2020. As of FY 2020, ConocoPhillips invested **$200,000** or in total **$1,300,000** to support sagebrush rangeland conservation**.** PacifiCorp also continued their annual support of $30,000.
- Approximately **96%** of the BLM funds provided through this agreement have been programmed for project work.

Team Support

The IWJV utilizes 10 percent of the BLM funds to support the following important services: oversight/management, team coordination, executive-level briefings and communication with BLM leadership and key partners, partnership development and expansion, facilitating partner contributions to projects through cooperative agreements and sub-awards, financial tracking and budget oversight, accomplishment reports, events and meeting coordination, meeting facilitation, partnership database support, and recognition and celebration of partners.