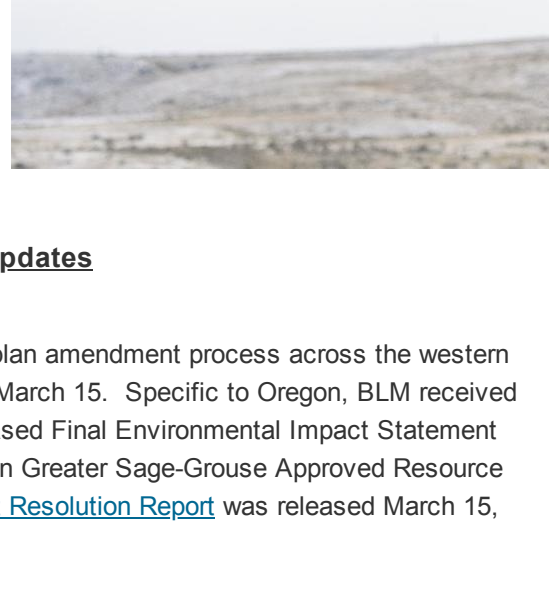
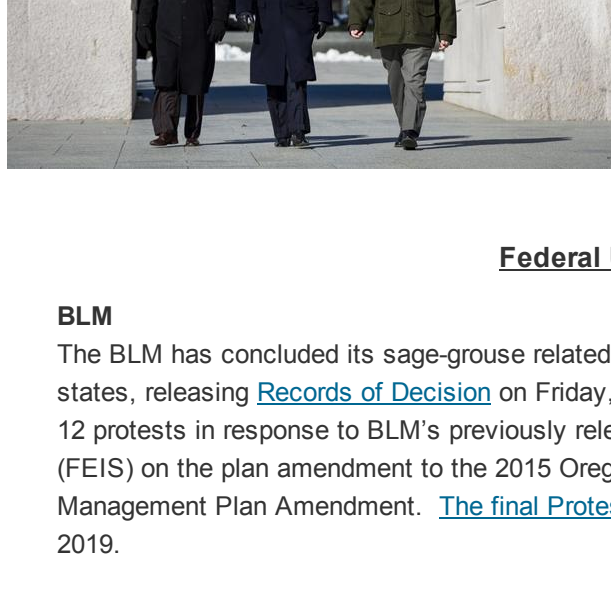




Sage Grouse Conservation Partnership January-March 2019 News and Updates (Sent April 1, 2019)



Federal Updates

BLM

The BLM has concluded its sage-grouse related plan amendment process across the western states, releasing [Records of Decision](#) on Friday, March 15. Specific to Oregon, BLM received 12 protests in response to BLM's previously released Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the plan amendment to the 2015 Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment. [The final Protest Resolution Report](#) was released March 15, 2019.

During the 60 day Governor's Consistency Review of the FEIS, the Oregon Governor Brown's Office filed a consistency review letter raising concerns including how the BLM's new policy for compensatory mitigation (IM 2019-018) may create inconsistencies with the state's mitigation program. Other issues raised in the letter include livestock grazing in Research Natural Areas as well as the application of the Habitat Objectives in Table 2-2 of the 2015 ARMPA. The BLM responded to the governor's letter on March 8, and the Governor's Office has 30 days to appeal BLM's response to the consistency review.

USFWS

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife, Division of Migratory Birds and Habitat Program, has drafted an Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes a scientific collecting permit application from ODFW to take Common Ravens in Baker County, Oregon. ODFW, in collaboration with Oregon State University (OSU), proposes to study the effect of lowering the population density of ravens on sage-grouse populations, and to compare the effectiveness of lethal and non-lethal techniques for lowering raven density. [Draft Environmental Assessment – Scientific Collecting Permit for Common Raven Removal](#)

Trainings for the Conservation Efforts Database version 2.1 are underway, check the [CED News and Events Page](#), to stay up to date. March topics included Registration, Single Record Entry, and the CED Batch Upload Process.

USFS

Forest Service Acting Deputy Chief and Reviewing Officer Chris French issued a letter to Region 6 Regional Forester Glenn Casamassa instructing him to withdraw the draft Record of Decision, Final Environmental Impact Statement, and the three Revised Forest Plans for the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. The existing Land and Resource Management Plans, as amended, will remain in place until revised. The Malheur and Wallowa-Whitman along with the Deschutes, Fremont-Winema, and Ochoco National Forests will continue to follow regional interim guidance for sage-grouse. Press release here: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/news-events/?cid=FEPRD613895>

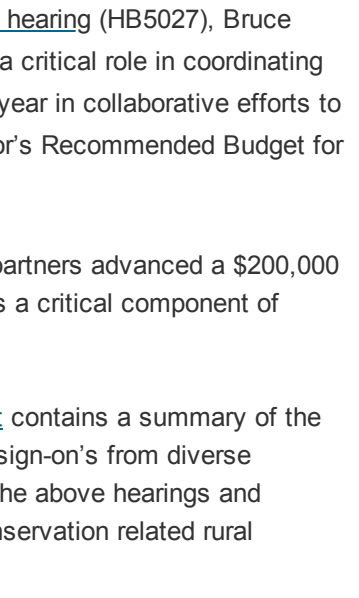
The Forest Service will be releasing the Final EIS and Final Record of Decisions for Plan Amendments in our Northern, Rocky Mountain, and Intermountain Regions soon. We will closely evaluate this material to see what changes might be advisable in our Region's interim sage-grouse conservation direction.

USDA-NRCS

NRCS is accepting applications for the [Agricultural Conservation Easements Program](#) (ACEP). Applications must be submitted by April 19 to be considered in the Fiscal Year 2019 batch of applications.

The [Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership](#) through USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Forest Service will invest over \$2 million this year to mitigate wildfire risk and restore healthy forest ecosystems through two targeted projects on public and private lands within the Fremont-Winema and Umpqua National Forests. Full press release here: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/or/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1450633>

The allocation of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) dollars by basin has been posted for 2019, including funding for Lone Pine Rangeland Fire Protection Association to reduce fire risks and other strategic investments in Oregon: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/full/or/programs/?cid=nrcseprd1322717%20>



State Updates

OWEB Awarded \$1.7 million to Baker LIT

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) awarded Baker Sage-Grouse Local Implementation Team (BSGLIT) a Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) Implementation grant of \$1,714,565 at their January 15-16, 2019 board meeting in Cannon Beach. The funding will be allocated over six years for habitat restoration, leveraging an additional \$2,400,000 from partner sources in the 2019-2021 biennium. Core partners include: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Area (Tri-County CWMA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Baker County, Powder Basin Watershed Council (PBWC), and private landowners. Board report

ODA Pesticide Rulemaking

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) is moving forward with a rule to prohibit the application of any product containing aminocyclopyrachlor with specific limitations in proximity to greater sage-grouse as the department has been alerted about the chemicals ability to kill sagebrush. Specifically application will be "prohibited on certain defined rights of-way; natural areas; restoration areas; marshes, swamps, bogs, and wetlands unless all conditions in an exception are met. This rule prohibits the application of any product containing aminocyclopyrachlor by any type of aerial application method. [This rule](#) prohibits the application of any product containing aminocyclopyrachlor in areas where the roots of desirable trees or shrubs may extend; on the inner or outer banks of ditches or canals; or in certain proximity to greater sage-grouse." [The comment period will close April 5.](#)

2019 Legislature Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee Hearings

At the [Department of Forestry budget hearing](#) (HB5019), testimony was provided by Bob Skinner-Vale RFP, Marla Rae-Jefferson RFP, Anna Freitas-OACD, Mark Stern-TNC and others in support of \$450,000 for training and equipment to support Rangeland Fire Protection Associations capacity to respond to fires across 16 million acres of sagebrush.

At the [Department of Land Conservation and Development budget hearing](#) (HB5027), Bruce Taylor shared that "a state investment of \$250,000 per year plays a critical role in coordinating an enterprise that is currently generating well over \$15 million per year in collaborative efforts to conserve sage grouse" as context for the \$500,000 in the Governor's Recommended Budget for SageCon Partnership coordination over the next biennium.

At the [Department of Fish and Wildlife budget hearing](#) (SB5510), partners advanced a \$200,000 ask to cover additional support for Local Implementation Teams as a critical component of implementing the State Action Plan.

The following SageCon Funding Needs [legislative support handout](#) contains a summary of the related budget asks for the 2019 Oregon Legislative Session and sign-ons from diverse supportive organizations. It continues to be circulated as part of the above hearings and beyond to demonstrate the breadth of support for sage-grouse conservation related rural community health

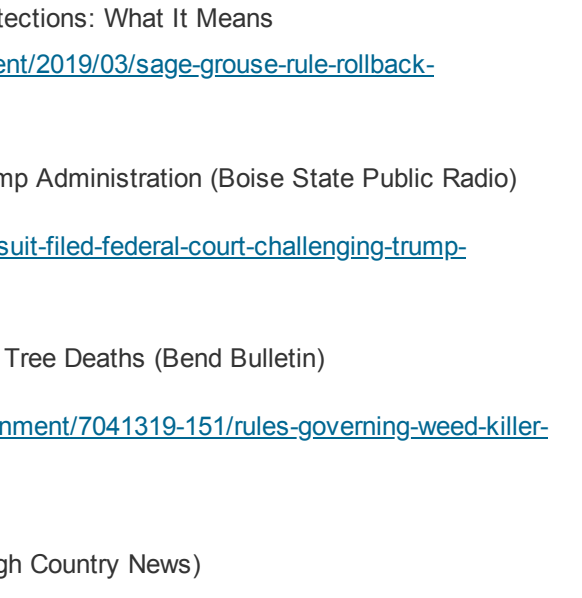
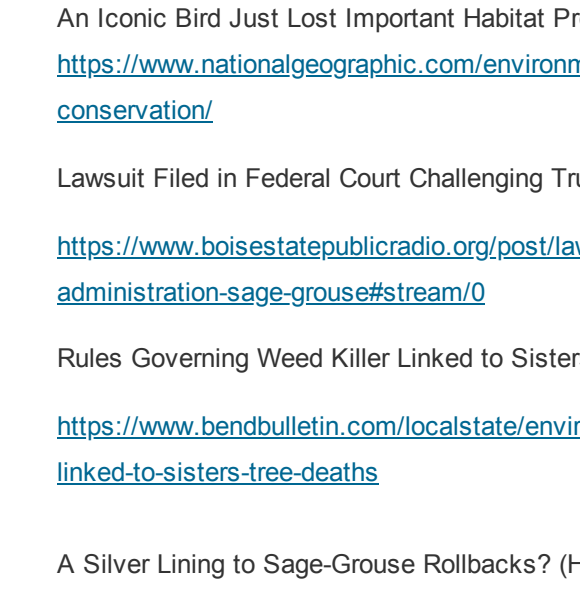
Bills, Bill, Bills SageCon Partners are following proposed bills below for their potential investments in sagebrush and rangeland health:

[HB2020](#) Establishes Carbon Policy Office within Oregon Department of Administrative Services and directs Director of Carbon Policy Office to adopt Oregon Climate Action Program by Rule.

[HB2729](#) Appropriates funding from General Fund to Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for purposes related to programs for grants from Oregon Agricultural Heritage Fund.

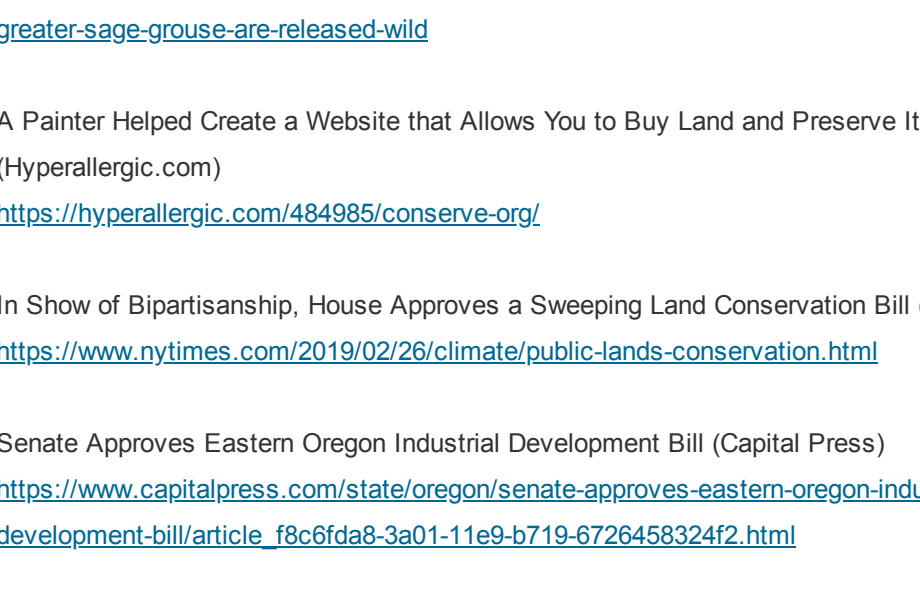
[HB2829](#) Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund to create a new revenue stream for ODFW to implement the Conservation Strategy

[SB339](#) Expands definition of "rangeland" to include land used primarily for cultivating crops for purposes of organizing rangeland protection association and providing fire protection for rangeland.



Multimedia Communications, Reports and Research

- The [Sage-Grouse Lek Camera](#) is back by popular demand starting April 1st!
- Roaring Springs Ranch's Zack Morgan featured in "[Partners in the Sage: School Teaches Stockmanship with a Light Touch](#)". The Nevada Stockmanship School is an annual event that teaches livestock and rangeland managers the fundamentals of enhancing and protecting rangelands by managing cattle with a gentle touch and herd behavior training.
- As part of NRCS's Working Lands for Wildlife program, research was conducted on rangeland productivity across land ownership types: [Patterns in Rangeland Productivity and Land Ownership and What They Mean for Conservation](#)
- The importance of wet mesic habitats shows the impact of drought on vegetation productivity and thus sagebrush species: Conserving Diverse Wet Habitats Keeps Western Rangelands Resilient
- [Intermountain Insight: A Case Study of the Bi-State](#) "My hope is that this study will continue to spur collaborative action, based on science, diverse perspectives, and shared vision to address at-risk species," said Ali Duvall, lead author and IIJWV's Assistant Coordinator.
- [Outcome-Based Grazing at the Winecup-Gamble Ranch](#): A team of 50 landowners and oriented agriculture resource professionals in Nevada developed the ROGER group: Results Oriented Grazing for Ecological Resilience. Check out this article to learn more about the ROGER group and its pilot site for an outcome-based grazing permit.
- Check out USFWS's free resources for education on sagebrush including lesson plans, posters, videos, books and more: [Sagebrush Ecosystem Curriculum](#)



SageCon Technical Resources on the Web

The SageCon technical team recently produced a curated list of remotely sensed maps that may be helpful for assessment of rangeland conditions and management planning in Oregon, along with other resources for interpreting and evaluating maps. See the new resources under the Data tab of the [SageCon website](#). The SageCon website provides information about the partnership, the Oregon Sage-Grouse Action Plan and other agency plans, tools built to aid in implementation and monitoring of the state Action Plan, and other resources. New tools have been developed by the SageCon Partnership to aid in coordinated planning throughout sage-grouse habitat in the state.

The [Oregon Sage-Grouse Development Siting Tool](#) allows developers and planners to input potential project footprints and get information about the mitigation hierarchy and likely impacts to sage-grouse.

The [Oregon Sage-Grouse Data Viewer](#) has also been updated with new vegetation maps and other spatial data for rangelands in the state, and will soon allow users to create customized queries to identify areas for potential restoration, protection, or other priorities based on the best geospatial data available within the state.

[SageCon Partners Work Planning Survey](#) results are in. Thanks to everyone who weighed in on how to prioritize and organize the work of the SageCon Partnership. Shout out to Megan Creutzburg, INR for designing the survey and compiling the data.



Sage Grouse in the News*

Interior Announces Changes to Sage Grouse Bird Protections (UPI)

https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2019/03/16/Interior-announces-changes-to-sage-grouse-bird-protections/6291552768150/

An Iconic Bird Just Lost Important Habitat Protections: What It Means

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/03/sage-grouse-rule-rollback-conservation/>

Lawsuit Filed in Federal Court Challenging Trump Administration (Boise State Public Radio)

<https://www.boisestatepublicradio.org/post/lawsuit-filed-federal-court-challenging-trump-administration-sage-grouse-stream/0>

Rules Governing Weed Killer Linked to Sisters Tree Deaths (Bend Bulletin)

<https://www.bendbulletin.com/localstate/environment/7041319-151/rules-governing-weed-killer-linked-to-sisters-tree-deaths>

A Silver Lining to Sage-Grouse Rollbacks? (High Country News)

<https://www.hcn.org/articles/endangered-species-in-some-states-sage-grouse-rules-rollback-means-more-protections>

Bird Advocates Question Raven-Killing Plans To Protect Sage Grouse (OPB)

<https://www.opb.org/news/article/ravens-sage-grouse-killing-bird-protections-oregon/>

U.S. Gets \$87 Million For Oil and Gas Leases in Sage-Grouse Habitat (Reuters)

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-drilling-sale/u-s-gets-87-million-for-oil-and-gas-leases-in-sage-grouse-habitat-idUSKCN1QL21J>

Emergency Letter: Save 'Highest Grouse Density Areas on Earth' (Wyofile)

<https://www.wyofile.com/emergency-letter-save-highest-grouse-density-areas-on-earth/>

The Dire Situation Of The Gunnison Sage Grouse In Utah (Utah Public Radio)

<https://www.upr.org/post/dire-situation-gunnison-sage-grouse-utah>

Hope Grows for One of Canada's Most Endangered Species as Greater Sage-Grouse are Released into the Wild (Canadian Geographic)

<https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/article/hope-grows-one-canadas-most-endangered-species-greater-sage-grouse-are-released-wild>

A Painter Helped Create a Website that Allows You to Buy Land and Preserve It (Hyperallergic.com)

<https://hyperallergic.com/484985/conserv-org/>

In Show of Bipartisanship, House Approves a Sweeping Land Conservation Bill (NYTimes)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/26/climate/public-lands-conservation.html>

Senate Approves Eastern Oregon Industrial Development Bill (Capital Press)

https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/senate-approves-eastern-oregon-industrial-development-bill/article_f8c6fda8-3a01-11e9-b719-6726458324f2.html

First-of-Their-Kind Drone Swarms to Restore Oregon Rangelands (MarketsInsider)

<https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/first-of-their-kind-drone-swarms-to-restore-oregon-rangelands-1027969138>

Sage Grouse and Power Lines — Not a Good Mix, Utah Study Notes (Desert News)

<https://www.desertnews.com/article/900054053/utah-sage-grouse-and-power-lines-not-a-good-mix-study-notes.html>

New Project Means Death for Sage Grouse Habitat (Post Register)

https://www.postregister.com/opinion/guest_column/new-project-means-death-for-sage-grouse-habitat/article_689047dc-7c54-55a5-b0bc-15c64032ca35.html

Brett Browncombe, Project Manager
National Policy Consensus Center
browncombe@pdx.edu
desk: 503-725-8114 cell: 503-679-5025

Julia Babcock, Project Coordinator
National Policy Consensus Center
jib@pdx.edu
desk: 503-725-8109 cell: 727-409-4160

Share this email:



Manage your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™
Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.
View this email [online](#).

PO Box 751 NPCC
Portland, OR | 97207 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

