

## Oregon's Sage-grouse Action Plan

# Why care about sage-grouse?

Three Forks, Malheur County

Once abundant across much of eastern Oregon, sage-grouse today are in serious trouble – for reasons that have significant implications for ranchers and rural communities and a wide variety of other wildlife.

### ***Fire and invasive species threaten sage-grouse and communities***

Large fires have burned through almost two million acres of Oregon sage-grouse habitat in recent years, fueled in part by the spread of cheatgrass and other invasive, non-native weeds.

Expansion of juniper and other conifers into formerly wide-open rangelands across millions of acres has further reduced habitat for sage-grouse, which avoid areas with even a few trees.

Fires and invasive species also pose threats to ranching operations that depend on healthy native rangelands for forage for their livestock. Declining rangeland health undermines the financial viability of agricultural businesses that are the historic foundation of the rural economy in southeast Oregon.

### ***Pending Endangered Species Act decision***

A pending decision on listing sage-grouse under the federal Endangered Species Act could trigger expansive new regulatory constraints on private landowners and public land management activities. Uncertainty around an ESA listing puts a cloud over existing operations and future economic development opportunities in a large part of rural Oregon.



**Sage-grouse are a compelling ecological indicator of what's happening in the wide-open sagebrush landscape that spans one-third of the state.**





### ***Why Oregon needs to act now***

Unprecedented collaboration among private and public stakeholders has put Oregon in a strong position to implement a comprehensive “all lands, all threats” strategy to conserve sage-grouse and create more resilient habitats and communities across southeast Oregon.

Oregon’s innovative approach has already won widespread recognition and will weigh heavily in the ultimate decision on any ESA listing. By acting now, the state can take the lead in responding to these issues before they become a full-blown crisis and preserve its uniquely Oregon approach to stewardship of our natural heritage.



### **For more information:**

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