

Bi-State Local Area Working Group



A Cooperative Conservation Win for Nevada/California Sage Grouse

When historic conservation news hit the headlines, the players who made it happen quietly kept on working. The Bi-State Local Area Working Group serves as a shining example of cooperation and a long-term commitment to effective action. The stakeholders found common ground, focused on what they agreed on, and put all egos aside to unveil a brilliant plan for conserving sage grouse on the Nevada-California border. Their ongoing efforts are continuing to pay dividends.

In June of 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Land Management and other Bi-State partners announced a landmark agreement to accelerate and focus conservation efforts to fully carry out the Bi-State Action Plan. The sage grouse and the wildlife that share their range now face a bright future, potentially averting the need to list the bird under the Endangered Species Act. At the same time, ranchers with critical water resources bordering public lands can keep their lands intact and safe from subdivision. The \$45 million commitment to restore this geographically distinct population of sage grouse gives plenty of hope for a win-win result.

“The LAWG has provided the foundation upon which effective long-term sage grouse conservation can build. Without the interest, dedication, and desire of the working group, sage grouse conservation would be vastly more difficult.” ~Tony Wasley, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Director and co-chair, Executive Oversight Committee (Bi-State sage grouse)



Meet the Bi-State Local Area Working Group

About

On the Nevada-California state line, a geographically distinct population of sage grouse once faced a precarious future. Today, that’s changed. A forward-thinking group of people representing ranchers, agencies, conservation groups, private citizens, and universities came together in 2002 to form the Bi-State Local Area Working Group. They agreed to work across borders of land and values for the common good of sage grouse. In 2012, they released the *Bi-State Action Plan: Past, Present and Future Actions for Conservation of the Greater Sage-Grouse Bi-State Distinct Population Segment*. This is no dust-gathering document, but represents on-the-ground successes from the past decade and guidance for the future.

Role with Sage Grouse

A great plan from the Bi-State Working Group steered Sage Grouse Initiative dollars to where they were needed most: funding and leveraging more dollars for voluntary conservation easements that keep private ranchlands intact. Easements and invasive conifer removal are the two top conservation actions identified in the Bi-State Action Plan.

Contact

Thad Heater, NRCS State Biologist, 775.857.8500 ext. 144, thad.heater@nv.usda.gov. Find the Action Plan and learn more at: http://www.ndow.org/Nevada_Wildlife/Sage_Grouse/Bi-State_FWS/



Tatiana Gettelman