



WY NRCS ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SAGE GROUSE

BRIAN JENSEN



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Who is NRCS?



Born in Response to a National Tragedy

11,000 employees, 92% in county/field offices

Staff trained in soils, agronomy, range, engineering, biology

Private lands focus

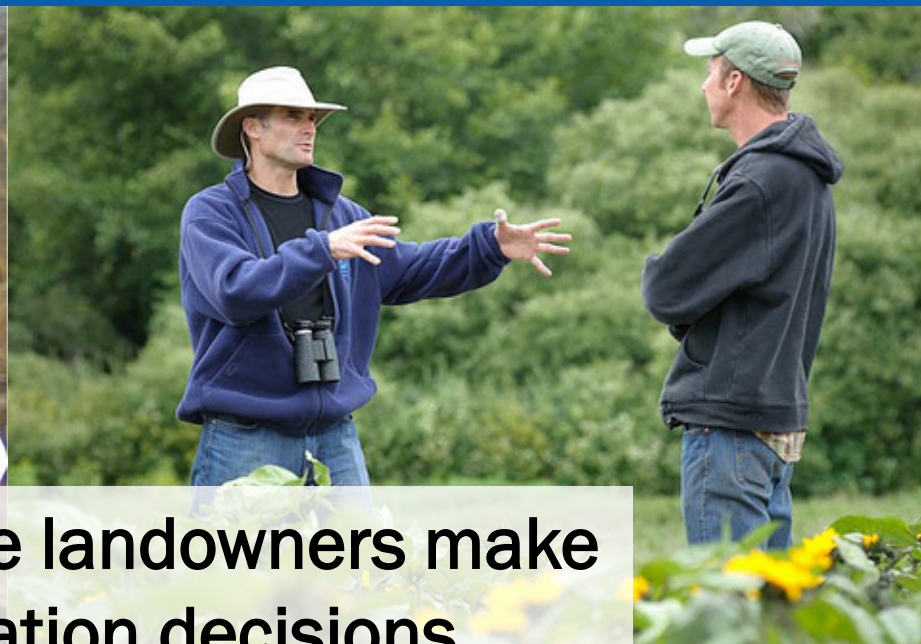
Public land partnerships

Non-regulatory approach

NRCS Mission: Helping People Help the Land

Vision: Productive, sustainable agriculture in balance with a high quality environment





NRCS helps private landowners make good conservation decisions



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USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Area of Interest (AOI) | Soil Map | Soil Data Explorer | Download Soils Data | Shopping Cart (Free)

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Area of Interest

Import AOI

Quick Navigation

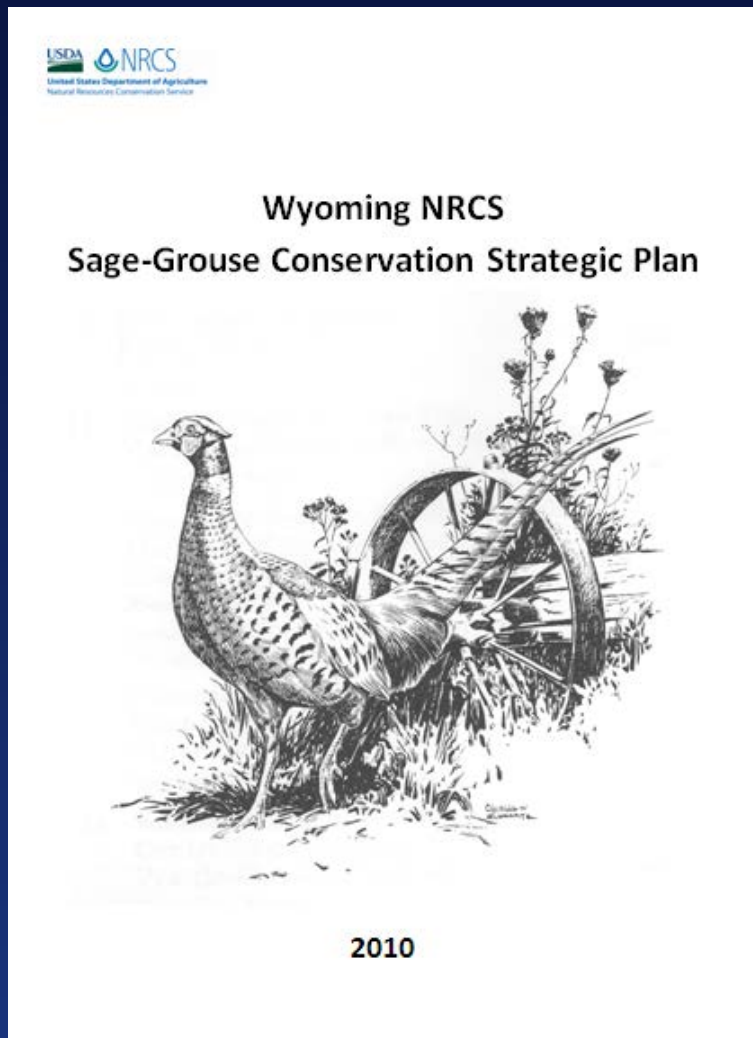
- Address
- State and County
- Soil Survey Area
- Latitude and Longitude
- PLSS (Section, Township, Range)
- Bureau of Land Management
- Department of Defense
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Hydrologic Unit

Area of Interest Interactive Map

Legend

View Extent: Contiguous U.S.

Scale: (not to scale)

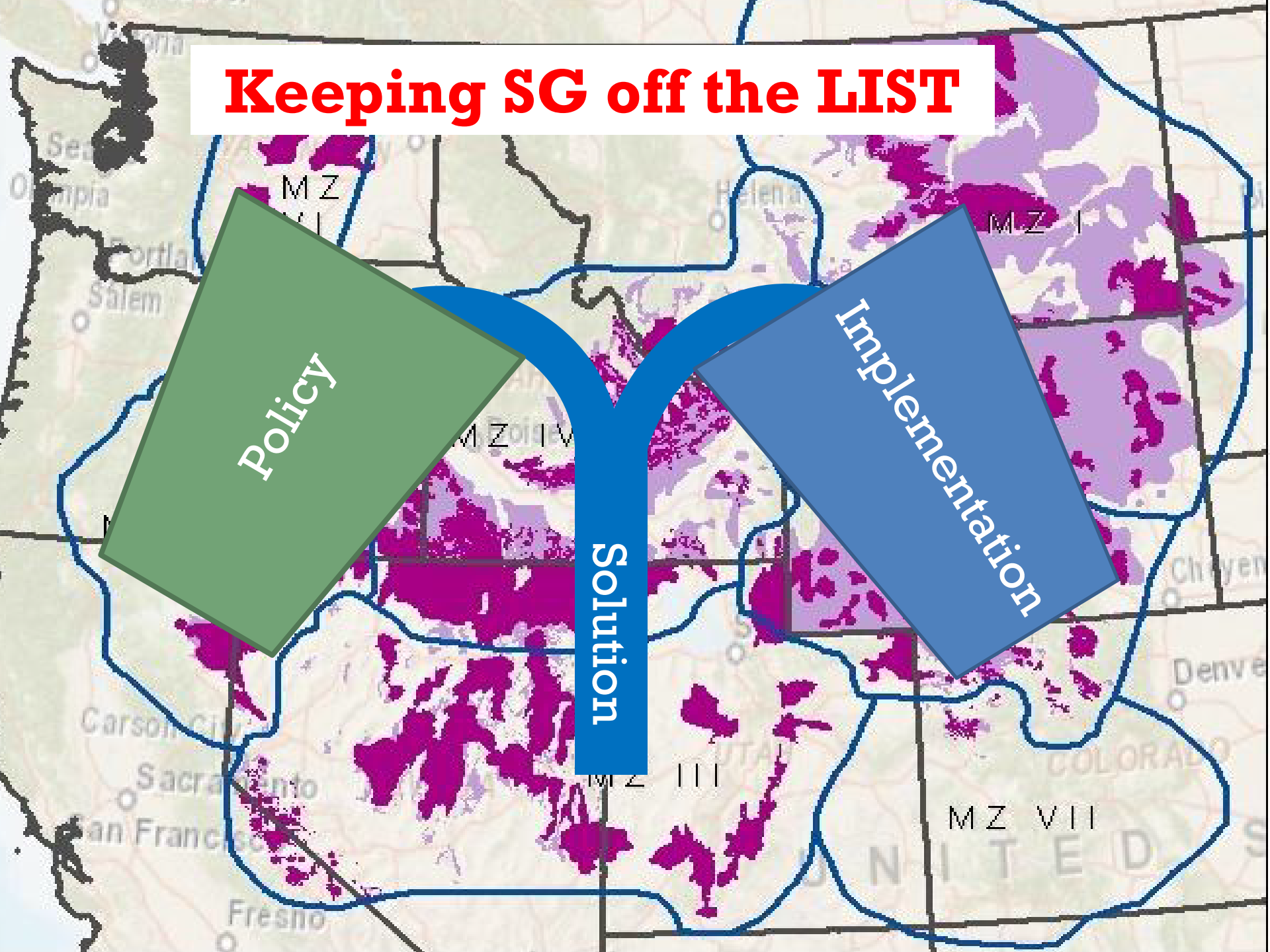


Keeping SG off the LIST

Policy

Solution

Implementation



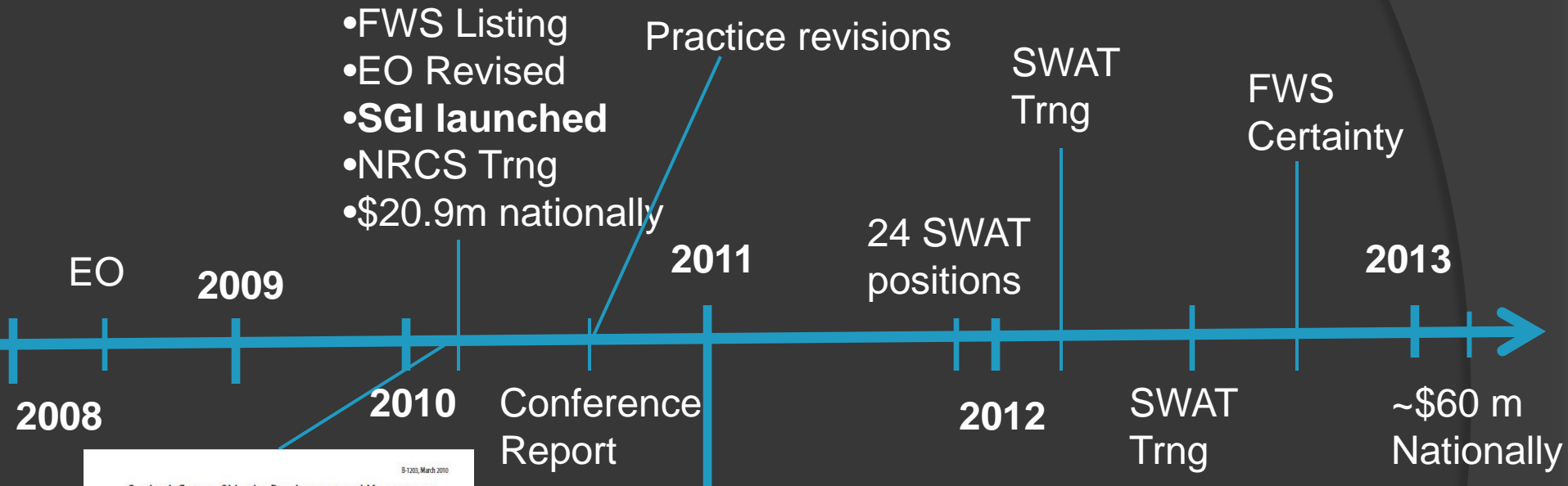
Sage Grouse Initiative



- Remove threats to sage-grouse and improve sustainability of working ranches
- Implement enough of the right practices in the right places to benefit populations
- Assess effectiveness, quantify benefits, adapt program delivery, and tell the story




Program Timeline




B-1203, March 2010

Grazing Influence, Objective Development, and Management in Wyoming's Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat

With Emphasis on Nesting and Early Brood Rearing



Jim Cagney, Everett Bainter, Bob Budd, Tom Christiansen, Vicki Herren, Matt Holloran, Benjamin Rashford, Mike Smith, Justin Williams



- \$92.1 m nationally
- EO Revised

Traditional Model

Agency-specific

Opportunistic

Planning-averse

Management actions are based on achieving outputs

Monitoring and research are dispensable

SIGI Model

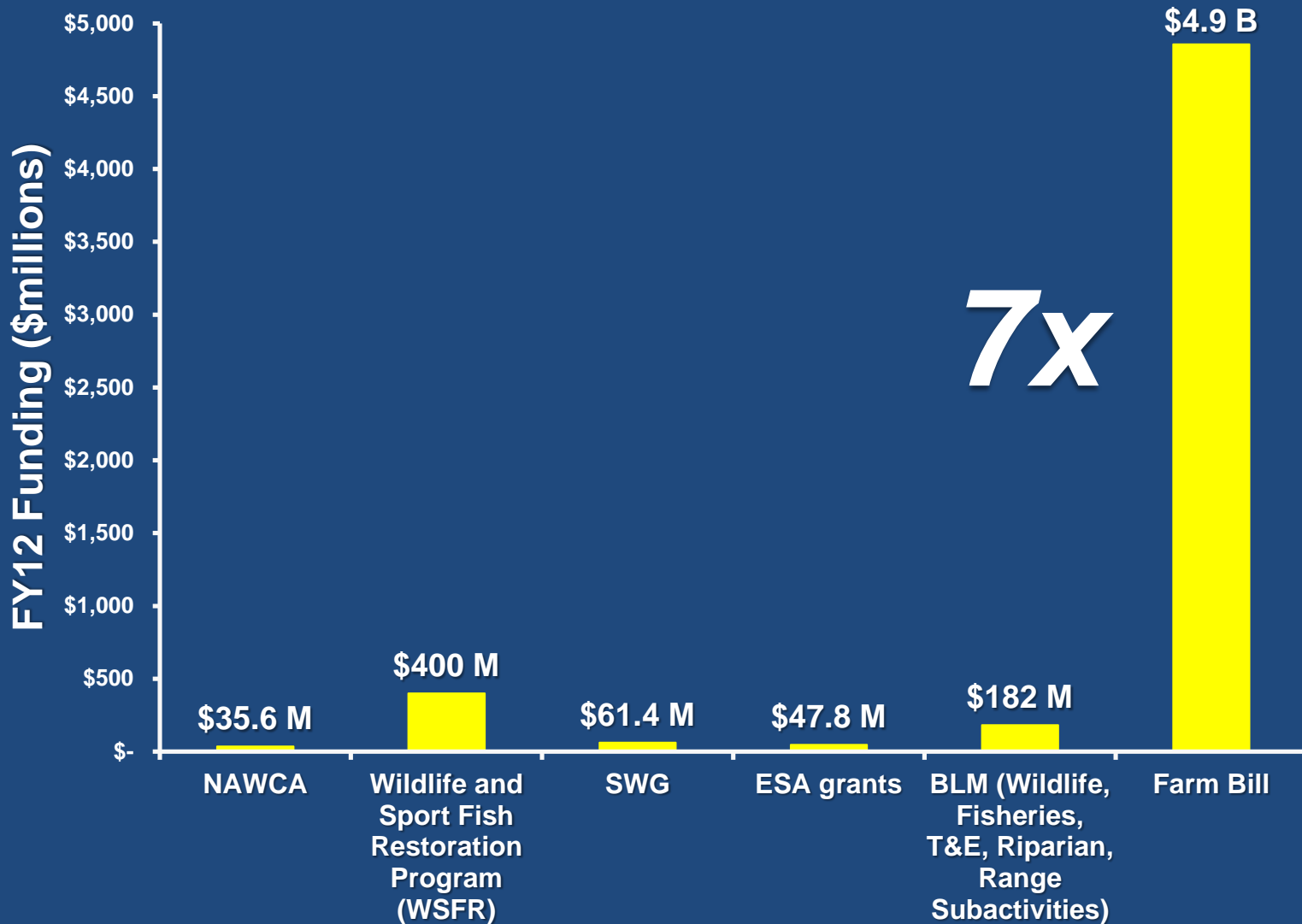
Collaborative, Partnership-driven

Strategic, Targeted

Science-based and Planning-intense

Management actions are based on achieving environmental outcomes

Monitoring and research are indispensable



SGL is not a new 'program' but rather strategic focusing of existing programs

NRCS Programs

Technical Assistance Program

- Conservation planning assistance only



Financial Assistance Programs

- EQIP, WHIP (EQIP)
- Cost-share for practice implementation
- Typically 3-5 year contracts

Easement Programs

- FRPP, GRP, WRP (ACEP)
- Permanent easements, long-term rental agreements

Science Support

- CEAP, CIG, SWAT

Compatible Land Use?

◎ Good for both

- Large, intact landscapes
- Plant Diversity
- Perennial grasses and forbs
- Invasive species management
- Healthy springs/seeps
- Well designed grazing plan

◎ Bad for both

- Subdivisions
- Overgrazing
- Human development that fragments landscapes.
- Sod formers
- Tanks without escape ramps
- Conifer Encroachment

Shared Vision

Wildlife conservation through sustainable ranching

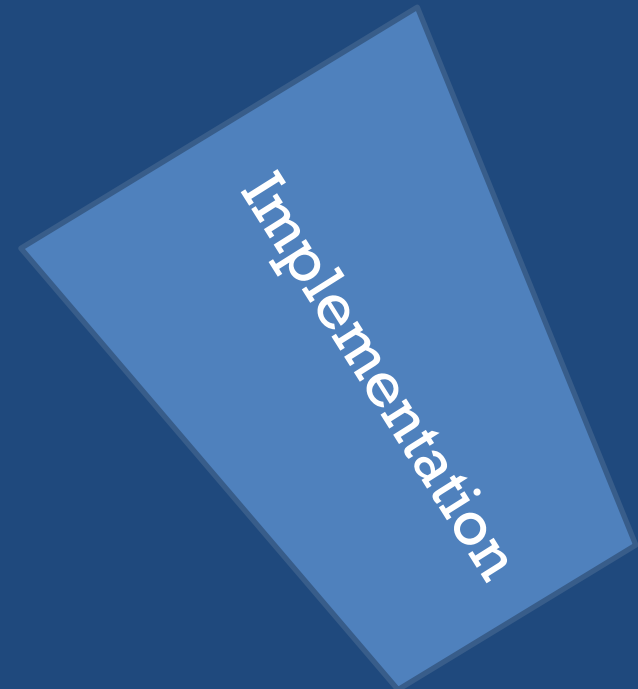


Habitat Improvement Programs- EQIP and WHIP (EQIP)

Implementation through SGI

- Sagebrush Removal
- Ag Conversion
- Fire
- Conifer Encroachment
- Weeds/Annual Grasses
- Energy (Oil, Gas, Wind)
- Mining
- Range Management Structures
- Fences
- Infrastructure (non-range)
- Grazing
- Free-Roaming Equids
- Recreation
- Urbanization/Exurban Development

*State-based strategies
guide implementation*



ESA Predictability

- NRCS 'conferenced' with USFWS and conditioned 40 practices to ensure benefits to sage-grouse
- Provides predictability to landowners



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



JUL 15 2013

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/AES/DRR/BCCC/054959

Dear Working Lands For Wildlife Participant:

Thank you for your participation in Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW), an innovative collaboration by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and private land stewards like you. In conjunction with your voluntary implementation of conservation practices outlined in WLFW, the Service is providing you with regulatory predictability under the

Endangered Species Act. If the species is currently listed or is listed in the future, you will be exempt from any incidental take of the species that may be inadvertently caused by the implementation and maintenance of the conservation practices identified in your conservation plan.



Training



Range-wide Accomplishments

Improved grazing systems on
2+ million acres



Helped secure conservation easements
on 240,000+ acres



>700 ranchers enrolled, \$145M invested, \$70M match

In 2013 another 198 new ranchers & \$19M invested

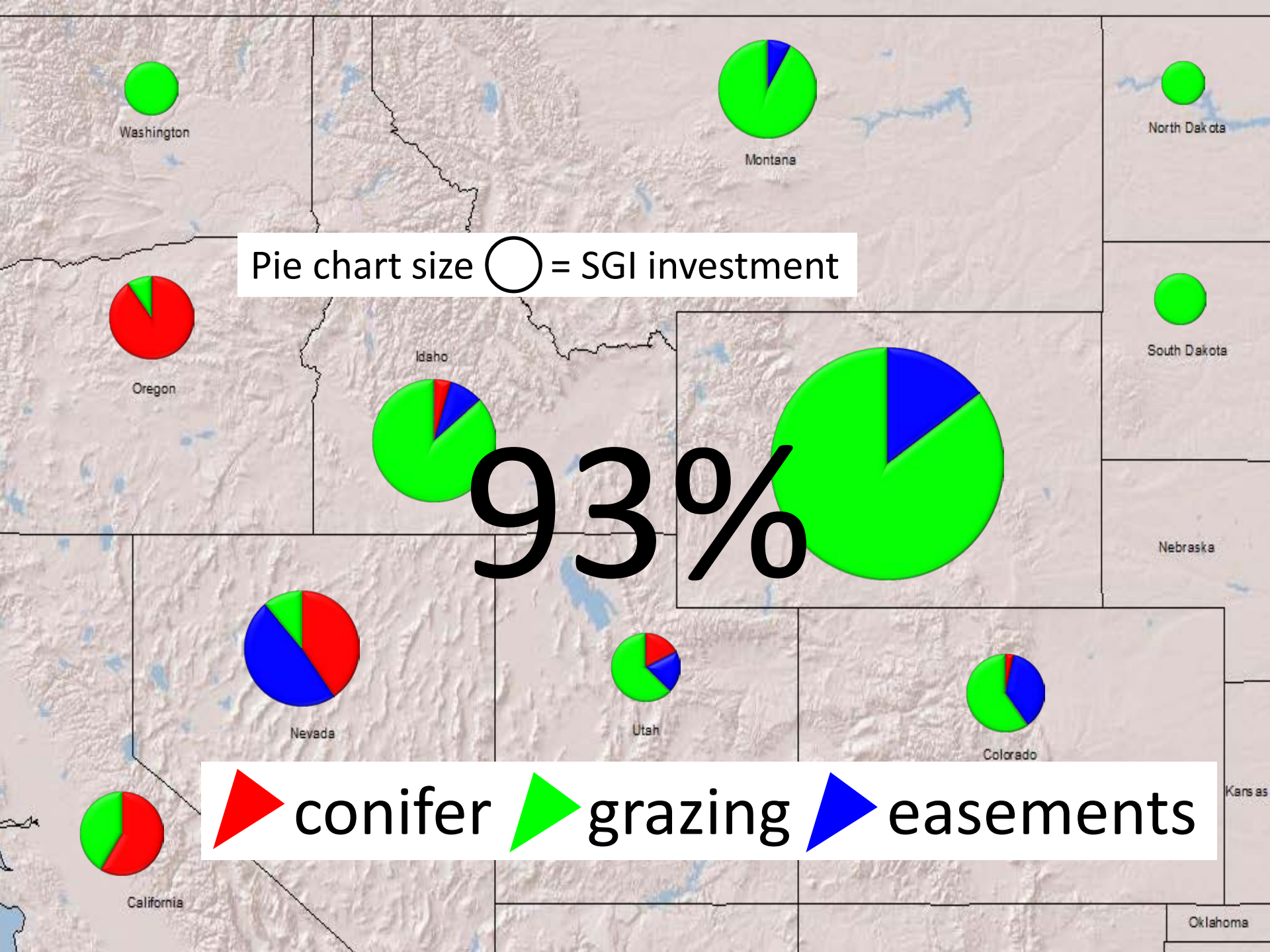
In 2014 another \$31M is allocated to SGI

Removed encroached conifers on
200,000 acres



Marked or moved 500+ miles of
'high risk' fence





WY Accomplishments

2010 Initiative Accomplishments

- 72 Applications Total
- 23 Contracts funded (20 EQIP, 3 WHIP)
- Common practices - Grazing management for nesting habitat improvement, Water developments and conversion to solar, Fencing, Fence marking.



2011 Initiative Accomplishments

- 43 Applications Total
- 21 Contracts Funded (16 EQIP, 4 WHIP)
- Similar practices as 2010



Totals for 2010 & 2011

Program	Practice	Extent	Unit
EQIP	Brush Management	81.9	ac
	Critical Area Planting	4	ac
	Fence	209,542.6	ft
	Obstruction Removal	4	no
	Pipeline	60,943.4	ft
	Pumping Plant	11	no
	Spring Development	3.0	no
	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	997,348.7	ac
	Water Well	6.0	no
	Watering Facility	26.0	no
	Grade Stabilization Structure	3.0	no
	Herbaceous Weed Control	1,350.0	ac
	Range Planting	25.0	ac
	Road / Trail / Landing Closure and Treatment	4,000	ft
WHIP	Fence	31,200	ft
	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	198,070.80	ac

2012 Initiative Accomplishments

- 54 Applications Total
- 35 Contracts Funded (24 EQIP, 11 WHIP)
- Similar practices as 2010 and 2011



2013

- 41 applications total
- 17 funded for \$1.8 million on 137K acres



Screening and Ranking

- Core Areas
- Breeding Bird Density
- Current Condition
- % of Threats Addressed
- % of operation enrolled
- Practices

SGI Challenges

Ownership by Sage Grouse Core Areas and Local Working Groups

Ownership Key

- Bankhead Jones
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Corps of Engineers
- DOE
- Department of Defense
- Fish & Wildlife
- Forest Service
- National Grasslands
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Water

Bates Hole LWG:

SURFACE OWNER	Acres
Private	1,268,379
Bureau of Reclamation	16,255
State	255,350
Fish & Wildlife	465
Water	29,528
Bureau of Land Management	1,047,926
Forest Service	462

Big Horn Basin LWG:

SURFACE OWNER	Acres
Bureau of Indian Affairs	14,967
Private	469,629
Bureau of Reclamation	18,404
State	223,322
Water	700
Bureau of Land Management	1,131,324
Forest Service	312

Wind-Sweetwater LWG:

SURFACE OWNER	Acres
Bureau of Indian Affairs	232,522
Private	456,363
Bureau of Reclamation	3,514
State	159,823
Department of Defense	1,341
Water	8,845
Bureau of Land Management	1,534,607
Forest Service	338

Upper Snake LWG:

SURFACE OWNER	Acres
National Park Service	30,222
Private	52,642
State	1,741
Fish & Wildlife	4,846
Water	1,165
Bureau of Land Management	146
Forest Service	5,439

Upper Green River LWG:

SURFACE OWNER	Acres
Private	322,263
Bureau of Reclamation	925
State	48,658
Water	2,877
Bureau of Land Management	446,201
Forest Service	11,535

Southwest LWG:

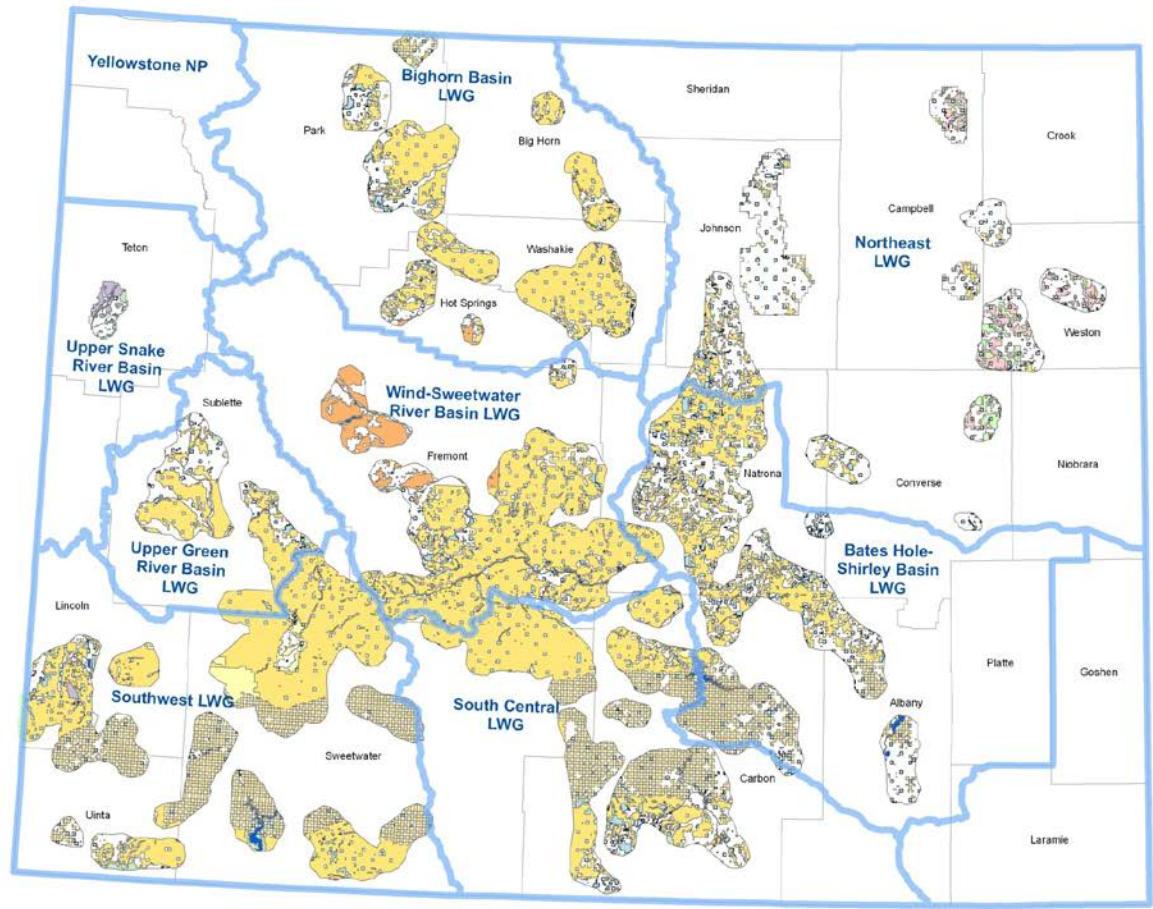
SURFACE OWNER	Acres
National Park Service	8,387
Private	897,175
Bureau of Reclamation	128,786
State	338,793
Fish & Wildlife	994
Water	37,049
Bureau of Land Management	2,034,518
Forest Service	37,121

South Central LWG:

SURFACE OWNER	Acres
Private	742,596
Bureau of Reclamation	16,300
State	154,259
Fish & Wildlife	60
Water	10,705
Bureau of Land Management	1,362,886
Forest Service	4,557

Northeast LWG:

SURFACE OWNER	Acres
Bankhead Jones	124,731
National Grasslands	87,513
Private	1,101,996
State	135,518
Bureau of Land Management	219,150





Easement Programs- FRPP, GRP, WRP (ACEP)

2010

- \$14m for FRPP- not directed towards SG. 21 contracts.
- \$4.1m for GRP- ~1/2 for SG. 4 easements, 5 rentals.



2011

- \$52.2m for FRPP, \$40m for SG- 36 of 39 projects in SG core or current
- \$10.4m for GRP- 11 projects all in SG core or current. 6 rentals, 5 easements.

2012

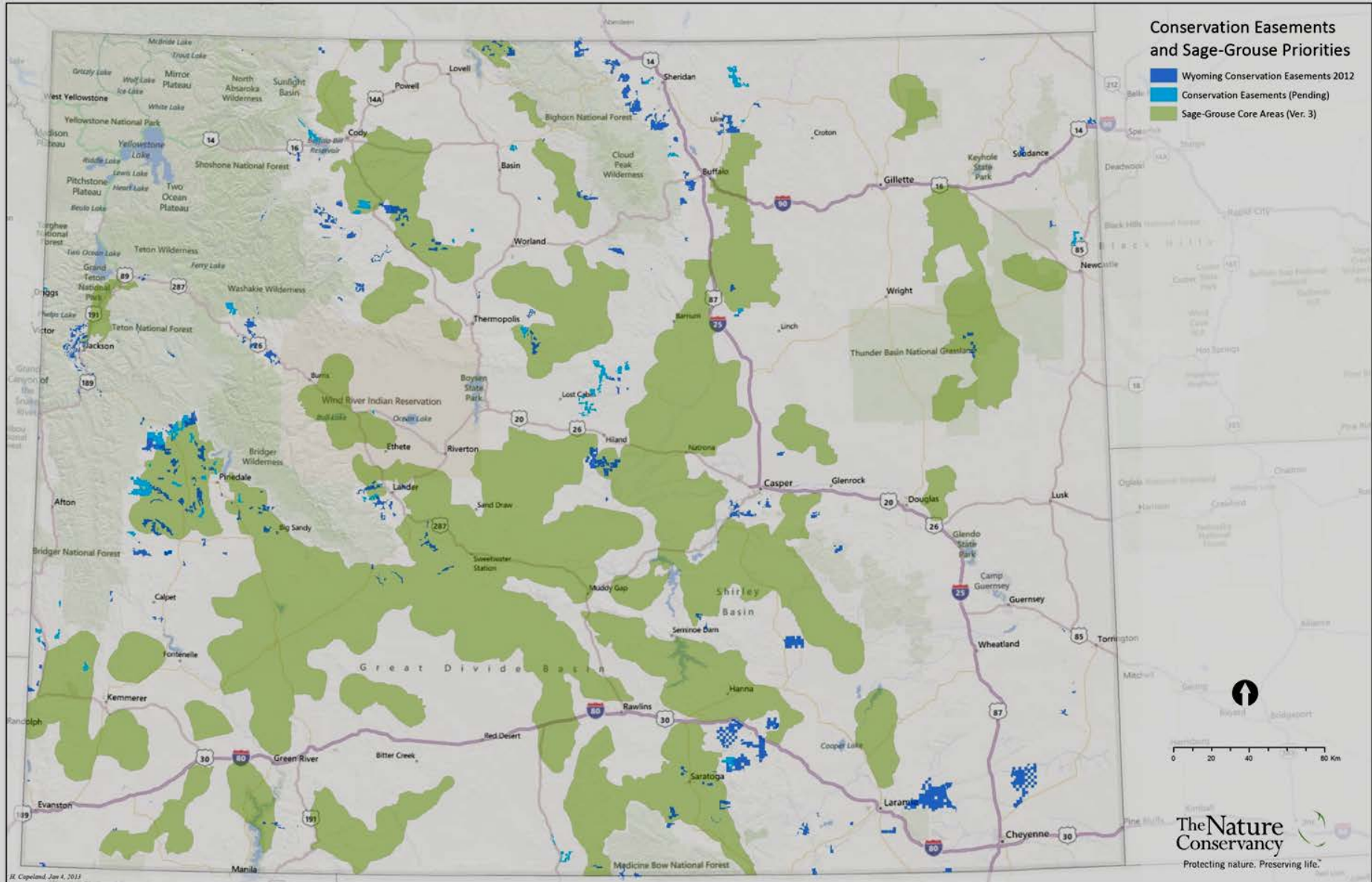
- FRPP- \$15.6m, 12 SG core, 4 non SG
- GRP- \$4.4m, all SG; 6 rentals, 1 easement



2013

- WRP/GRP not authorized under CR
- \$5.5 million in FRPP for prior year contracts on 18K acres

Easements- Existing and Pending



SWAT- Strategic Watershed Action Team

- 5 positions in WY: Lander, Pinedale, Powell, Buffalo, and Saratoga





SGI SWAT: Paying Partners



INTERMOUNTAIN WEST
JOINT VENTURE



Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks



PHEASANTS

forever
The Habitat
Organization

Audubon



OREGON
Fish & Wildlife



The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™



ConocoPhillips



UTAH
DNR



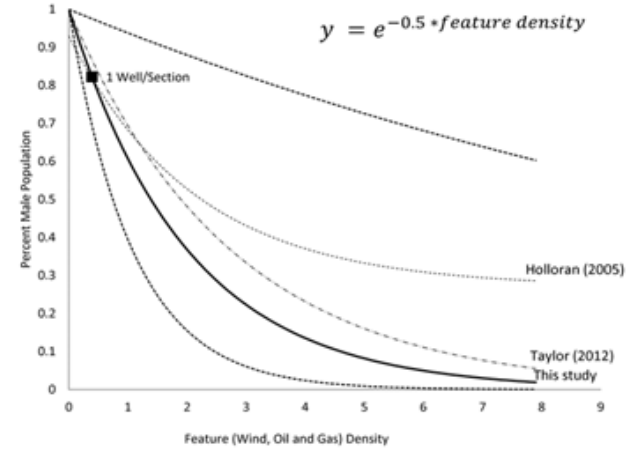
NWTF
Conserve. Hunt. Share.



Supporting **Science** to Target Delivery and Measure Outcomes

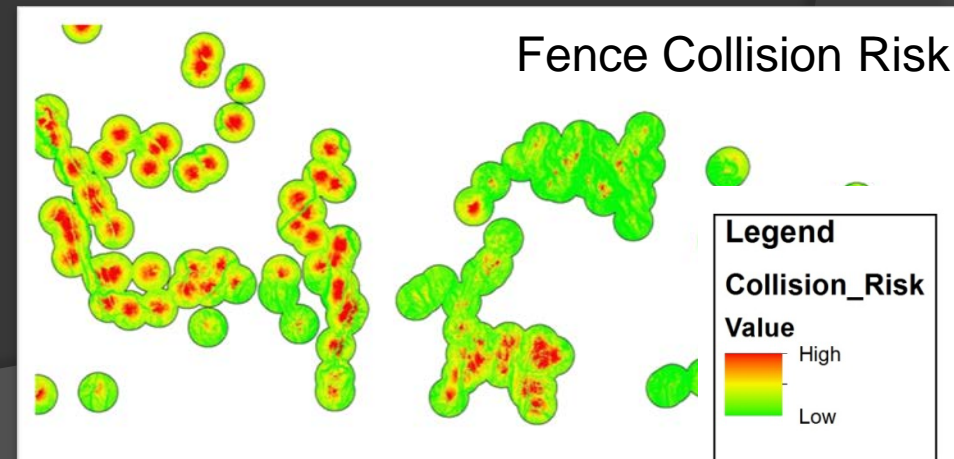
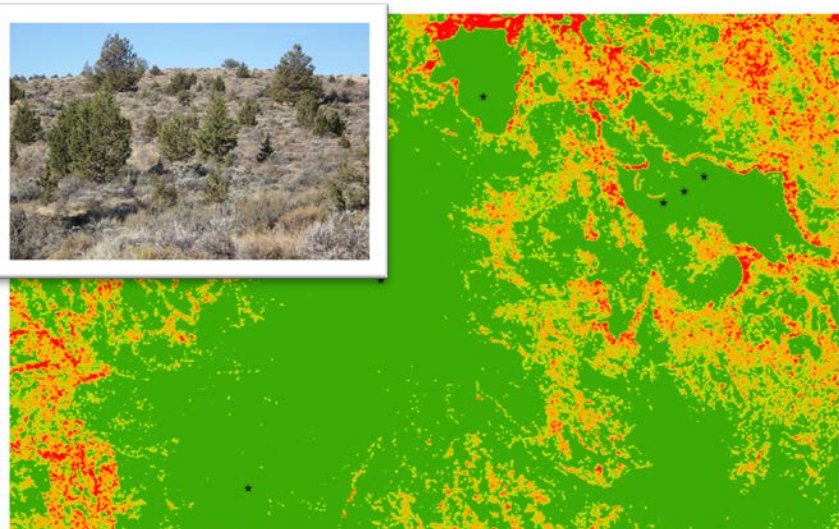


Figure 4. Sage-grouse population response to feature density regression relationship (solid line) with 95% CI (dotted lines).



Copeland HE, Pocerwicz A, Naugle DE, Griffiths T, et al. (2013) Measuring the Effectiveness of Conservation: A Novel Framework to Quantify the Benefits of Sage-Grouse Conservation Policy and Easements in Wyoming. PLoS ONE 8(6): e67261. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0067261

<http://www.plosone.com/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0067261>



Telling the Story




SUCCESS: We're Dancin'
Voluntary conservation actions in California bring back the sage and the grouse that call it home.
[Reintroduction in California](#)

VIDEO: Saving Sage Grouse, The Wyoming Way
The power of partnership is on full display as energy companies, conservation groups, ranchers and government pitch in for sage grouse.

FEATURED FRIEND: COR ENTERPRISES
Conservation requires partnership. And that begins with productive relationships like the one we have with COR Enterprises.

NEW STRATEGIES
See how helping zero in on enhancing

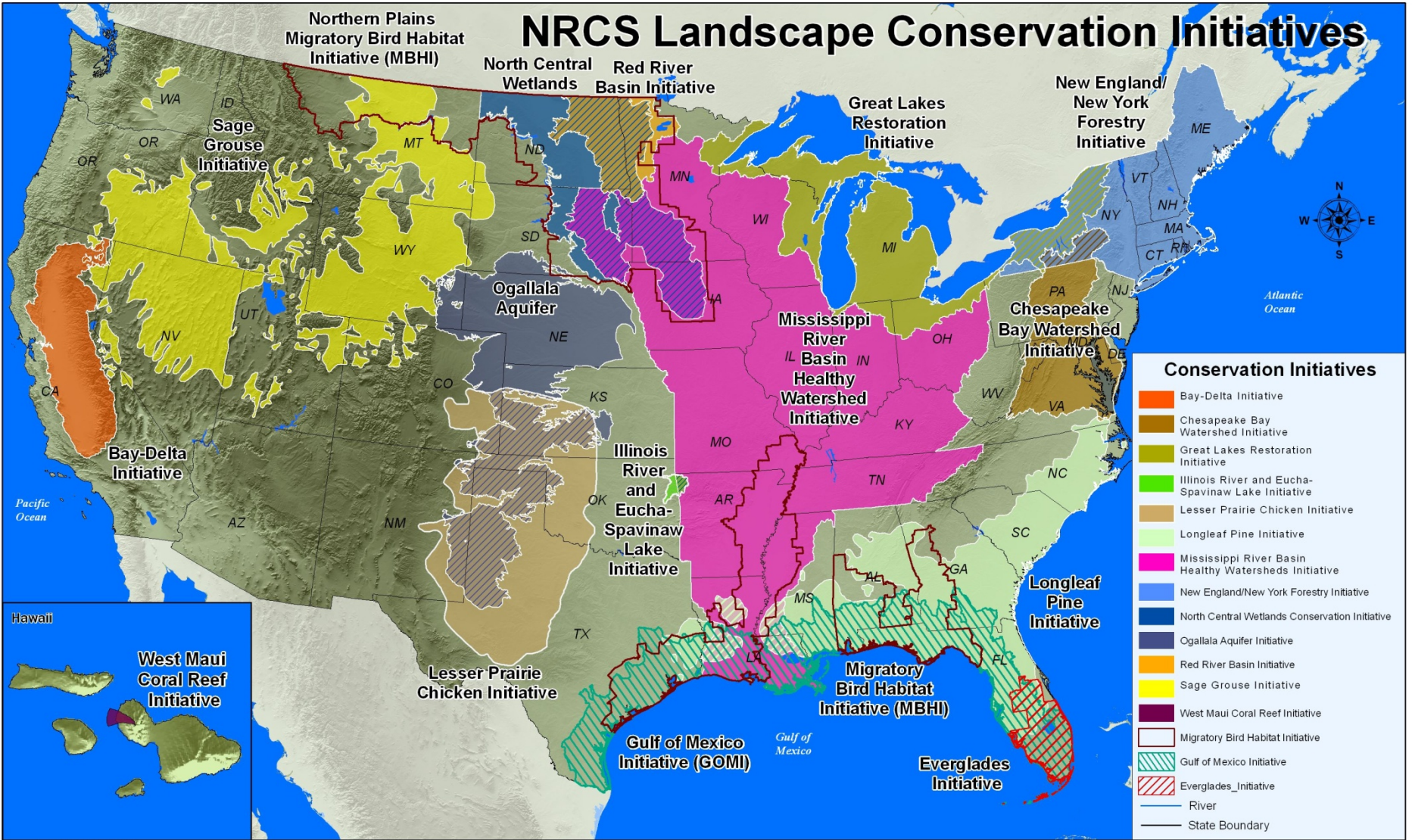
Lek  **us on facebook**

Follow the partnership: www.sagegrouseinitiative.com

2014 and Beyond

- ◎ New Farm Bill
 - Programs combined- overall funding down ~30%
 - New easement program- no allocation
- ◎ New Chief for NRCS in 2013
- ◎ Initiatives the new normal?
 - SGI only initiative to receive additional funding in 2014- >\$50 million
 - SWAT funded through 2016.
- ◎ WY SGI- \$6.5million
- ◎ Listing decision Impacts?

NRCS Landscape Conservation Initiatives



- Conservation Initiatives**
- Bay-Delta Initiative
 - Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative
 - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
 - Illinois River and Eucha-Spavinaw Lake Initiative
 - Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative
 - Longleaf Pine Initiative
 - Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative
 - New England/New York Forestry Initiative
 - North Central Wetlands Conservation Initiative
 - Ogallala Aquifer Initiative
 - Red River Basin Initiative
 - Sage Grouse Initiative
 - West Maui Coral Reef Initiative
 - Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative
 - Gulf of Mexico Initiative
 - Everglades Initiative
 - River
 - State Boundary



U.S. Department of Agriculture
 Natural Resources Conservation Service
 Resource Assessment Division
 Washington, D.C. March 2012

Map ID: 12351

Source: USDA, NRCS, USGS DATA



QUESTIONS?

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307-233-6740

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