



Baker Sage-grouse *Local Implementation Team*

Baker Comprehensive Sage-grouse Threat Reduction

SAGEBRUSH/SAGE-STEPPE HABITAT

The Baker Local Implementation

Team (LIT) is working collaboratively with private landowners and managers to enhance sage-grouse habitat within Baker County to reverse local sage-grouse population declines.

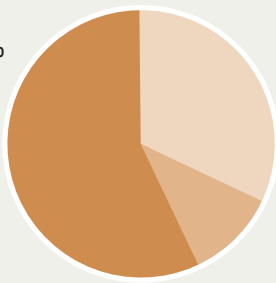


The Baker Priority Area of Conservation is considered to be the most strategically important area for sage-grouse conservation in Baker County and is the primary location of restoration efforts. Efforts also expand into general sage-grouse habitat throughout Baker County where restoration can help support thriving leks and habitat corridors.

Funding

OWEB awarded \$1,292,415 in funding that leveraged \$1,980,664 in matching funds

Restoration
\$735,904 / 56.94%



Stakeholder Engagement
\$407,426 / 31.52%

Technical Assistance
\$149,085 / 11.54%

Benefits

- Improvement to sage-grouse habitat quality and quantity
- Promoting wildfire prevention and restoration activities
- Improved understanding of sage-grouse threats including West Nile Virus, late season habitat, and more
- Grazing and land management to promote healthy sage-brush ecosystems

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) grant program is a bold, new conservation approach that supports high-performing partnerships to implement strategic restoration actions and measure ecological outcomes through coordinated monitoring. In January 2019, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board awarded an Implementation Focused Investment Partnership grant to the Baker Sage-grouse Local Implementation Team. This report documents projects for which funding was obligated during the first biennium of the initiative (2019 to 2021) to meet FIP initiative objectives. Work completed under the FIP grant program is part of a much larger on-going collaborative effort of federal, state and local agencies, tribes, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations in Baker LIT Planning Area. Accomplishments included in the report only reflect actions completed with OWEB FIP funding.

PARTNERS

Core Partners: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Baker County, Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Area, Bureau of Land Management, Powder Basin Watershed Council, Private Landowners

Supporting Partners: Oregon State University Extension, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, The Nature Conservancy, Baker Valley Vector Control, Institute for Natural Resources, Agricultural Research Service, Rural Landowners

GOAL

Increase the quality and quantity of sage-grouse habitat and ultimately increase the Baker sage-grouse population.

STRATEGIES

- Promote awareness and enrollment in voluntary habitat conservation programs
- Prevent, treat, and adaptively manage invasive annual grasses and other noxious weeds

- Protect, enhance, and expand extent and connectivity of areas with adequate sagebrush cover
- Address key information gaps

IMPLEMENTATION (2019-2021)

Program Enrollment

28

LAND OWNERS
ENROLLED IN
HABITAT
PROGRAMS

Weed Treatment & Prevention

3,320

ACRES OF
ANNUAL GRASSES
TREATED

Restoration & Planning

3

PLANNING
MEETINGS
FOR STRATEGIC
FUEL BREAK
PLAN

Fill Information Gaps

15

WEST NILE VIRUS
HOT SPOT
SAMPLING SITES
IDENTIFIED
AND ADDED

2,635

ACRES OF
NOXIOUS WEEDS
TREATED

1

SITE-SPECIFIC PLAN
FOR THE CCAA IS
COMPLETED

5

ALTERNATIVE FORAGE OPTION
ANALYSIS MEETINGS HELD

1

OHV WASH STATION
PRELIMINARY PLAN
COMPLETED

1

SAGE-GROUSE
COMPATIBLE GRAZING
ANALYSIS COMPLETED

OUTCOMES

Near Term 0-5 YEARS

- Extent and abundance of invasive annual grasses and other noxious weeds is reduced
- Sagebrush/sage steppe plant communities including native bunchgrass and forb diversity and abundance are suitable to support all life history stages of sage-grouse

Mid-Term 5-10 YEARS

- Sage-grouse nest success increases

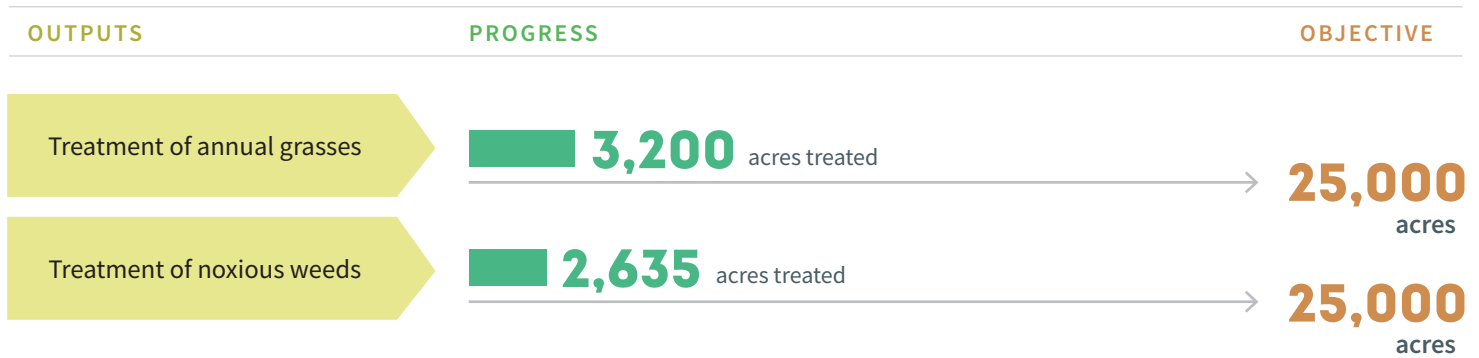
Long Term 10+ YEARS

- Sage-grouse population is stable or increases



FIP Initiative Progress, Biennium 1

Progress on metrics reflects implementation supported by OWEB funding, and does not represent all progress achieved via other funding sources.



Monitoring Approach

The partnership will utilize existing sage-grouse habitat monitoring methods to ensure consistency with statewide data collection in order to allow collected data to inform overall monitoring goals of Oregon's Sage-grouse Action Plan. The monitoring protocol has been developed and implemented.

Adaptive Management

Restoration

CHALLENGES

Understanding the need and realizing the logistics of establishing a permanent OHV wash station.



LESSONS LEARNED

Hurdles, including long-term maintenance, are issues that the FIP is working through with key partners. This has led us to explore temporary/portable options for a wash station.



ADAPTATIONS

Remaining flexible while maintaining the overarching goal of the project has been a beneficial exercise for key FIP partners. Working in this way ensures that the FIP is completing due diligence and exploring all options.

Monitoring

CHALLENGES

Determining in-house capacity for database development.



LESSONS LEARNED

Upon exploration of FIP database needs, contract capacity, and through communication with partners, we discovered that FIP partners may be best suited to develop the database in-house.



ADAPTATIONS

The FIP Coordinator and USFWS are collaborating to develop a database to track projects and cater to FIP needs in a workable and reportable database.

Engagement

CHALLENGES

Maintaining landowner engagement during COVID.



LESSONS LEARNED

The FIP had to adapt communication strategies. Prior relationship building with landowners and continuing engagement helped maintain open lines of communication and expand projects.



ADAPTATIONS

Increased virtual outreach through newsletters, virtual presentations, phone calls, fliers, and social media.

Undergoing leadership transitions at partnership organizations delayed some FIP priorities.



Strong collaboration and commitment from key FIP partners maintained momentum to initiate the project once leadership was back in place.



The FIP had to delay the hiring of a CCAA Coordinator for a year. The FIP will have to overcome this delay by hitting the ground running once a coordinator is hired, and have a high degree of coordination with other FIP partners to establish relationships.