



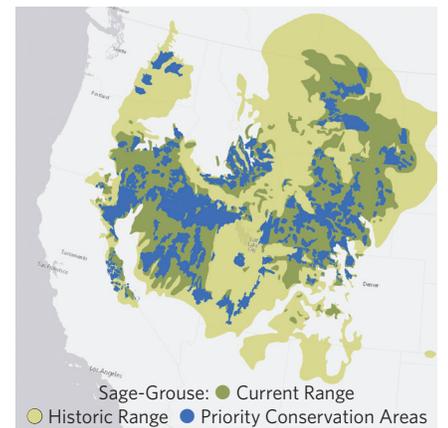
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# Greater Sage-Grouse in the Great Basin

## CONSERVING SAGE-GROUSE IN THE HEART OF THE WEST

The greater sage-grouse is the largest grouse in the Americas, making its home in the West's clean-scented high deserts and plains. At one time, the bird could be found in 13 states and three Canadian provinces, numbering as high as 16 million birds. Today, approximately 200,000 remain.

The sage-grouse lives in the heart of the American West with 350 other species of wildlife and plants. The Nature Conservancy has been working for decades with private and public partners to conserve this legacy bird and its Western habitat, to the benefit of the future generations who will inherit this land.



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### Innovative Partnership to Protect Sage-Grouse



© Joe Kiesecker

In an effort to conserve hundreds of thousands of acres of sagebrush to protect sage-grouse and other species, The Nature Conservancy is serving as a technical science advisor in a first-of-its kind agreement between the U.S. Department of Interior and Barrick-Gold Mining.

Under the agreement, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will manage the Nevada Barrick Sage-Grouse Bank, enabling Barrick to achieve “net conservation gain” when “debits” from future mining activities are compared to “credits” earned through voluntary conservation actions.

Utilizing the Sagebrush Conservation Forecasting Tool, which uses satellite imagery and predictive habitat modeling, the Conservancy will recommend restoration actions.

### Scientists Cook Up New Solutions



Science tech Danielle Rucco creates seedling pods with a pasta maker.  
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In recent years, wildfires have swept through the Great Basin, allowing invasive grasses to take hold and fuel even more frequent and widespread wildfires.

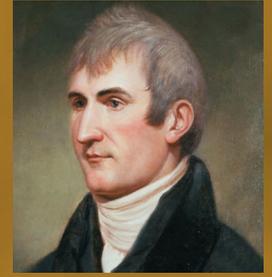
Reseeding native grasses—a fundamental trait of healthy sage-grouse habitat—is an expensive and often futile venture.

The Conservancy is partnering with the Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center to test various growing techniques, including repurposing an industrial pasta maker to create “seed pillows.” These nickel-sized pods contain a mix of compost, clay and starches that help native seedlings survive.

“These techniques can help native grass seeds survive in harsh, cold desert landscapes and take root before invasives take over,” said Conservancy scientist Jay Kerby.

*“The cock of the Plains is found in the plains of Columbia and are in Great abundance from the entrance of the S. E. fork of the Columbia [Snake River] to that of Clark’s river [Deschutes River].”*

—Meriwether Lewis, 1806



© Charles Peale



The golden eagle, pronghorn antelope, burrowing owl and badger are among the numerous animals that share habitat with the sage-grouse. Shown left to right: © William Burkett, © Chris Pague/TNC, © Michael Fuhr/TNC, © Paul Berquist



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**TIM GRIFFITHS** | West Regional Coordinator, Working Lands for Wildlife | USDA-NRCS

“The Nature Conservancy uses cutting edge science to help guide SGI investments, and resulting insights continually improve on-the-ground results.”



© Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

**MIKE CANNING** | Assistant Director | Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

“The Nature Conservancy has a long history of effective conservation in Utah. With its increasing focus on sage-grouse protection efforts, we look forward to working with The Nature Conservancy to protect critical habitat.”



© Ken Miracle

**DONNA BENNETT** | Rancher and Chair of the Owyhee Sage Grouse Local Working Group | Owyhee County, ID

“The Nature Conservancy has been a valued partner in the Owyhee Sage Grouse Local Working Group for over a decade. The Conservancy brings practical know-how and sound science to great projects that conserve the sage-grouse and win support from local ranchers. They have worked with many ranchers in the Owyhees, including assisting juniper control projects at Bull Basin and Anne Basin. The Conservancy has been an indispensable friend.”

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The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. [nature.org/sagegrouse](https://www.nature.org/sagegrouse)