



Conserving greater sage-grouse in South Central Washington

A WDFW wildlife diversity grant project

Greater sage-grouse are an iconic shrubsteppe species, serving as a key indicator of the health of sagebrush ecosystems. But their populations have significantly declined throughout their range due to habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation. Sage-grouse are listed as endangered in Washington and are a focal point of shrubsteppe conservation efforts across the West. This project conducts targeted surveys of sage-grouse on private lands in South Central Washington, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the full extent of sage-grouse distribution and populations in Washington.



Credit: Tom Koerner/USFWS

Project name: Conserving Greater Sage-Grouse in South Central Washington

Primary species benefitting: Greater sage-grouse

Grant total: \$110,614

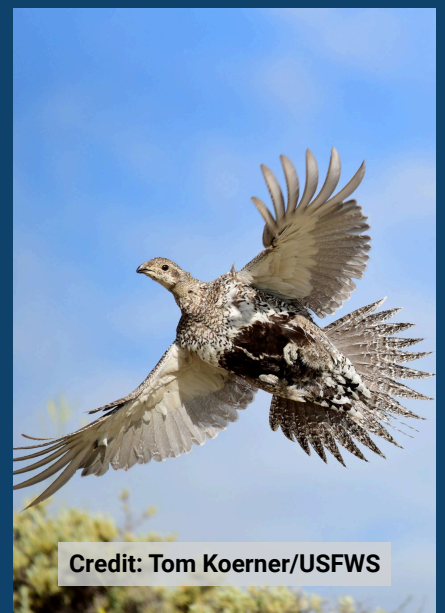
Grantee & associated entity: Seth Hulett, Audubon Washington

Webpage:

wa.audubon.org/conservation/working-lands

This project helps protect greater sage-grouse in Washington by identifying where these birds live and how to support their recovery. By surveying private lands in the Toppenish Ridge and Rattlesnake Hills Management Areas for the presence of sage-grouse, the project gathers essential data to guide habitat conservation and land management efforts. This work follows state recovery strategies and focuses on creating healthier landscapes for sage-grouse and other wildlife.

Surveys focus on up to 10 private properties with suitable habitat or unconfirmed sage-grouse reports, leveraging partnerships with WDFW and landowners to gather essential conservation planning data. The project will also work closely with landowners to implement sage-grouse-friendly management practices, supporting habitat restoration and sustainable land use.



Credit: Tom Koerner/USFWS



Credit: WDFW

Project goals and outcomes

- Collaborate with WDFW to develop and implement survey methods to properly assess sage-grouse presence in project areas.
- Establish a reliable inventory program to assess and protect sage-grouse populations in the Toppenish Ridge and Rattlesnake Hills Management Areas.
- Submit survey data to WDFW and compile a comprehensive project summary report.
- Engage landowners to adopt habitat conservation practices, including enrollment in programs like Audubon Conservation Ranching, and provide technical assistance for sustainable management.
- Raise awareness by creating educational materials and hosting events, ensuring landowners and conservation partners are informed and motivated to take part in sage-grouse conservation.

Integrating with long-term grouse recovery efforts

This project directly contributes to the efforts described in the Washington State Recovery Plan for the Greater Sage-Grouse by focusing on understudied regions in South Central Washington where sage-grouse have been historically observed. Filling the data gap in these areas will guide effective habitat restoration and management decisions, enhancing sage-grouse recovery across the state.

The project also aligns with the long-term strategy of the Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI), which emphasizes the importance of habitat protection, landowner engagement, and landscape threats like wildfire. By collaborating with private landowners and utilizing conservation programs like Audubon’s Conservation Ranching program, the project works to promote sustainable land management practices that support sage-grouse, but also biodiversity and climate resilience.



Credit: Tom Koerner/USFWS

This project was funded by WDFW through the [Wildlife Diversity Grant Program](#).

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