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 sagebrush 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


**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)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Enrollment</th>
<th>Weed Treatment &amp; Prevention</th>
<th>Restoration &amp; Planning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 LAND OWNERS ENROLLED IN HABITAT PROGRAMS</td>
<td>3,320 ACRES OF ANNUAL GRASSES TREATED</td>
<td>3 PLANNING MEETINGS FOR STRATEGIC FUEL BREAK PLAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill Information Gaps</td>
<td>2,635 ACRES OF NOXIOUS WEEDS TREATED</td>
<td>1 SITE-SPECIFIC PLAN FOR THE CCAA IS COMPLETED</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 WEST NILE VIRUS HOT SPOT SAMPLING SITES IDENTIFIED AND ADDED</td>
<td>1 OHV WASH STATION PRELIMINARY PLAN COMPLETED</td>
<td>1 SAGE-GROUSE COMPATIBLE GRAZING ANALYSIS COMPLETED</td>
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<td>5 ALTERNATIVE FORAGE OPTION ANALYSIS MEETINGS HELD</td>
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**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs Progress Objective</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment of annual grasses</td>
<td>3,200 acres treated</td>
<td>→ 25,000 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment of noxious weeds</td>
<td>2,635 acres treated</td>
<td>→ 25,000 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Challenges**

**Restoration**

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**

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**

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.

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.