



2011 Annual Report

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Sage-Grouse Initiative

This report contains fiscal year activity for the state of Colorado from the time period of October 2010 to September 2011.

Who We Are

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and others care for the land. NRCS has six mission goals that include high quality, productive soils; clean and abundant water; healthy plant and animal communities; clean air; an adequate energy supply; and working farms and ranchlands.

Vision

Productive Lands -
Healthy Environment

Mission

Helping People Help the Land

“The purpose of the Sage-Grouse Initiative is to enhance and preserve Sage-Grouse habitat and the sustainability of working ranches in Colorado.

Sage Grouse Program Manager

Fiscal Year 2011 Sage Grouse Initiative Program

Statewide Activities

Number of Applications Contracted	1
Dollar Amount Approved.....	\$91,821
Acres under Contract	3,377

The Program

The Sage-Grouse Initiative is a program offered in 11 Western states under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

The purpose is to provide assistance to agricultural producers to implement practices that will alleviate or reduce threats to sage-grouse habitat.

The Sage-Grouse are ground-dwelling birds, native to the sagebrush steppe ecosystem of the American West. They are found at elevations ranging from 4,000 to over 9,000 feet and are highly dependent on sagebrush for cover and food. Over the decades they have experienced a significant decline in population and habitat.

The Assistance

Successful applicants will receive funding to implement priority conservation practices designed to improve natural resource conditions.

Not only do these practices offer significant environmental benefits, but they are also important to growers.

Practices that can be applied include:

- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management

- Stockwater
- Pipelines
- Fences
- Fence Marking

The Qualifications

NRCS utilized its Environmental Quality Incentive’s Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentive’s Program (WHIP) to implement the initiative and although a conservation plan was not required for enrollment, all applications that included an NRCS approved conservation plan, received priority status for enrollment consideration.

Colorado landowners within Moffat, Delta, Eagle, Garfield, Mesa, Gunnison, Grand, Summit, Rio Blanco, Montrose, Routt, Jackson, Saguache, San Miguel, and Dolores were affected by the Sage-Grouse Initiative. Staff developed conservation plans aimed to improve Sage Grouse habitat.

For More Information

Visit our web site at www.co.nrcs.usda.gov.



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NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAM SUCCESS STORIES

Protecting Sage Grouse Habitat

The only two places in the world the Gunnison Sage-grouse can be found are on the Western slope of Colorado and in a small portion of Southeastern Utah.

Colorado, however, hosts the largest population of the species. The protection of sage-grouse habitat has been one of NRCS in Colorado's highest priorities for nearly a decade. The state hosts two species in the Sage-grouse family including the Gunnison as well as the Greater.

Over the past 10 years, the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CDPW) placed the sage-grouse on its "species of concern list," and as a result, NRCS strengthened its partnerships with the agency to help support efforts to conserve sage-grouse habitat.

NRCS has not only partnered with CDPW, but also Partners in Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Wild Turkey Federation, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), local Conservation Districts, landowners and numerous other stakeholders to map and enhance habitat as well as conserve it through easements.

NRCS conservation efforts to improve habitat for sage-grouse include the use and implementation of prescribed grazing systems, range planting, brush/pinon-juniper management, cross fencing and fence marking. NRCS efforts in 2010 and 2011 alone saw the treatment of nearly 40,000 acres.



Escape ramp installed in watering tank to assist sage grouse out of structure.