

# Natural Resources Long Range Strategy for Harney County

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FY2016 – FY2020

# Status of Revision

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## 2015 Local Work Group Meeting:

- Received input on priorities for FY2016-2020 including suggestions for revising existing priorities

## 2016 Local Work Group Meeting:

- Presented revised priorities and desired future outcomes

## 2017 Local Work Group Meeting:

- Presented draft objectives for each priority
- Changed from numbered priorities to bulleted priorities

## Next Steps:

- Revise actual Long Range Strategy document

# Priority Resource Problems

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- Harney Basin Aquatic Ecosystem Function
- Medusahead Rye
- Riparian Condition in the Silvies Water Quality Demonstration Area
- Ground Water Availability
- Juniper Encroachment

# Harney Basin Aquatic Ecosystem Function

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**Desired Future Outcome:** To improve and maintain aquatic health and the condition of flood-irrigated habitats in order to improve habitat conditions for migratory birds in the Harney Basin.

**Objective 1:** Reduce and maintain carp populations at a level that allows for good water quality, healthy native aquatic plant and animal communities, and adequate food resources for migratory bird populations.

**Objective 2:** Secure 10,300 acres of flood-irrigated habitat in the Harney Basin through either conservation easements or through practices that improve management ability and reduce the incentive for converting to other uses by September 30, 2020.

- Improve management ability and reduce the incentive for converting to other uses on 5,000 acres.
- Secure 5,300 acres of privately owned wet meadow habitat under working land conservation easements.

Conservation Implementation Strategy for  
Harney Basin Aquatic Health Improvement

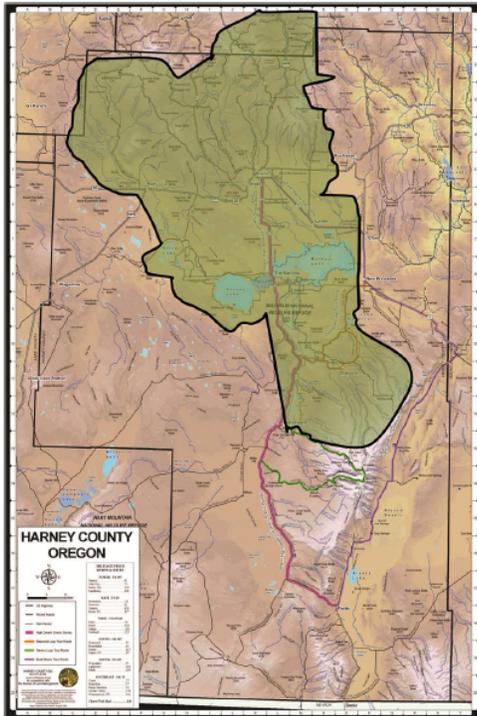
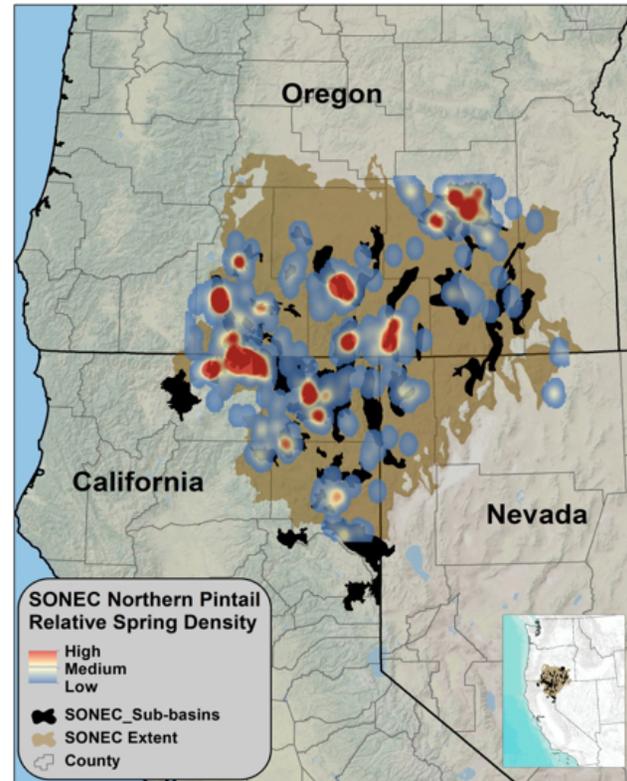


Figure 1. Area of Interest for Harney Basin Aquatic Health Improvement Project

Conservation Implementation Strategy for  
Working Lands Waterbird|Habitat Conservation in the SONEC region



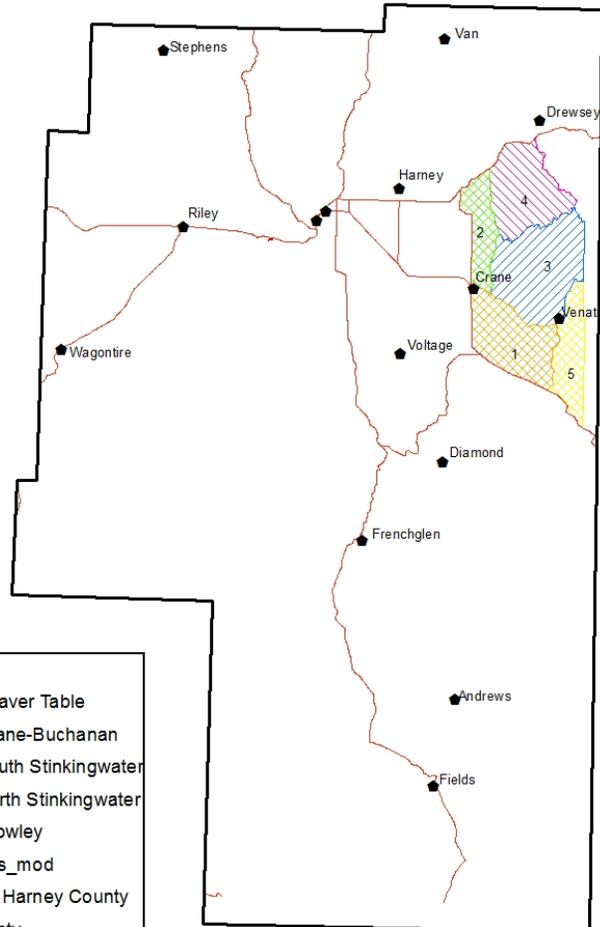
# Medusahead Rye

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**Desired Future Outcome:** Land managers adopt and implement integrated pest management (IPM) methods in order to reduce and maintain medusahead populations to levels that are economically and ecologically sustainable.

**Objective:** Work collaboratively with private and public land managers in the Stinkingwater Medusahead Management Area to contain the medusahead infestation, compartmentalize treatment areas, and achieve a significant reduction in the amount of medusahead infested acres.

IPM in the Stinkingwater Medusahead Management Plan Area:  
Phase Areas 1 through 5



- Legend**
-  Phase 1: Beaver Table
  -  Phase 2: Crane-Buchanan
  -  Phase 3: South Stinkingwater
  -  Phase 4: North Stinkingwater
  -  Phase 5: Crowley
  -  harney\_cities\_mod
  -  Highways in Harney County
  -  Harney County

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# Riparian Condition in the Silvies Water Quality Demonstration Area

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**Desired Future Outcome:** In 5 years, 60% of stream miles on private agricultural lands in the Silvies watershed are in Ecological State A, and 40% of stream miles in lower ecological states exhibit improving trends in ecological condition.

**Objective 1:** Assess riparian conditions on private agricultural lands in the Silvies watershed.

**Objective 2:** Conduct outreach and education to inform landowners of regulatory requirements and benefits of functioning riparian systems.

**Objective 3:** Conduct inventories on degraded riparian areas to document pre-treatment conditions.

**Objective 4:** Implement treatments to improve riparian condition.

**Objective 5:** Conduct monitoring to document results of treatments and track progress toward achieving the desired future outcome.

**SILVIES RIVER WATERSHED DEMONSTRATION AREA: Action Plan**

Harney Basin Ag Water Quality Management Area

Harney SWCD – July 2013-June 2015

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. Description of Watershed**

Silvies subbasin (4<sup>th</sup> field HUC) is contained in the Malheur Lake Basin (3<sup>rd</sup> field HUC). The Silvies subbasin drains approximately 1,350 square miles. It is approximately 60 miles long and 23 miles wide. The Silvies River originates in the Blue Mountains of Grant County and flows to Malheur Lake in Harney County; it is a closed basin. Silvies subbasin is 844,976 acres in size with 554,151 of those acres in Harney County. This area (within Harney County) will be referred to as the Silvies River Watershed Demonstration Area). Within Harney County, the Silvies River runs 202.2 stream miles. Land ownership is 40% private and 60% public.

Agriculture in the watershed largely consists of feed crops for livestock. Commercial crop production is restricted by a short growing season and is predominantly limited to hearty varieties of alfalfa, pasture mix, wild hay/native meadow hay (which is flood irrigated by the Silvies River and surrounding tributaries),

Figure 1. Silvies River Watershed Demonstration Area



# Ground Water Availability

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**Desired Future Outcome:** To ensure the continued availability of ground water for sustainable beneficial use in the Harney Basin.

**Objective 1:** Complete a ground water assessment to identify aquifer boundaries, recharge sources and rates, and quantify water demand.

**Objective 2:** Identify aquifers that are currently being depleted or face imminent risk of depletion.

**Objective 3:** Identify opportunities to reduce water withdrawals from depleting or at risk aquifers while still allowing for beneficial use.

**Objective 4:** Implement structural and management practices to reduce water use.

**Objective 5:** Establish a monitoring program to continue to evaluate the status of water aquifers.

# Juniper Encroachment

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**Desired Future Outcome:** To improve ecological condition and wildlife habitat by removing encroaching western juniper on 30,000 acres of private land in Harney County by the end of 2020.

**Objective 1:** Treat 20,000 acres of Phase 1 and 2 invasive juniper on private lands in high priority sage grouse habitat.

**Objective 2:** Treat 5,000 acres of Phase 1 and 2 invasive juniper on private lands to improve mule deer habitat and/or improve forest health.

**Objective 3:** Treat 5,000 acres of Phase 3 invasive juniper on private lands to improve range health, reduce erosion, and improve surface water quality.

# Sage Grouse Initiative

Oregon Implementation Strategy (2014 - 2019)



*A strategic approach to conserving sage grouse, sagebrush ecosystems, and working landscapes*

**USDA** United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service



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