Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership

Sagebrush country in southwestern Montana is home to multi-generational family ranches intermixed with public land that supports vital recreational economies, all anchored by this native landscape and the ecological processes it supports.

Locally Led

Partnership Based
Ranchers and small business owners, together with the State of Montana and federal agencies, local conservation districts, and non-governmental organizations began a series of coordinated sagebrush restoration and rangeland health projects in the region.

Leveraged Funding
Over $1.8 million in projects implemented since 2018
Over $1.5 million in competitive research grants applied to assess the effects of conservation actions

What was accomplished?

Job Creation
4 new small contractors engaged in restoration work, with the opportunity to work year-round.

3 new start-up companies supported by this area's partnership conservation work.

Locally based Youth Employment Program created in 2021. This program will serve as a Conservation Corps made of local youth and young adults who will have an opportunity to make an hourly wage and contribute to their community and households.

Innovation
Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership is working with the wood products industry to pilot innovative ways to improve utilization of small diameter materials and biomass.

Partnership Coordinator Sean Claffey helped put together a field crew comprised of unemployed fishing guides who were out of work due to the pandemic.

Conservation
50 miles of fencing modified to become wildlife-friendly

48,000 acres under permanent conservation easement since 2018

22,831 acres of conifer expansion removed to restore habitat diversity and forage opportunities. This includes over 10,000 acres of prescribed fire across private and public lands.

7.6 miles of wet meadow habitat preserved/restored and

868 structures installed to slow water and preserve wet meadow habitats for natural storage

Building Common Ground by Working Together:
Ranchers, land managers, hunters, anglers, and other outdoor recreation groups all benefit when the land is healthy.

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