

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Determination for Issuing a Single Source Financial Assistance Award

Instructions: In accordance with Service policy 516 FW 6, *Issuing Discretionary Grant and Cooperative Agreement Awards without Competition*, complete this form to document the justification for issuing a single source grant or cooperative agreement award. This form must be signed by both a program representative and the employee with signature authority for the award to be issued (see 516 FW 3, *Signature Authority for Grant and Cooperative Agreement Awards*). The completed and signed form must be maintained in the official award file.

Recipient Name: Oregon State University Extension Service
Project Title: Grazing Season of Use Effects on Sagebrush Obligate Avian Habitat
Program Contact: Dustin Johnson

Select all criteria that apply (from 505 DM 2):

☒	(1) Unsolicited Proposal: The proposed award is the result of an unsolicited application that represents a unique or innovative idea, method, or approach that is not the subject of a current or planned award, but is found to be advantageous to program objectives.
☐	(2) Continuation: The activity to be funded is necessary for the satisfactory completion of, or is a continuation of, an activity we are funding and holding a competition would have a significant adverse effect on continuing or completing the activity.
☐	(3) Legislative Intent: The language in the applicable authorizing legislation or legislative history clearly indicates the intent of Congress to restrict the award to a particular recipient or purpose.
☒	(4) Unique Qualifications: The applicant is uniquely qualified to perform the activity based on a variety of demonstrable factors such as location; property ownership; voluntary support capacity; cost-sharing ability, if applicable; technical expertise; or other such unique qualifications.
☐	(5) Emergencies: Because of a compelling and unusual urgency, or substantial danger to health or safety, there is not enough time to follow adequate competitive procedures.

Explain below why competition for this award is not practical. As applicable, summarize the program legislative history, unique capabilities of the proposed recipient, and any cost-sharing contribution offered by the proposed recipient. Be brief and specific:

Oregon State University and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been collaborating on issues related to sage-grouse and sage steppe habitat conservation, along with a diverse group of partners, in southeast Oregon since 2011 to develop and begin the implementation of several Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances for sage-grouse. This partnership makes OSU staff uniquely qualified to complete this valuable research on livestock grazing that will further our knowledge base and improve our recommendations on grazing management to private and federal stakeholders. OSU faculty serve as a vital conduit to the local ranching.

I have determined that this project meets the requirements for a single source award and recommend that it be awarded to the recipient named above.

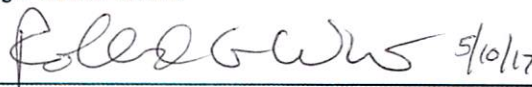
 4/19/17

Program Representative Sign and Date

Paul Henson

Printed Name of Program Representative

I, as the Service employee with signature authority for this award under 516 FW 3, have reviewed this program recommendation and find that it meets the requirements for a single source award.

 5/10/17

Authorized Signator Sign and Date

Rolland G. White Asst. Dir. Ecological Services

Printed Name of Signator

Grazing Season of Use Effects on Sagebrush Obligate Avian Habitat

The sage-steppe ecosystem is currently under threat from landscape scale processes including invasion by annual grasses, an unprecedented rise in wildfire, and encroachment by conifers that have reduced its size by 50% in the past 150 years. Such extensive habitat reduction has led to declines in several sagebrush obligate wildlife species and generated an intense focus on how remaining sagebrush should be managed. Livestock grazing is the predominant land use in the sagebrush ecosystem and an important economic driver in the region. As such, it is a central factor considered in most sagebrush habitat conservation planning efforts. However, surprisingly, a dearth of information is available for understanding the influence of common contemporary grazing practices on sagebrush habitats and associated obligate wildlife species over both short and long time scales. Land managers will need a better understanding of these interactions to support decision-making that contributes to sustainability in both agriculture and sage-steppe ecosystems.

The objectives of this study are to assess the influence of three grazing regimes in sagebrush habitat on (1) seed availability, (2) bunchgrass response, (3) potential nesting cover, (4) recruitment of desired plant species, (5) plant community composition and structure, and (6) abundance, nest density, and nest success of sagebrush-obligate songbirds.

Land managers' ability to effectively maintain healthy sage-steppe ecosystems that ensure the sustainability of agriculture, and provide adequate habitat for all sagebrush obligate avian species, depends on effective management strategies that provide for important habitat parameters. One common criticism of previous work focusing on sage-steppe habitat is the inability of studies to directly connect various habitat metrics to the sagebrush-obligate wildlife species that depend on them. While our study will not be of a sufficient scale to assess direct impacts on sage-grouse nest success, we intend to quantify differences in Brewer's sparrow, sagebrush sparrow, and sage thrasher abundance, nest density, and nest success. We propose to test the effects of different grazing practices on the structure and composition of sagebrush plant communities while concurrently monitoring their relative influences on sagebrush-obligate songbirds.

This research will fill important knowledge gaps that currently exist around the short- and long-term effects of different grazing regimes on plant community and habitat characteristics of sagebrush rangelands. This research will also fill a sizeable knowledge gap related to the influence of grazing on sagebrush-obligate songbird abundance and nest success. This is the kind of information that is desperately needed to help rangeland owners and managers identify and implement management practices that are sustainable for both grazing and sagebrush obligate avian species in the sagebrush ecosystem.

Projected Costs:

Item	Cost
Student Summer Labor Cost	\$14,000.00
Fuel for travel to Sites	\$300.00
Fence Building	\$6,000.00
Fencing Supplies	\$7,000.00
Audio Recorders	\$3,000.00
Total prior to Overhead	\$30,300.00
Overhead 17.5%	\$5,302.50
Total Funding Request	\$35,602.50