

INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT
Between the
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
and the
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Subject: SWAT Sage Grouse Initiative

- I. **THIS AGREEMENT**, is entered into between the Fish and Wildlife Service, Intermountain West Joint Venture hereinafter called “FWS” and the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, hereinafter called “NRCS”.
- II. **Authority:** Economy Act 31, U.S.C. 1535, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), 16 U.S.C. 3839aa-3839aa-9, 3841, 7 CFR Part 1466 (CFDA 10.912); Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), 16 U.S.C. 3839bb-1, 7 CFR part 636 (CFDA 10.914); Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA), 16 U.S.C. 590a-590f, 590q, 7 CFR part 610 (CFDA 10.902)
- III. **Purpose:** The goal of Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) is to sustain working ranches and conserve sage grouse in 11 western states. SGI targets conservation delivery within high sage grouse abundance centers or “core areas” to help maintain large and intact grazing lands by applying conservation practices to maximize the biological return on conservation investments. Landowners benefit by knowing that if sage grouse are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), they can continue to implement approved conservation measures and still be within full compliance of ESA.
- IV. **Mutual Interest:** The FWS and NRCS have a mutual interest in conservation and wise use of land, water, plants and related resources.
- V. **Objectives:**
 - Increase field-level capacity by placing specialized human skill sets at critical geographic ‘pinch points’ to increase SGI benefits.
 - Increase science capacity to better focus SGI implementation, assess biological outcomes, and continually improve program delivery.
 - Improve and enhance outreach and communication strategies to increase partner buy-in and SGI participation from landowners.
 - Expand SGI partnership to further leverage NRCS contributions resulting in increased outcomes and participation.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES

A. NRCS will:

1. Reimburse FWS \$4,000,000.00 towards the costs of this agreement.
2. Provide training to FWS to ensure the scope of work is being accomplished.
3. Provide administrative guidance for positions that focus on the NRCS Sage Grouse initiative.

B. FWS will:

1. FWS will provide NRCS \$2,254,000.00 towards the costs of this agreement.
2. Provide technical assistance to further the conservation and protection of Sage-Grouse habitat in the priority locations of California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.
3. Provide guidance and logistical support to the Sage Grouse Teams and Board of Directors.
4. Provide contracts, conduct interviews, and select positions supporting the Sage Grouse Initiative.
5. Provide training to partners to ensure the scope of work is being accomplished.

VII. CONTACTS:

A. Fish and Wildlife

Technical

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Administrative

Theresa Bates. FWS Administrative Officer, Mountain-Prairie Region
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B. Natural Resources Conservations Service

Technical

Tim Griffiths, NRCS Sage-grouse Imitative Coordinator
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Administrative

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VII. DELIVERABLES:

- Hire 16 three-year, non-federal conservation practitioners (range conservationists, biologists, and cultural resources specialists) to increase delivery of SGI programs within sage-grouse core areas to maximize benefits. Specifically, increased capacity will help NRCS achieve:
 - o 615,000 acres of rangeland improvement to increase sage-grouse hiding cover during nesting season. Additional grass cover is expected to increase sage-grouse populations 8-10%.
 - o Removal of 38,400 acres of encroaching conifer in key nesting, brood-rearing and wintering sites. Cuttings will remove tall structures from otherwise suitable sage-grouse habitat where re-colonization and increased bird abundance is anticipated.
 - o Mark or move 180 miles of 'high risk' fence near leks where sage-grouse breed, preventing 800-1,000 fence collisions annually. This is equivalent to all male sage-grouse counted on most recent surveys on leks in Alberta, Saskatchewan, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Washington combined.
- Science based evaluations carried out by reputable, independent scientists have been initiated to measure biological response of sage-grouse to improved grazing management, removal of encroached conifer, and the marking and moving of fences. NRCS CEAP and CIG grants helped to initiate these evaluations but SWAT science capacity will be used to complete

science evaluations. Resulting scientific publications will document SGI effectiveness and help adaptable improve program delivery.

- Increase communications and outreach by creating and maintaining a dedicated website and Facebook page for the Sage Grouse Initiative. SGI website will provide overview of SGI, announcements, accomplishments, current status of national projects, updates, SGI-sponsored research, news, and hosts project location map with hot links to selected projects for success stories. Website offers convenient place for downloads of video and audio clips, photos, guides, upcoming events, etc. Website links to State specific NRCS SGI pages, SGI Facebook, and partner websites. SGI Facebook provides similar features as SGI Website but targets a potentially different social media outlet.
- Strengthen the SGI by building and maintaining partnerships that result in additional funds contributed to SGI capacity; support NRCS staff in coordinating SGI implementation among a diverse array of wildlife conservation partners including 11 state fish and wildlife agencies and at least 10 non-governmental conservation organizations or corporations; and effectively manage contracts and agreements to facilitate the objectives of the SWAT.

IV. RESOURCES REQUIRED

Budget Summary

Task	Partner Contribution	NRCS SWAT Contribution	Total Funding
Grazing management support	\$843,000	\$1,240,250	\$2,083,250
Wildlife biology support	\$737,625	\$1,085,219	\$1,822,844
Cultural resource support	\$105,375	\$155,031	\$260,406
Capacity coordinator	\$132,500	\$190,666	\$323,166
Program effectiveness evaluations	\$0	\$440,000	\$440,000
Decision support products	\$78,000	\$375,832	\$453,832
Communications support	\$65,000	\$268,802	\$333,802
SWAT Management	\$292,500	\$244,200	\$536,700
Total	\$2,254,000	\$4,000,000	\$6,254,000

V. TERMS

It is mutually agreed:

1. This agreement becomes effective on May 1, 2011 and will remain in effect until December 1, 2014.
2. This agreement may be amended or modified by a written amendment, modification, or revision to the agreement through an exchange of correspondence between authorized officials of Fish and Wildlife and NRCS.
3. This agreement may be terminated by either party by written notice to the other party or parties at least 30 days in advance of the effective date of the termination.
4. By signing this agreement the participants agree to abide by all applicable federal laws, regulations, and executive orders.
5. The Servicing Agency will obtain reimbursement from the Customer Agency via use of the Intergovernmental Payment and Collection System (IPAC) on a monthly basis. The Servicing Agency will reference the following accounting citations when IPAC transactions are processed:

FWS IAG NO.
APPROPRIATION NO.
AGENCY LOCATION CODE:
DUNS NO.
OBJECT CLASS:

NRCS IAG NO. 67-3A75-11-XXX
APPROPRIATION NO.
AGENCY LOCATION CODE: 12-40-1600
DUNS NO. 19 603 5430
OBJECT CLASS: 2510

VI. APPROVAL

The undersigned parties hereby agree to the terms and conditions specified above.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Signature

Date

Fish and Wildlife Service

Signature

Date