

State of Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Initiative

Nevada's large sagebrush ecosystem is uniquely important to the Silver State. In addition to being home to much of Nevada's wildlife, the sagebrush landscape provides many recreational activities to residents and visitors, as well as opportunities for the renewable energy development, ranching and mining that are vital to Nevada's economy. This landscape is also home to the Greater Sage-grouse, a species now being evaluated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for potential listing as an endangered species due to a decline in its numbers.

The FY 15-17 Biennial Budget continues, and more importantly builds on, the commitment made last biennium to support a Nevada-based approach to managing the threats to the sagebrush landscape in the state. This includes the ongoing work of the multi-stakeholder Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Council, the state's Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team – a multi-disciplinary, interagency state team representing and involving the Departments of Wildlife, Agriculture and Conservation and Natural Resources, and the on-the-ground work of the state's multiple conservation districts under the direction of the State Conservation Commission.

To specifically address the threats to the sagebrush steppe environment in Nevada, and to work as productively as possible with the federal agencies that manage the majority of the land in the state, the Council and the Technical Team are incorporating and applying the best available science through the program's plan and strategic actions. This includes developing state-of-the-art habitat mapping tools in coordination with the United State Geological Survey and the development of a cutting-edge conservation tool, known as the Nevada Conservation Credit System. This system, when combined with the new mapping information, provides transparent, consistent and strategic decision-making on habitat protection, high priority restoration projects and the potential to avoid, minimize or mitigate activities that cannot be located outside of Greater Sage-grouse habitat.

The importance of this ecosystem in Nevada, and the need to address its decline and the resultant impact on any and all species, is recognized in this budget through dedicated general funds in support of the Council, the Technical Team and the Conservation District specialists, as well as additional support for the Conservation Credit System to fund ongoing adaptive management additions and modifications based on science and experience. Most importantly, included is a major state commitment of \$1 million each year to capitalize the credit system through immediate project work that will both help prevent additional harm, and restore damage already done, to the sagebrush ecosystem. This project work is also bolstered by the addition of the funding necessary to support rapid document development to expedite federal permitting of these natural resource projects. Further, the budget contains a commitment to help ensure the state is able to maximize its Conservation Camp Program and the program's utilization of professional staff that train and supervise inmates in fighting wildland fire and performing natural resource project work on behalf of the state and its citizens.

State of Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Program Initiative FY 15-17 Biennium

Budget Account	Department/ Division	Decision Unit	Description	Governor Recommends General Fund	
				FY16	FY17
4150	DCNR Administration	E851	Primary Components of Sagebrush Ecosystem Program	1,454,970	1,453,970
			Capitalize Conservation Credit System for Habitat Project Work	1,000,000	1,000,000
			National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Permitting Contract for Resource Projects	125,000	125,000
			Conservation Credit System Adaptive Management / System Maintenance Contract	250,000	250,000
			Annual Contract - Independent Conservation Credit System Audit	0	25,000
Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Pay and Meeting Travel / Technical Team Project Travel IT Hardware/Software	52,770	52,770			
4150	DCNR Administration	E852	Change Team Operating to Full General Fund	85,573	85,573
4150	DCNR Administration	E901	Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team Program Manager	77,210	79,739
			Change Funding for Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team Program Manager to Full General Fund Transfer Funding for Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team Program Manager	57,908	59,804
4151	Conservation Districts	E852	Change Funding for Three Conservation Staff Regional Specialists to Full General Fund	180,018	130,426
4151	Conservation Districts	M150	Change Funding for Three Conservation Staff Regional Specialists to Full General Fund	0	43,808
4151	Conservation Districts	E851	Increase Project Travel for Three Conservation Staff Regional Specialists	3,741	3,741
4173	State Lands	E901	Transfer Funding for Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team Program Manager	(19,302)	(19,935)
4173	State Lands	E852	Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team Environmental Scientist to Full General Fund	52,072	53,922
4195	Forestry	E852	Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team Forester to Full General Fund	68,861	68,765
4198	Forestry Camps	E813	Increase Recruitment and Retention of Critical Wildfire Suppression and Project Crew Supervisors	0	413,421
4540	Dept. of Agriculture	E226	Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team Conservation Staff Specialist to Full General Fund	46,707	46,557
FISCAL YEAR TOTALS - General Fund Enhancements for Sagebrush Ecosystem Program				1,949,850	2,359,987

Additional Non-General Fund for Initiative - FY 15-17 Biennium

--	Dept. of Wildlife	--	Non-Executive Budget Commitment for Habitat Suitability Mapping	375,000	375,000
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