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SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL

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Predator control has been proven to be the most important tool to save the sage hen. There are many factual, scientific predation management plans based on data that were made by responsible scientists to prove this. Back history of sage hen numbers also proves this.

Nevada at one time had two million (2,000,000) sheep. Today we have about 60,000.

In the past years when there were millions of sheep on the range there were millions of sage hen and deer on the same range. Sage hen numbers increased because of changes to habitat that came with grazing and from predator control by the sheepherders.

The sheepmen started the predation management plan and later had the help of the government, which was called the Wildlife Service. There were thousands of sheep herders with rifles and traps which helped control predators. Also the sheepmen pay a tax of 2 cents per head to help on the program.

The federal government and the state of Nevada have cut their predator control money and work force by two-thirds. Now with fewer sheepherders and fewer government trappers we have fewer sage hen.

Cattle have replaced the sheep on the ranges and with fewer sheep there is less money available from sheepmen alone to control predators; everyone must help with the cost of predator control if we are going to increase the sage hen.

As we discussed at the Bi-State sage hen meeting February 8, 2013:

The Secretary of Interior should take into account the extent to which grazing yields public benefits over and above those accruing to the users of the forage resource for livestock purposes. We need to keep multiple use principles. We want the State and local governments to be able to make decisions on our grazing because they live here and better understand our problems.