



Nevada Department of Wildlife Expands Restoration Efforts



The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) has dedicated a significant amount of time and funds to restore sagebrush rangelands and habitats. After the 2006 wildfire season, NDOW coordinated with many private landowners to restore vegetation on private lands in burned habitats. Approximately 175,000 acres of private land burned in the 2006 fires and NDOW was able to assist in the restoration of more than 25,000 acres of burned private lands and about 5000 acres of federal lands containing critical wildlife habitat.

To combat the many threats to rangeland habitats such as wildfire, cheatgrass invasion, and pinyon-juniper (P-J) expansion, NDOW has committed to continue its restoration efforts on an annual basis. During heavy fire years, efforts will focus on quick reseedling of burned habitat. When fires do not create a critical need, restoration efforts will continue in the form of cheatgrass conversion, green stripping, seedling plantings, and P-J removal in important sagebrush habitats.

Cheatgrass will be attacked from many angles including the use of herbicides such as Plateau, and seeding of native species and introduced forages that

are known to compete well with cheatgrass. Initially, cheatgrass conversion will focus on private rangelands that have been impacted by cheatgrass. NDOW is seeking private land partners to implement large scale cheatgrass conversion projects. Interested landowners are encouraged to contact Dave Pulliam, NDOW Habitat Bureau Chief at (775) 688-1560 or email at dpulliam@ndow.org.

The cumulative impacts of fire, cheatgrass, and P-J cause a loss of over one million acres per year of sagebrush habitats. Efforts to protect and restore rangeland habitats must be expanded. Nevada's economy and rural communities cannot afford to lose its sagebrush rangelands and associated wildlife.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) is responsible for the protection, restoration and management of fish and wildlife resources, and the promotion of fishing, hunting, and boating safety. NDOW's wildlife and habitat conservation efforts are primarily funded by sportsmen's license purchases and a federal tax on hunting and fishing gear. Support wildlife and habitat conservation in Nevada by purchasing a hunting, fishing, or combination license. For more information, see NDOW's web site at www.ndow.org.

Turning the tide will require

- ✓ Protecting habitat & water resources
- ✓ Re-seeding burned habitats that are not likely to return to natural vegetation.
- ✓ Contact invasive plant communities to return them to natural plant communities

Cooperation among land management agencies exists and can be realized around a properly funded restoration program magnifying the restoration efforts of all.

The threats are great and increasing. Efforts to protect and restore habitats must be expanded. Nevada cannot afford to lose its sagebrush habitats and associated wildlife. Without restoration, Nevada's economy, rural, and agricultural communities will be significantly impacted to the detriment of the entire state.

Nevada is facing unprecedented threats to its wildlife, rural communities, agriculture, public safety, and outdoor recreation. The State is losing its natural vegetation and dependent resources at an alarming rate. The greatest of these threats include wildfire, invasive annual

invasive non-native annual grasses like cheatgrass and red brome displace native plants, increase the fire return interval, and provide very poor forage and wildlife habitat.

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and forbs. Soils under P-J lose the capability to trap, store, and slowly release water and are more prone to erosion. Dense stands of P-J are highly susceptible to fire with very poor post-fire regeneration. While P-J can provide thermal cover for wildlife, the forage and habitat value is minimal when compared to the sagebrush habitats it is displacing.

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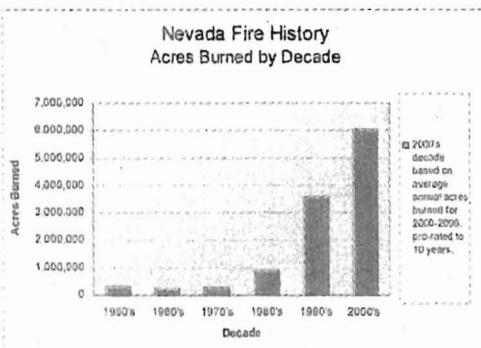
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Sagebrush Threats

Nevada is facing unprecedented threats to its wildlife, rural communities, agriculture, public safety, and outdoor recreation. The State is losing its natural vegetation and dependent resources at an alarming rate. The greatest of these threats include wildfire, invasive annual grasses, and pinyon-juniper encroachment. These threats are decimating the sagebrush ecosystems that have made Nevada the unique, great State it is.

Wildfire

The chart below shows the rapid increase in wildfire's impact. Prior to the 1980's, burned lands averaged less than 25,000 acres per year. Nevada's average acres burned per year has steadily increased by twenty-four times to the current average of more than 600,000 acres burned per year.

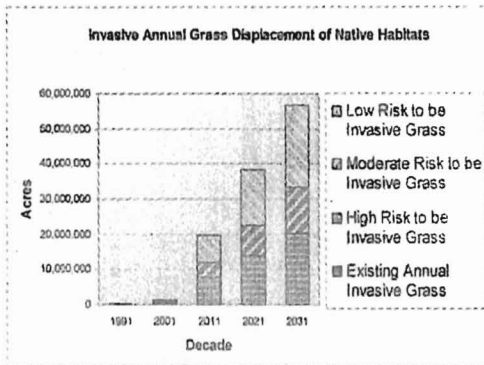


Fire fighting expenditures and threats to public safety have dramatically increased, while native species populations, grazing lands, and wildlife habitat have declined.

Cheatgrass Conversion

Invasive non-native annual grasses like cheatgrass and red brome displace native plants, increase the fire return interval, and provide very poor forage and wildlife habitat.

Nevada currently has over 1.2 million acres dominated by invasive grasses. Dr. Wisdom's book, "Habitat Threats in the Sagebrush Ecosystem" estimates that Nevada is at high risk to lose an average of 600,000+ acres per year over the next 30 years to invasive grasses.

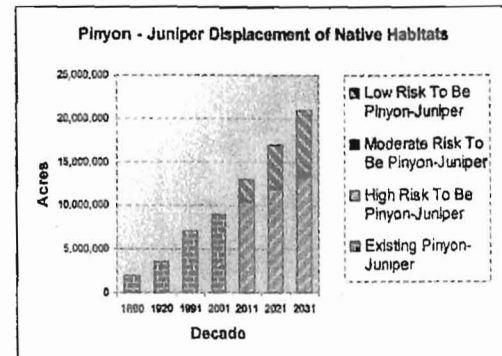


This grass invasion will accelerate the frequency and size of wildfires; greatly reduce forage available to livestock; displace critical wildlife habitat; and threaten rural communities, public safety, and tourism.

Invasive Pinyon-Juniper

Pinyon pine and juniper (P-J) have spread into sagebrush habitats, greatly reducing the presence and diversity of understory grasses

and forbs. Soils under P-J lose the capability to trap, store, and slowly release water and are more prone to erosion. Dense stands of P-J are highly susceptible to fire with very poor post-fire regeneration. While P-J can provide thermal cover for wildlife, the forage and habitat value is minimal when compared to the sagebrush habitats it is displacing.



Prior to settlement, Nevada contained less than 2 million acres of pinyon-juniper. The chart shows the increase of P-J and indicates that sagebrush habitat is being lost to P-J at a rate of over 150,000 acres/year.

The cumulative impacts of these threats will devastate over one million acres of sagebrush habitat per year. Charting the history of these threats shows the losses will grow more rapidly with each passing decade. The sagebrush losses will lead to: federal listings of multiple species as threatened or endangered; exorbitant expenses for fire fighting and public safety; and severe economic losses for agriculture, rural communities, and tourism.

