



Western Juniper in Oregon Facts//Accompanying Fact Sheet

- Western Juniper trees have expanded beyond their historic locations encroaching onto sagebrush terrain throughout the West, out-competing other shrubs and plants that provide habitat for the ground dwelling, and threatened, greater sage grouse.
- Western Juniper and pinyon pines have expanded their range some 600 percent in western states since the 1800s, affecting Oregon, northern California, Idaho, Utah and parts of Colorado. When these conifers converge on sagebrush rangelands, they crowd out other native plant and animal species, consume significant amounts of water and convert wet meadows to dry landscapes devoid of their natural diversity.
- Removing juniper has many watershed values: it increases forage for livestock and wildlife, conserves water for other plants, increases plant diversity, and reduces perches for ravens and other predators.
- The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services created an initiative called “Working Lands for Wildlife” to assist ranchers in voluntarily restoring or enhancing 200,000 acres of rangeland over five years, combating sage grouse habitat loss and ensuring viability of western ranching.
- The Western Juniper Alliance is an initiative launched by leaders and practitioners across Oregon in July 2013. Working with nearly 40 state and federal agency partners, business leaders, and non-profit organizations, the goal is to restore ecosystems in eastern Oregon through economic development. Managing Western Juniper improves grazing conditions, increases water supplies, decreases wildfire risks, and restores habitat for sensitive species like sage grouse and mule deer. And, by utilizing juniper that is currently being cut and either left on the site or burned, they are helping to create jobs, source innovative wood products, and serve as a plentiful resource for biomass energy.
- To date, work crews have cut encroaching junipers on 60,000 acres of private ranchland property, helping to control juniper encroachment and return the land to its historic condition. Roughly 50,000 acres of Western Juniper are cut and managed on BLM land each year in Oregon.
- This collaborative effort not only keeps the range productive, but is projected to increase the populations of threatened greater sage grouse by 8 to 10 percent through wildlife habitat conservation practices such as prescribed grazing, brush management and fence flagging.