Idaho Fish & Wildlife Office Landscape Conservation

Owyhee Uplands Priority Landscape

The Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office (IFWO) has identified the Owyhee Uplands in southwest Idaho as one of its Priority Landscapes where we will prioritize our conservation efforts. The Owyhee Uplands contains portions of the sagebrush ecosystem regarded as important to the conservation of the greater sage-grouse in the west but also supports healthy populations of sagebrush obligates such as pygmy rabbit and pronghorn antelope. While primarily comprised of federal lands, it also includes state, Tribal, and private lands and interests that must be considered and coordinated in order to maintain the integrity and viability of this landscape.

While the Owyhee Uplands is primarily represented by sagebrush communities, it includes other habitats such as depressional wetlands and aspen that provide important resources and habitat heterogeneity critical to the various life history needs of many of its sagebrush inhabitants. Many of the sagebrush obligate species require large, open, and connected habitats that allow seasonal migration or access to changing resources. This is especially important in planning for threats such as climate change and rangeland fire.

Much of this landscape is utilized by the livestock industry, with farming and mining contributing to the local and State economy. The landscape includes unique wilderness areas such as the Owyhee River and Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness Areas, and it abuts equally important sagebrush ecosystems in both Nevada and Oregon. Coordinated management between these states, as well as

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The Owyhee Uplands Priority Landscape, located in southwest Idaho, is predominantly comprised of habitats such as sagebrush-steppe and aspen woodlands, and supports sagebrush-reliant species such as greater sage-grouse and pygmy rabbit.

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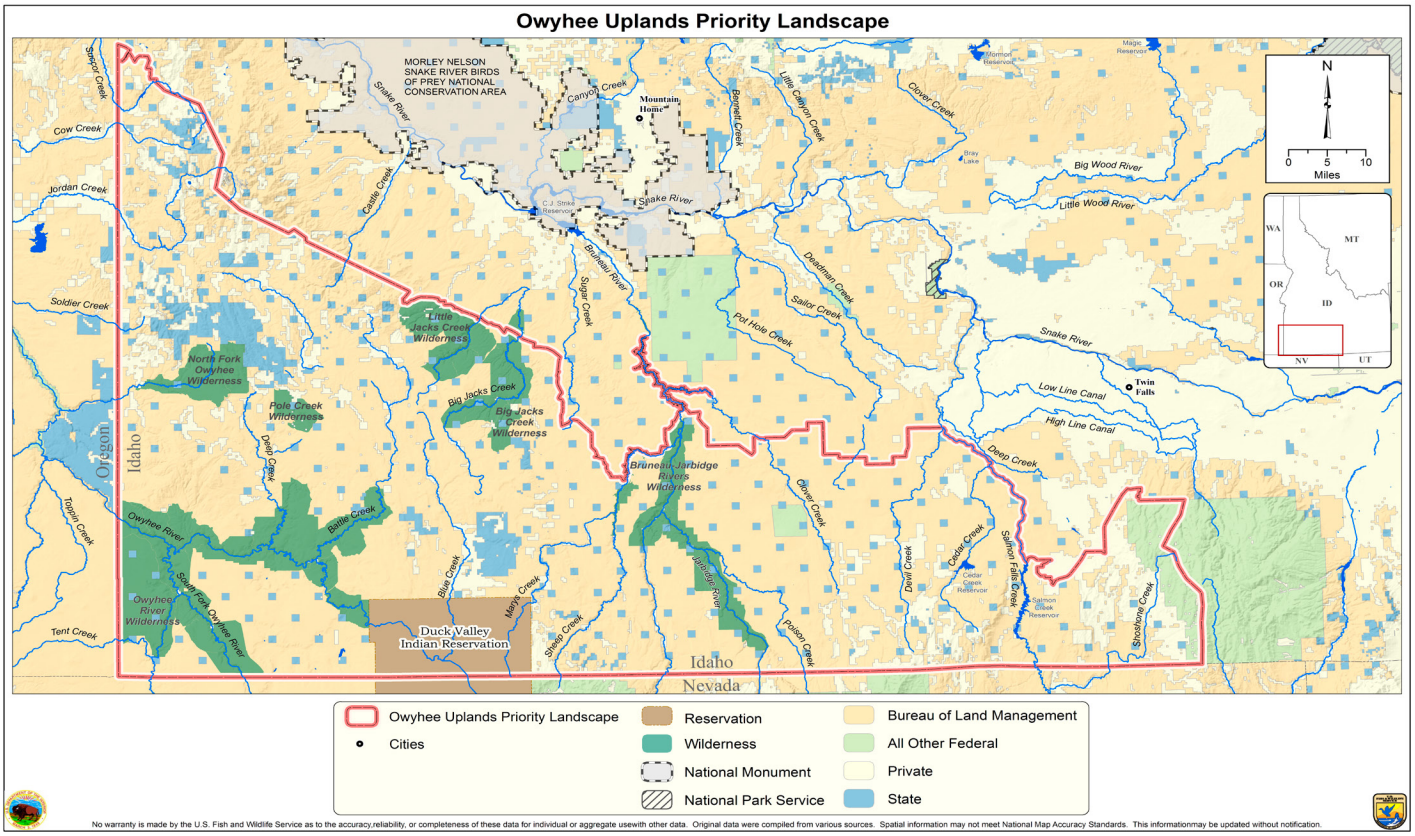
The greater sage-grouse is a sagebrush-dependent species and icon of the sagebrush ecosystem. The Owyhee Uplands Priority Landscape and habitats in the adjacent states of Nevada and Oregon, contain some of the most important habitat for the long-term conservation of this and other sagebrush-reliant species.

private, Tribal, and federal partners could make this contiguous area one of the most important sagebrush ecosystems in North America. Covering an area of approximately 6,000 square miles, the Owyhee Uplands Priority Landscape accounts for 7% of the State of Idaho. Eight percent of this landscape is under the management of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe.

The IFWO has developed three Landscape Strategies for the Owyhee Uplands that target: sagebrush communities; wetland-aquatic-riparian habitats; and aspen-dominated communities. These strategies identify 11 Priority Species, all of which can serve as indicators of habitat health, provide ecosystem or habitat-level services, or possess value as public outreach tools.

While IFWO's Landscape Strategies identify important conservation targets and needs, these strategies are intended as starting points for initiating dialog and planning with land managers and resource professionals engaged in management of this landscape or adjacent ecosystems. The IFWO will seek participation of these parties to revise our strategies and integrate priorities of partners and stakeholders to address the most productive conservation actions and collaborate to achieve success.



The sagebrush ecosystem dominates the Owyhee Uplands Priority Landscape, but smaller areas of grasslands, aspen woodlands, and wetlands contribute to the life history needs of many of its sagebrush-reliant species. Major partners in this landscape include the Bureau of Land Management, the state of Idaho, the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe, and private land owners.

Priority Species identified in Owyhee Uplands Priority Landscape:

- American beaver
- Aspen
- Brewer's sparrow
- Columbia spotted frog
- Greater sage-grouse
- Interior redband trout
- Mule deer
- Pygmy rabbit
- Sage thrasher
- Sagebrush sparrow
- Slickspot peppergrass

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