



NEWS RELEASE

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Partners for Conservation Releases Report Evaluating Lessons Learned from Collaborative Sage-Grouse Conservation

Ordway, CO: Partners for Conservation, a landowner-led organization focused on improving landscapes through communication, released a report today that evaluates lessons learned during greater sage-grouse conservation efforts. The report, *Perspectives on Collaborative Conservation*, compiles responses from more than 40 individuals who were actively engaged in sage-grouse conservation from a variety of scales and perspectives. The interviews provide insights into things that worked and did not work during the collaborations that developed to keep the greater sage-grouse off the endangered species list.

“Whether partnerships between federal and state agencies with private landowners, restoration projects coordinated between non-profit groups and land management agencies, or the thousands of hours negotiating state sage-grouse conservation plans, the collaborative efforts across the West were, and still are, unprecedented,” noted Steve Jester, executive director of Partners for Conservation. “By identifying what worked well – and where the greatest challenges emerged – there are lessons to be learned. The hope is that the information generated will help guide collaborative conservation on natural resource challenges in the future.”

Between 2010 and 2015, there was an unprecedented effort across the West to keep the greater sage-grouse off the endangered species list – culminating in the September 2015 announcement that the bird did not need federal protection. However, collaborations had begun well before 2010 and continue to this day. Partners for Conservation gathered the perspectives of 42 individuals who were actively engaged in sage-grouse conservation. Primary perspectives that were interviewed included private landowners, local agencies or community groups, industry, groups that were facilitators of collaborative efforts, state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and elected officials or their staff. Individuals were also selected based on their work at different scales including the individual

operation level, the watershed or landscape level, statewide efforts, regional coordination, and national decision-making level.

Overall, survey respondents had a shared purpose and vision: to have healthy sage-grouse populations that would preclude the need for listing under the Endangered Species Act. While many of the stakeholders came with very different motivations and had different perspectives, several themes emerged from the respondents that crossed all scales and perspectives. These overarching themes were:

- Building trust and the relationships that are built from this trust formed the bedrock of the collaboration
- Building relationships takes time and some degree of risk taking. Fortunately, many key relationships already existed and participants were highly motivated to form them where they were missing
- Diverse perspectives representing multiple interests (ecologic, economic, sociologic) were key to building trust as well as creating innovative workable solutions
- Basic skills such as good listening, understanding and respect of perspectives other than your own, and patience as relationships were built and trust established were key
- Open and transparent communication was critical to moving the collaborations toward workable and sustainable solutions
- Integration of trusted science broadly shared and understood formed the sideboards of the collaborative solutions

“We found that there was a high degree of motivation to find solutions that could work for a wide range of partners – something that is critical in ensuring that conservation decisions are implemented successfully,” Jester continued. “The investment in time and effort to build the relationships, trust, and eventually effective partnerships can seem daunting and even insurmountable. However, addressing natural resource challenges in a collaborative fashion is the only way to forge lasting solutions. PFC intends to carry the lessons learned forward through a series of workshops helping partners learn how to develop effective relationships and partnerships to sustain landscapes and communities.”

The report can be found on the Partners for Conservation website at: www.partnersforconservation.org.

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About Partners for Conservation

Established in 2008, [Partners for Conservation](http://www.partnersforconservation.org) embodies a grassroots movement of private landowners working with agencies, non-profit organizations, and policymakers to collaborate on conservation projects to sustain our working landscapes for present and future generations. PFC represents the voices of 21st century conservation and the collective effort to support working landscapes through voluntary, incentive-based public and private programs.