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NDOW Seeks Seed Gathering Volunteers

The Nevada Department of Wildlife will hold their annual volunteer seed collection on Saturday, November 22nd starting at 9:00 AM. Even though 2008 was not a big fire year, Northern Nevada has lost millions of acres of wildlife habitat to wildfires in the last ten years and seed is still needed for ongoing range rehabilitation efforts.

“When demand is high for seed like it was in 2006-2007, the price for a pound of pure live sagebrush seed can be over \$100” said Steve Foree, NDOW habitat biologist. According to Foree, if we don’t have volunteers harvest seed, we have to buy it. The seed collected is not the only benefit to using volunteers,” Foree continued, “We get matching federal aid based on the hours they work which will also be used in the habitat rehabilitation process”.

After being stripped from the plant, the sagebrush seed is sent to the Nevada State Seed Bank for cleaning and mixing with other species of seed appropriate for the area. A hopper suspended from a helicopter then disperses the seed over burned and damaged rangelands.

In addition to mule deer and sage grouse, many other animals depend on sagebrush for their survival. Sage thrashers, sage sparrows, Brewer’s sparrows,

Nevada Department of Wildlife

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loggerhead shrikes, pygmy rabbits, greater short-horned lizards, and burrowing owls are among the other sagebrush obligates that will benefit from range rehabilitation efforts.

This year's collection site is just a few miles northwest of town. Proceed north on Mountain City Highway from the intersection in front of Adobe Middle School. Go 2.2 miles north and turn left on the dirt road. Then follow the signs another mile to the marked location. All volunteers in attendance will be entered into a drawing for a gift certificate to the Star restaurant.

Harvesting seed is quite easy so volunteers of all ages can participate. Those who are allergic to sagebrush should not participate. Work gloves and buckets will be provided for those who don't have them. Lunch and drinks will also be provided and we plan to finish collecting by early afternoon. Be prepared for cold weather by dressing in layers. If the weather is too wet, we may cancel. Call 777-2391 early Saturday morning if the weather looks questionable or the same number if you have other questions or need more information.

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