

Sagebrush Habitat Plan

Introduction

Nevada is the Sagebrush State and sagebrush habitats alone cover over 50 percent of the State, supporting more than 367 species of wildlife, and multiple plants and invertebrates that occur nowhere else in the world. Healthy, intact sagebrush supports rural economies and traditional uses and is vital to the well being of Nevada citizens.

Threats to sagebrush in Nevada are wide-spread and impact our way of life. Loss of high-quality sagebrush habitat in Nevada has been far reaching over the last several decades. Mule deer, pronghorn, sage-grouse and other wildlife have declined as a result of sagebrush habitat loss and degradation.

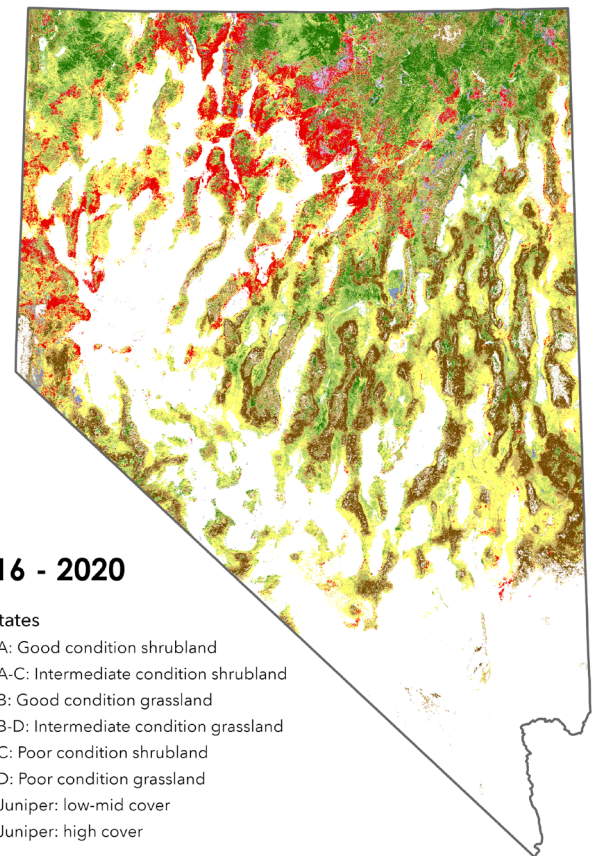
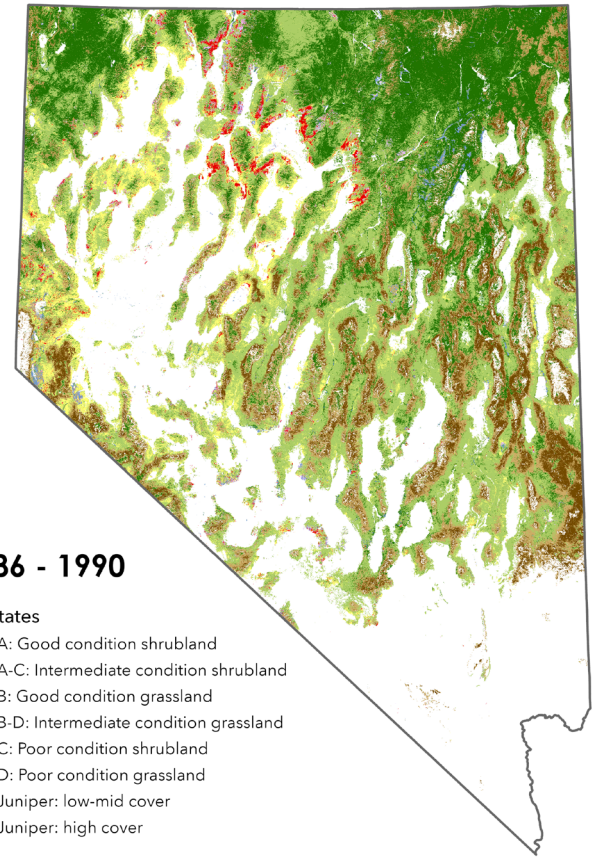
In Nevada, eight species are predominantly dependent on sagebrush habitat for most of their life history needs: pygmy rabbit, Great Basin pocket mouse, sagebrush vole, sagebrush lizard, greater sage-grouse, sage thrasher, Brewer's sparrow, and sage sparrow.

From 1986 to 2020, good and intermediate quality sagebrush habitat within Nevada declined from an estimated 70.1 percent of potential habitat to 35.5 percent of potential habitat. In addition to this loss of good quality habitat, there has been a rapid expansion of poor condition grasslands from 1.5 percent in 1986-1990 to 11.6 percent in 2016-2020 across the state.

In an effort to better coordinate and address sagebrush degradation, Executive Order (EO) 2021-18 directed NDOW to collaboratively establish a Nevada Habitat Conservation Framework to provide for habitat conservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and protection.

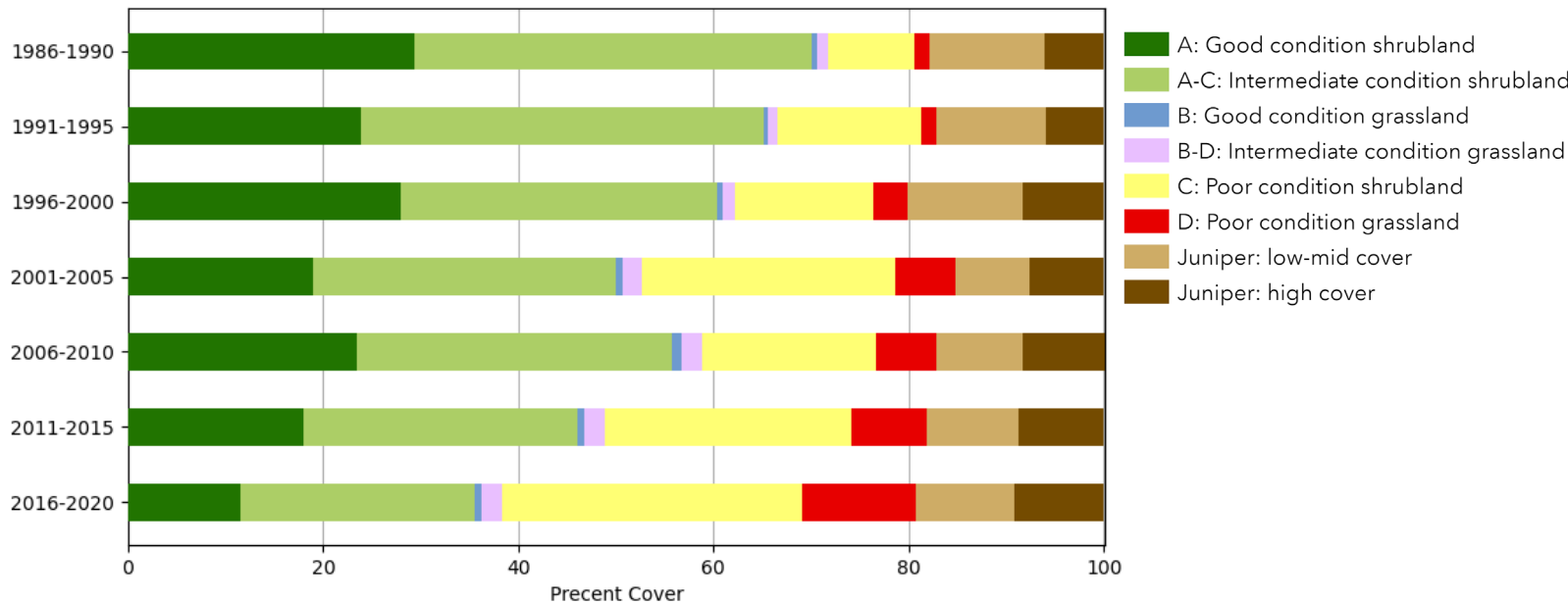
Foundational elements of the EO include the development of a Sagebrush Habitat Plan and Wildlife Connectivity Plan. These will be developed in coordination with the Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Program (SEP) and the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) with coordination and input from the Public and other State and Federal land management agencies.

NDOW and the SEP hope to collaborate with federal and state agencies, tribes, private landowners, and other interested publics to develop habitat mapping products to assist in strategically identifying and prioritizing landscapes for conservation efforts to be included in their respective plans (Sagebrush Habitat Framework for NDOW and Strategic Action Plan for the SEP).



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Change in sagebrush habitat quality from 1986-2020



NDOW and the SEP held local work group meetings in January 2023 in Winnemucca, Elko, Ely, Reno, and Las Vegas to seek input on the development of the SHP. If you missed the meeting, then you can find the presentation and background information at: <https://www.ndow.org/blog/habitat-conservation-framework/>

We welcome your input in the SHP planning process. If you have any comments or would like to be added to the contact list, please submit comments and contact information to ndowshp@ndow.org

Ideas for providing helpful input includes (but is not limited to):

- Contact information for other interested parties,
- Feedback on draft geospatial products outlined in the presentations and their possible uses,
- Other approaches to identifying priority landscapes at different scales from state-wide to regional to project scales,
- What are Nevada's priority threats and actions and how to best address in a way that is helpful for various needs.

Tentative timeline:

- Public Surveys - TBD
- Public/Agency review draft products – Spring/Summer 2023
- Local Work Group/Targeted Meetings – TBD
- Public Draft Review – Fall 2023
- Final Draft – Dec. 2023
- Future Revising - TBD

