

Sagebrush Habitat Planning

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.

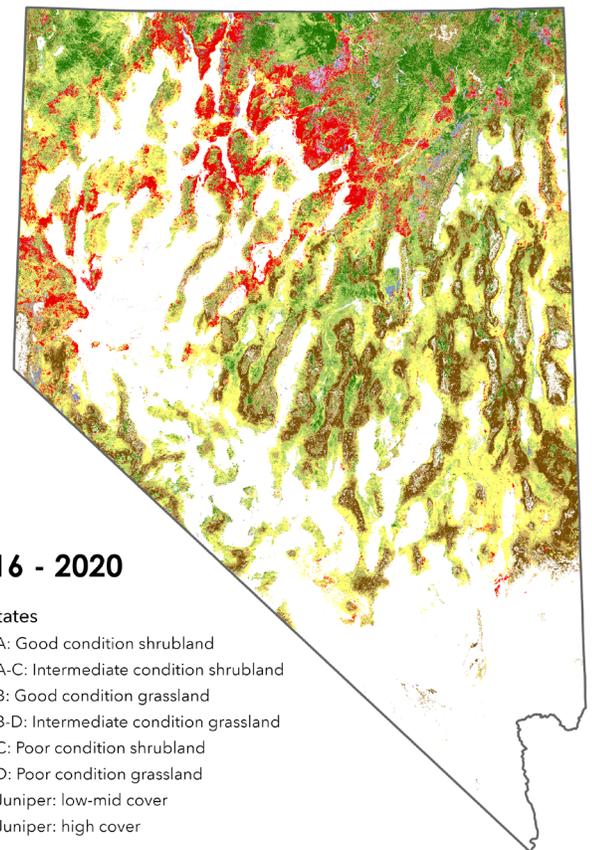
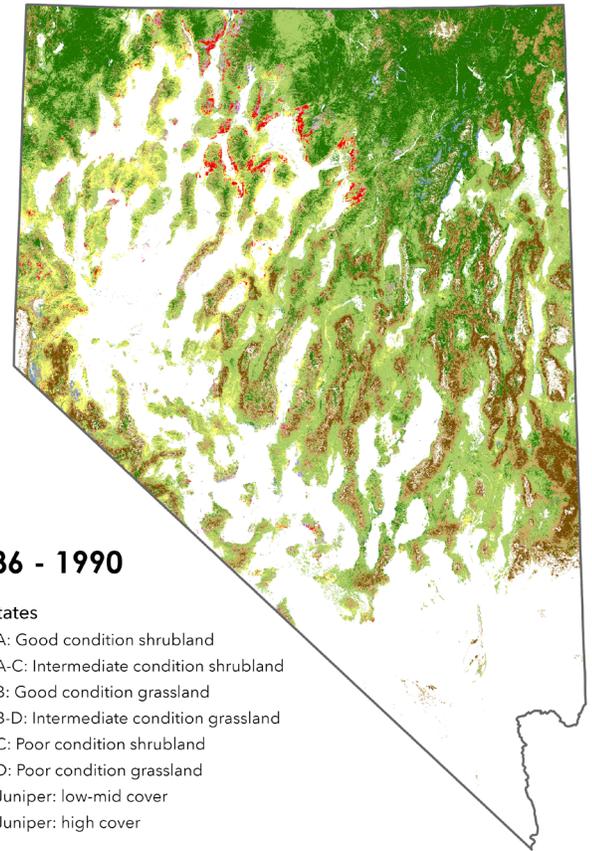
Threats to sagebrush in Nevada are wide-spread and impact our way of life. Loss of high-quality sagebrush habitat in Nevada has been far reaching over the last several decades. Mule deer, pronghorn, sage-grouse and other wildlife have declined as a result of sagebrush habitat loss and degradation.

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 2015-2020 across the state. Roughly 31,704,818 acres, or 44.81 percent of the state is estimated to historically have supported sagebrush ecosystems and associated wildlife.

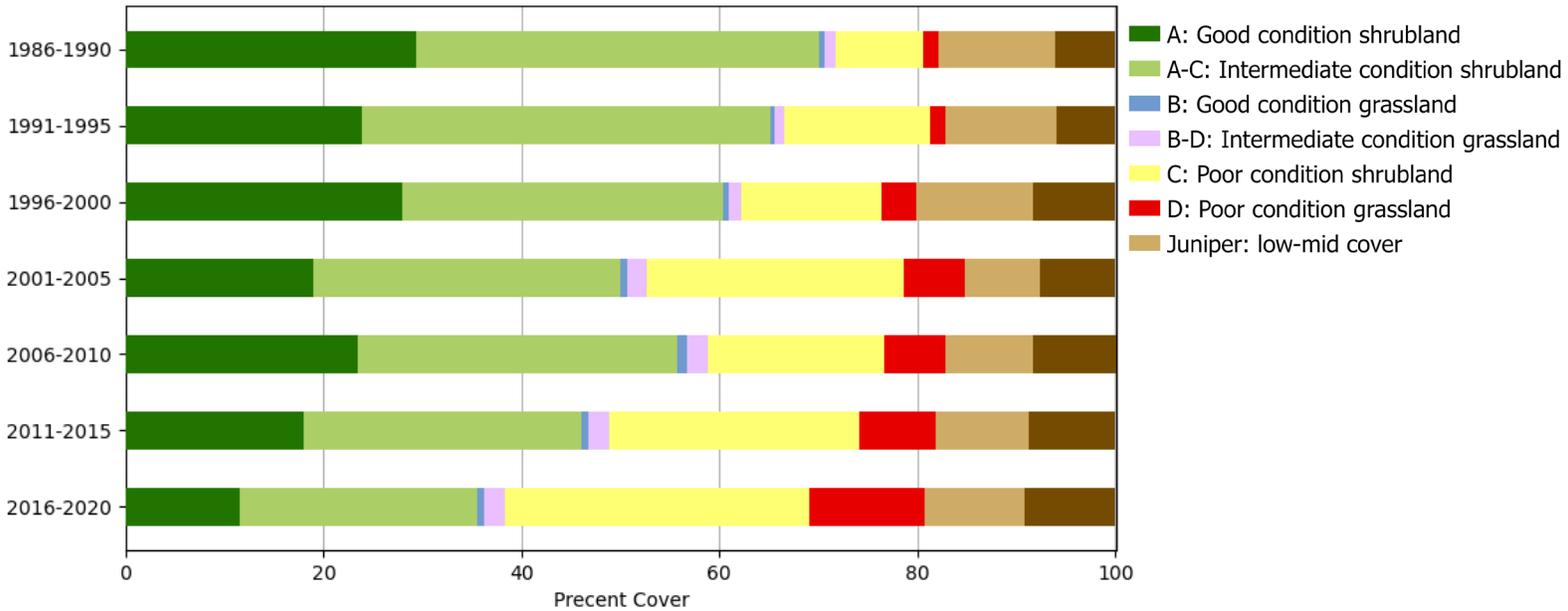
In an effort to better coordinate and address sagebrush degradation, Executive Order (EO) 2021-18 directed NDOW to collaboratively establish a Nevada Habitat Conservation Framework to provide for habitat conservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and protection.

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.



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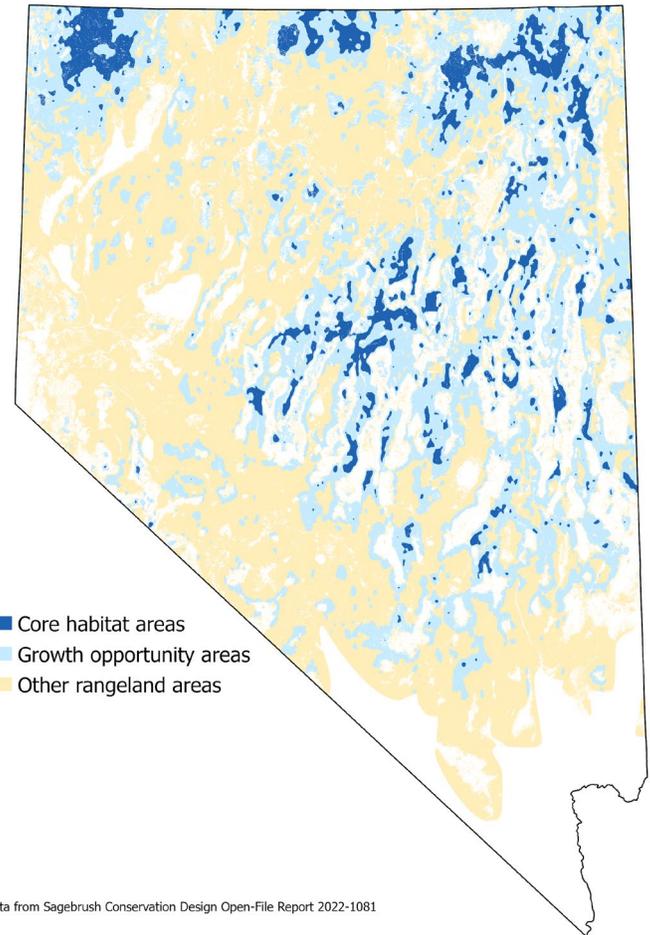
Change in sagebrush habitat quality from 1986-2020



NDOW and the Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team (SETT), along with other federal and state partners, are coordinating closely on developing habitat mapping products and recently developed tools 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).

NDOW's goal is to develop a Nevada centric map that prioritizes conservation work based upon habitat values and threats.

The SEP may integrate prioritized mapping products into the existing Adaptive Management Policy and include both of them within the Strategic Action Plan to maximize conservation efforts and address areas that exhibit isolated sage-grouse population declines due to natural and manmade disturbances. The SEP will primarily focus on sage-grouse specific habitats and threats.



Data from Sagebrush Conservation Design Open-File Report 2022-1081

