

# NRCS Sage-Grouse Initiative (SGI)

A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO FARM BILL CONSERVATION PROGRAM DELIVERY



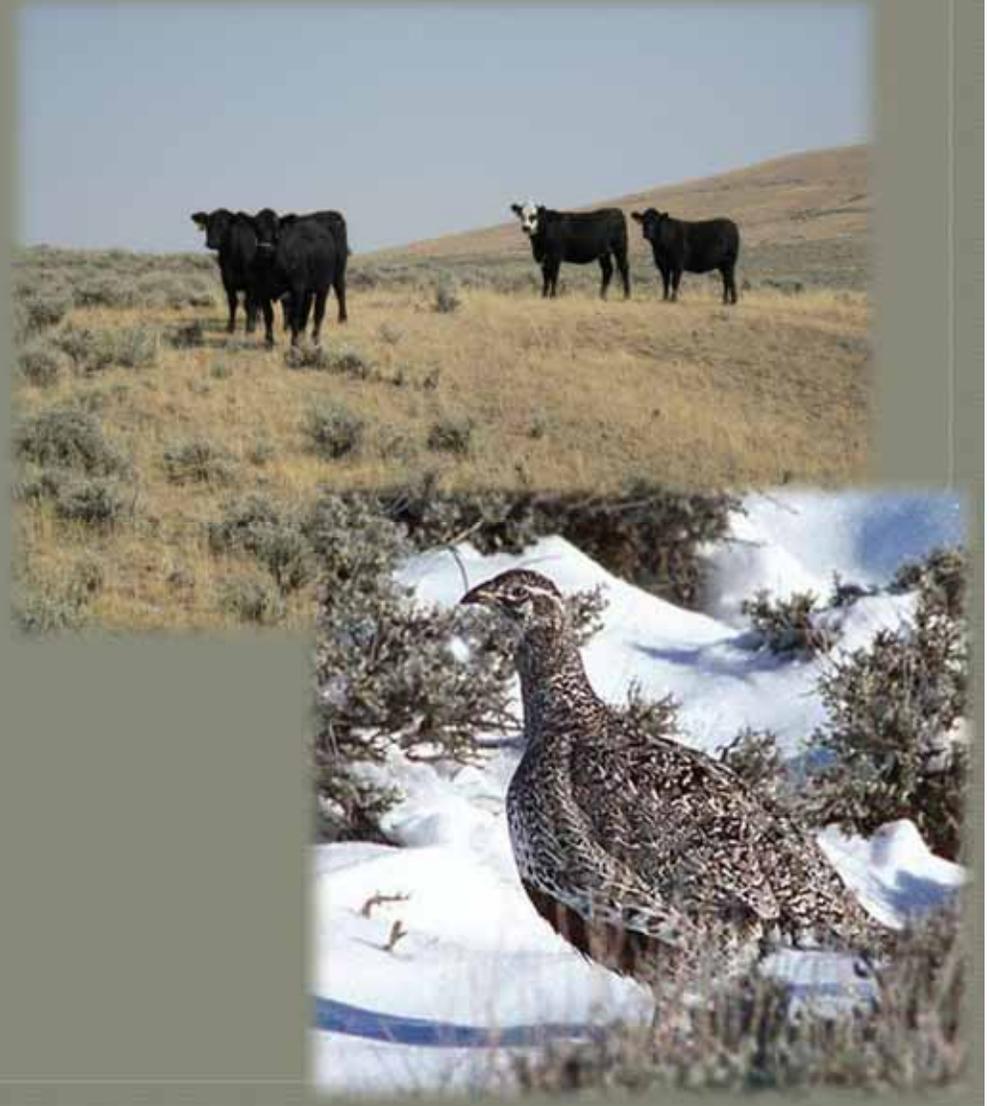
# Initiative Overview

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- ◉ Strategically focus financial and technical assistance resources to alleviate threats to sage-grouse and improve the sustainability of working ranches
- ◉ Implement the right practices, in the right locations , at the appropriate scale to result in a measurable population level response.

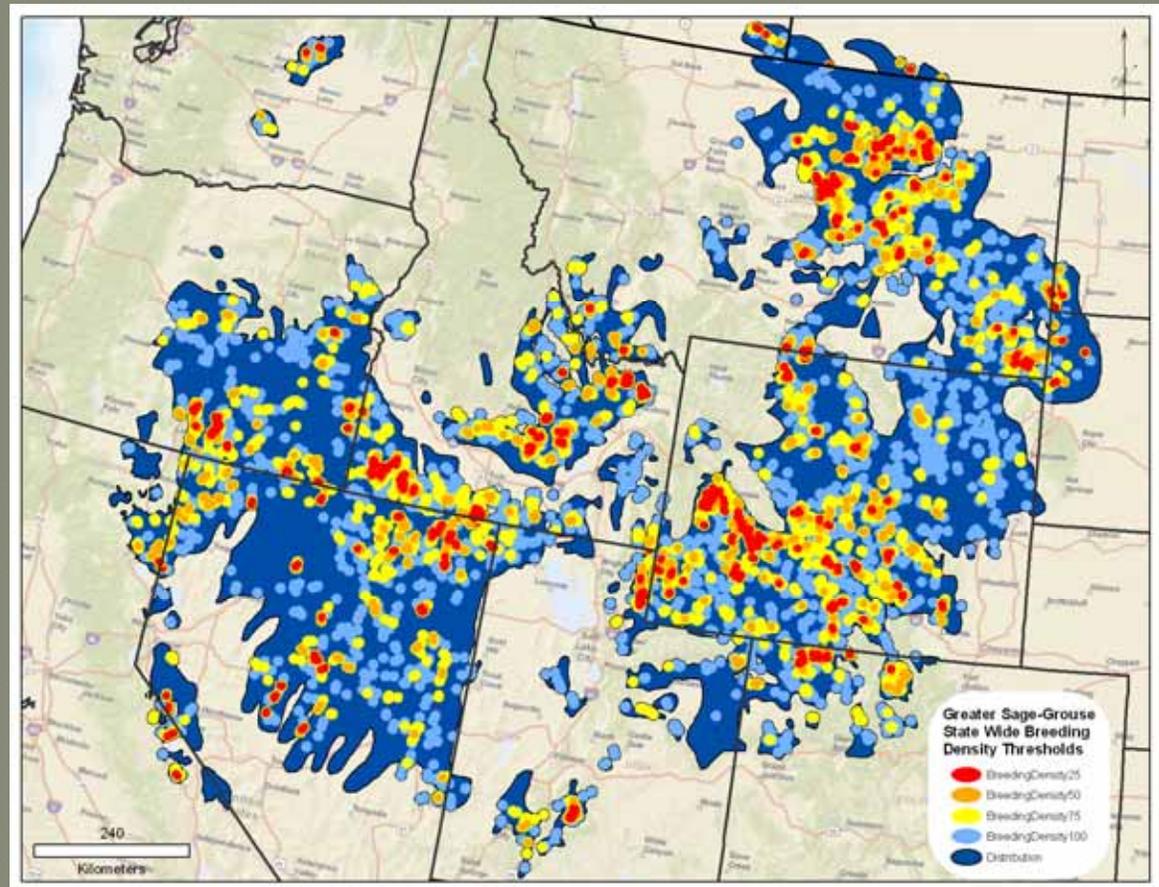
# *Why is NRCS going “all in” for sage-grouse conservation?*

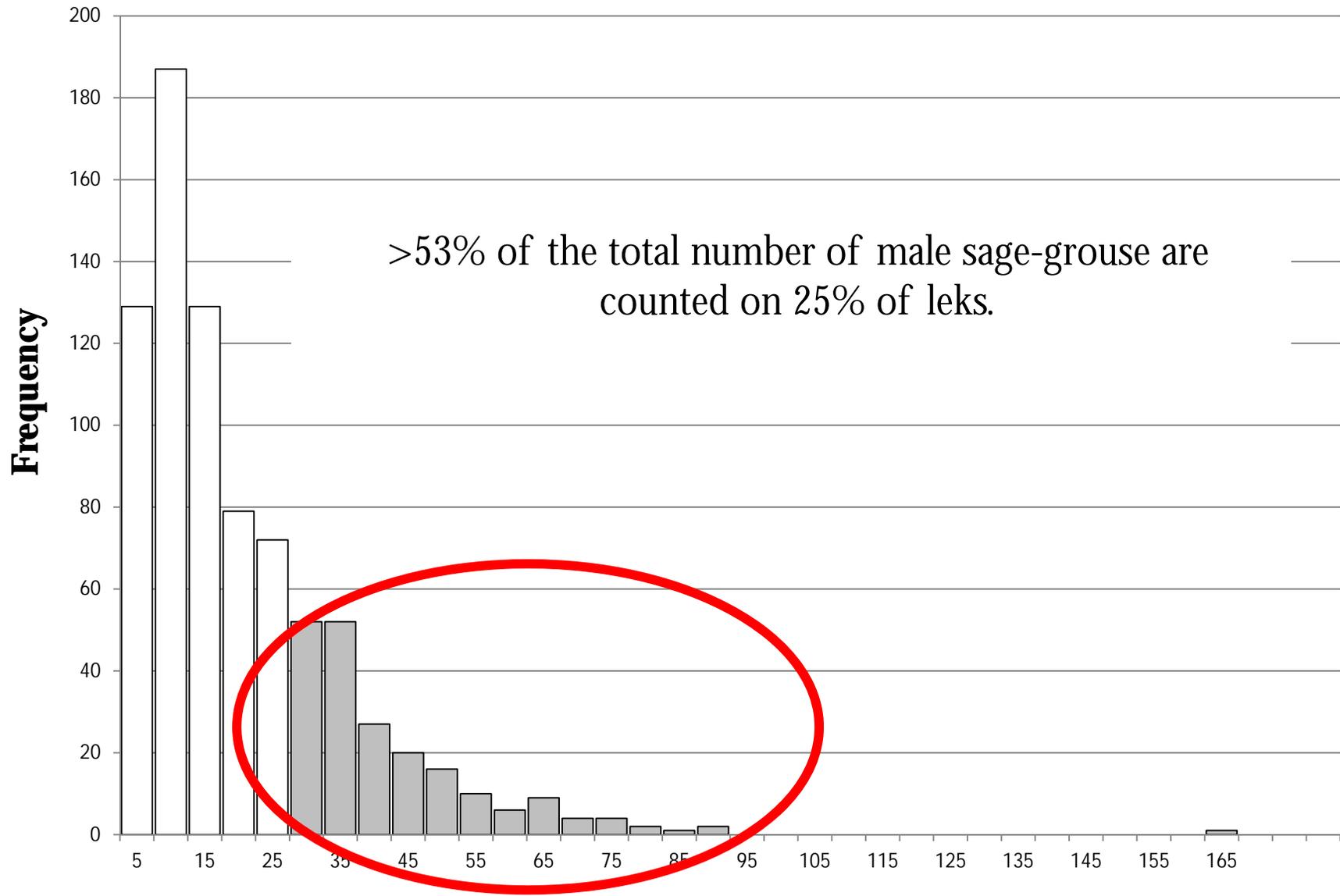
- Future of sage-grouse and working lands are inextricably linked
- NRCS leadership support, agency structure, and available resources
- Avoid consequences of a listing under ESA
- Initiative is not a panacea but should be a great start



# Targeted Approach

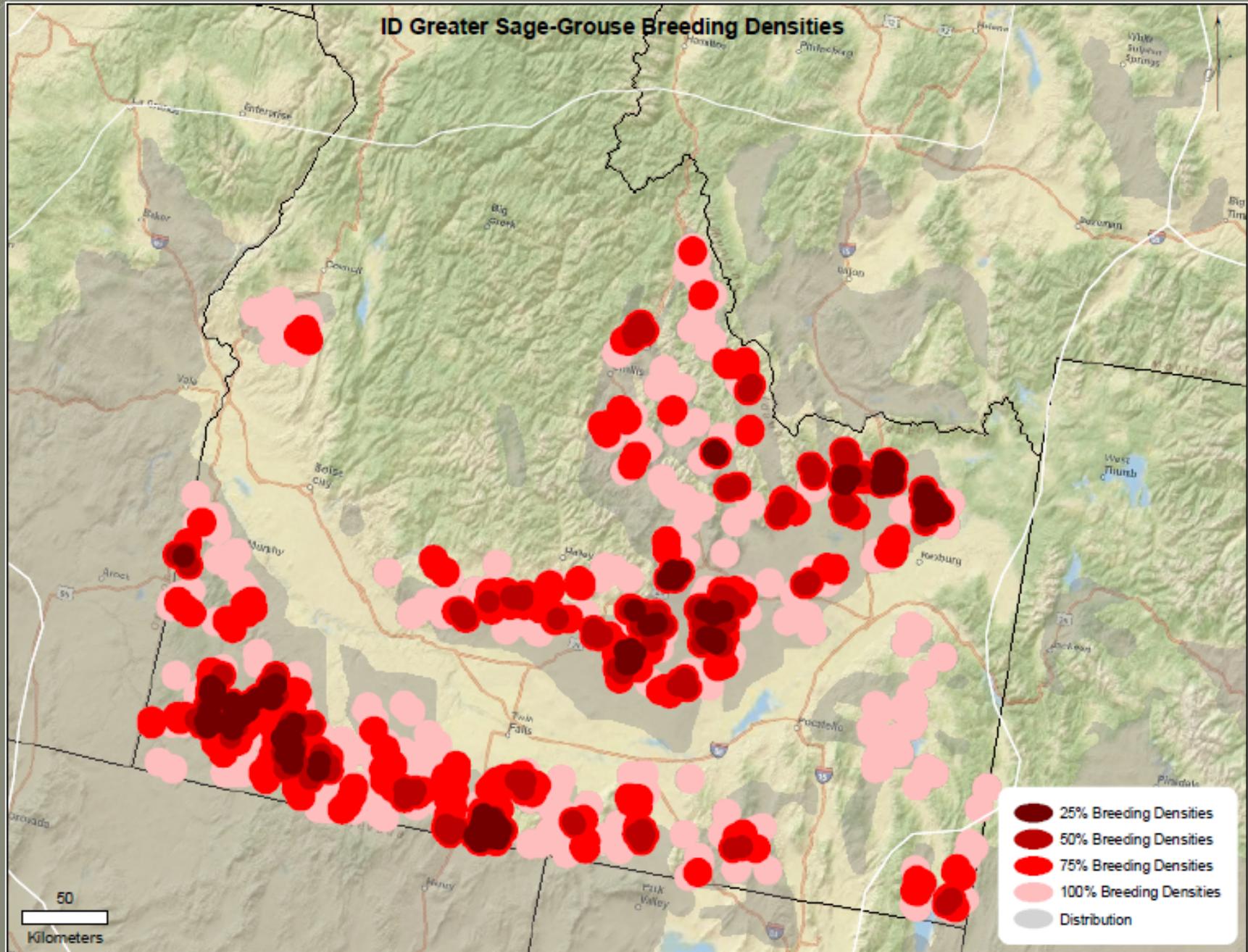
- Avoid “random acts of kindness”
- Target resources towards core areas for grouse





**Male Count on Sage-Grouse Leks**

# ID Greater Sage-Grouse Breeding Densities



# State Sage-Grouse Strategy



- Based on State Plan
  - Conservation Plan for the Greater Sage-grouse in Idaho, July 2006
- Narrowed list of threats and conservation measures
- Identified NRCS programs and practices

# Wildfire and cheatgrass invasion



# Livestock impacts



Lack of  
sagebrush



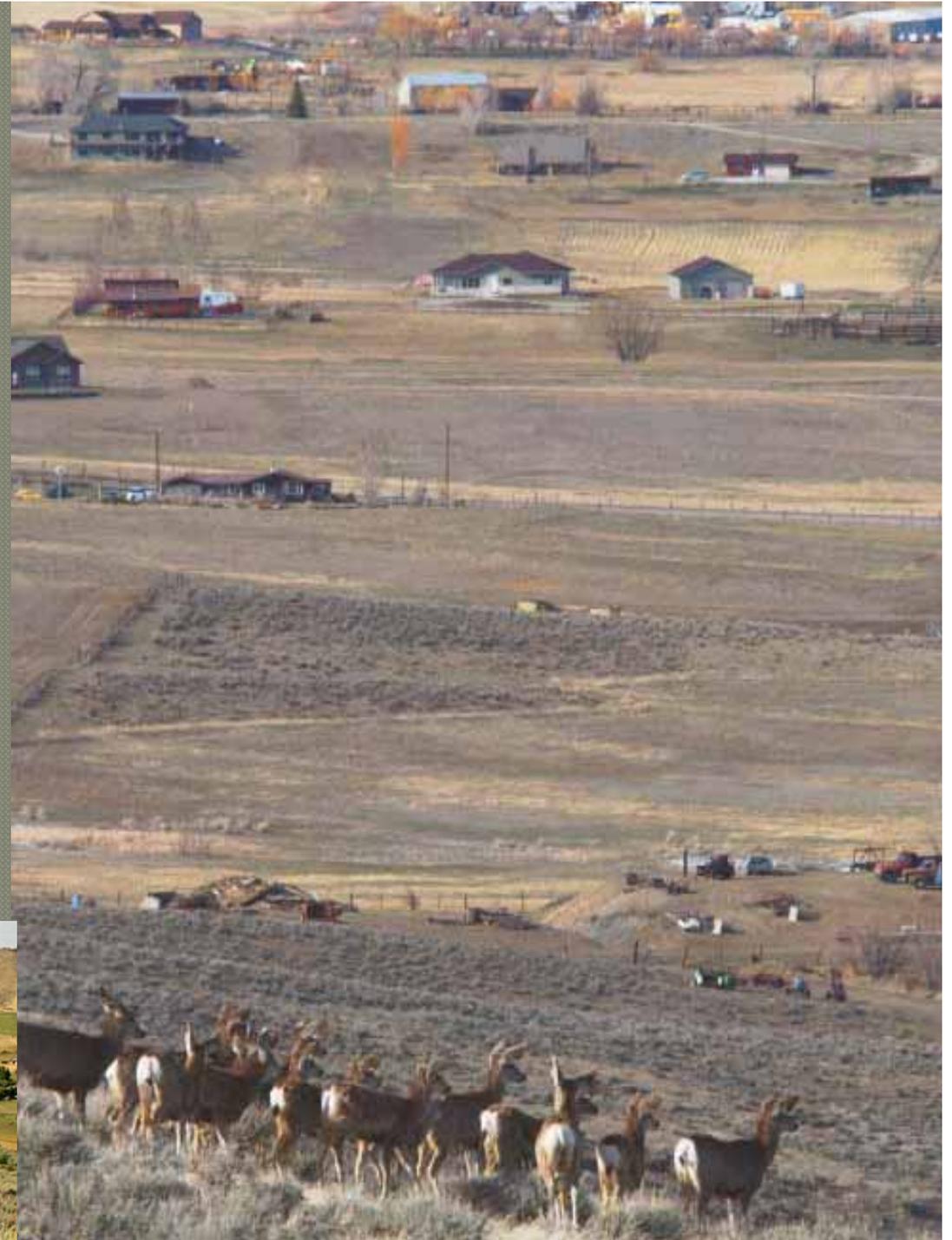
Conifer  
encroachment



Urban/exurban  
development

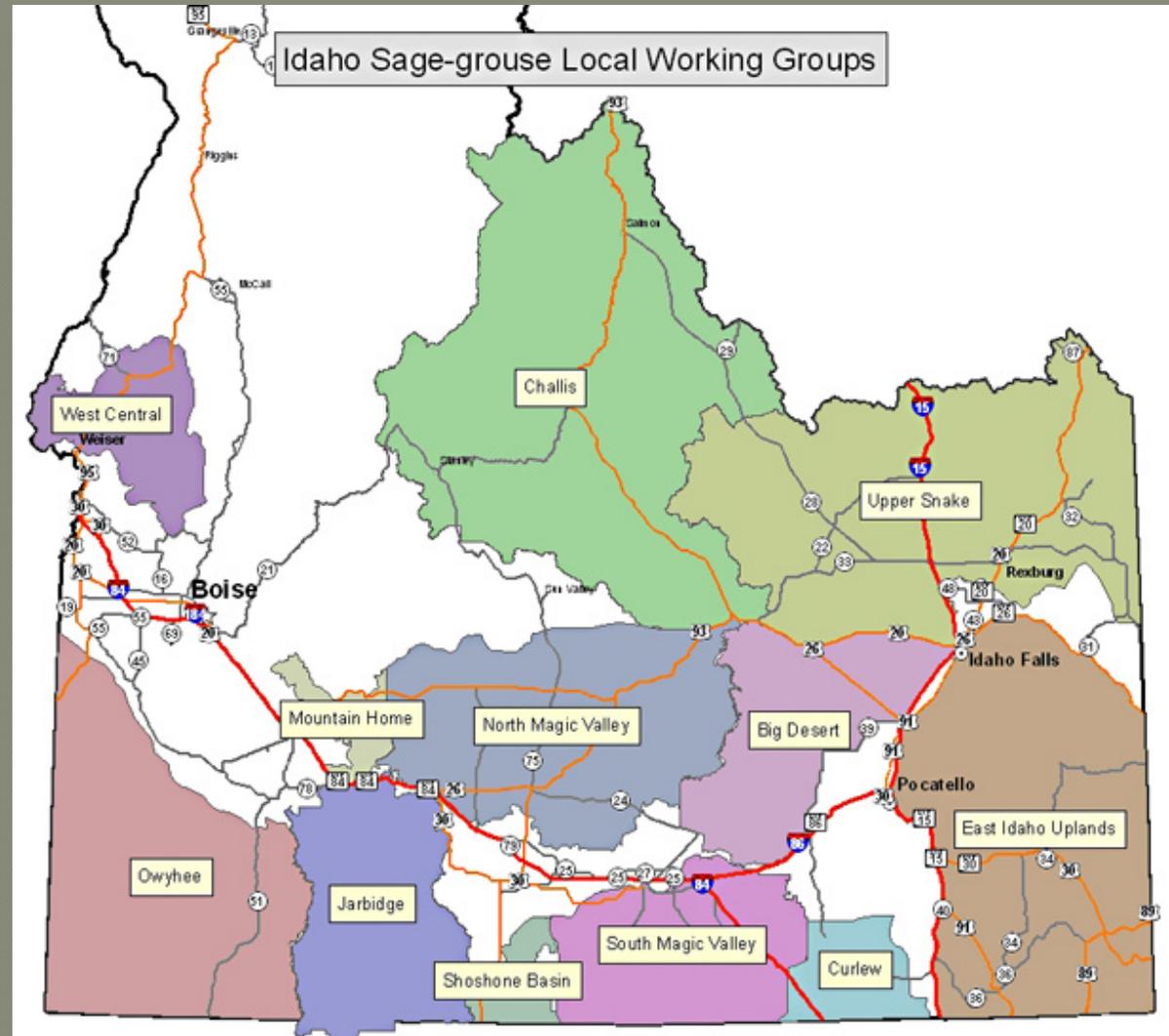


Agricultural  
expansion



# Local Priorities

- Projects that address threats identified by the LWG also receive higher priority



# Monitoring & Evaluation

## • Three-tiered Approach

- SGI Contracts
  - Vegetation, Rangeland Health
- CEAP and CIG
  - Studies underway in Montana, Oregon, Wyoming
  - Grazing systems, conifer removal
- Rangelwide
  - National Resources Inventory
  - Analysis of lek data



# Conference Report

- ◉ Warranted but precluded = candidate status
- ◉ NRCS “conferenced” with USFWS
- ◉ Those implementing NRCS conservation practices in sage-grouse habitat will be in compliance with the ESA if species is listed

# Conference Report Caveats

- NRCS Conservation Practices benefit sage-grouse

## BUT

- Conservation Measures for each practice must be followed
- NRCS Conservation Planning Process is followed
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management is the umbrella practice

[http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/sage\\_grouse\\_report\\_compliance.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/sage_grouse_report_compliance.html)

# Idaho SGI 2010 - 2011 Accomplishments



**Conifers  
Removed**

**6278 Ac**

**Spring Developments  
Modified**



**Improved Grazing  
Management**

**11**

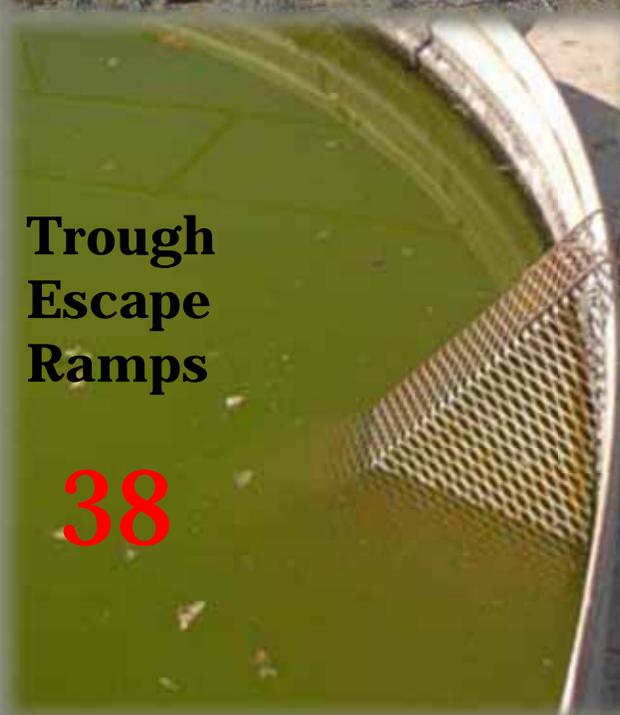


**> 312,037 Ac**

**59 miles**

**Trough  
Escape  
Ramps**

**38**



**Fence Modification / Removal**



# Grassland Reserve Program

- 22,369 acres enrolled in 2011
- USDA buys development and cropping rights from willing ranchers
- Ranchers retain grazing, haying, and pasture management rights
- Grazing management plan ensures consideration of sage-grouse habitat requirements

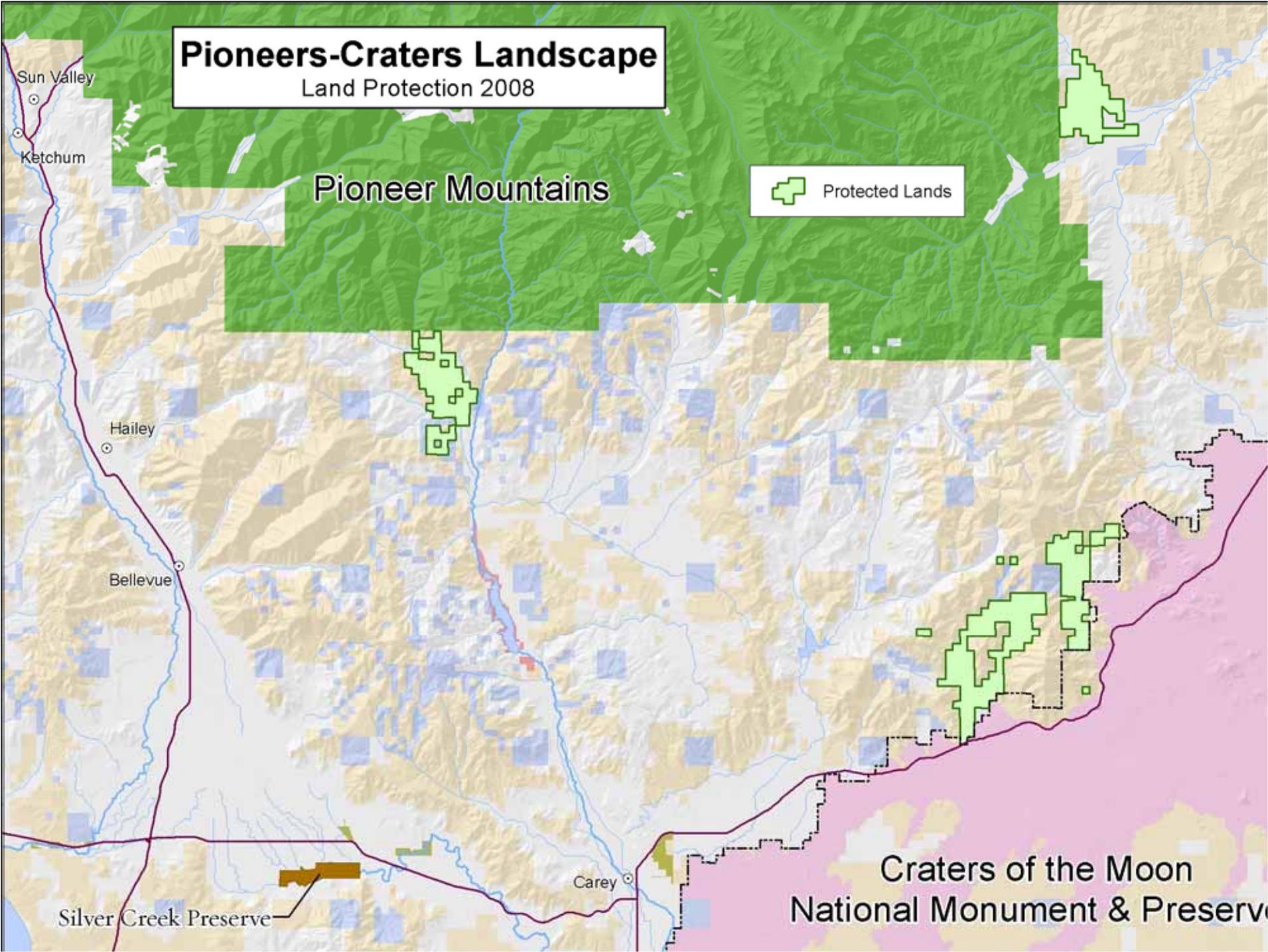


# Pioneers-Craters Landscape

Land Protection 2008

Pioneer Mountains

 Protected Lands



Craters of the Moon  
National Monument & Preserve

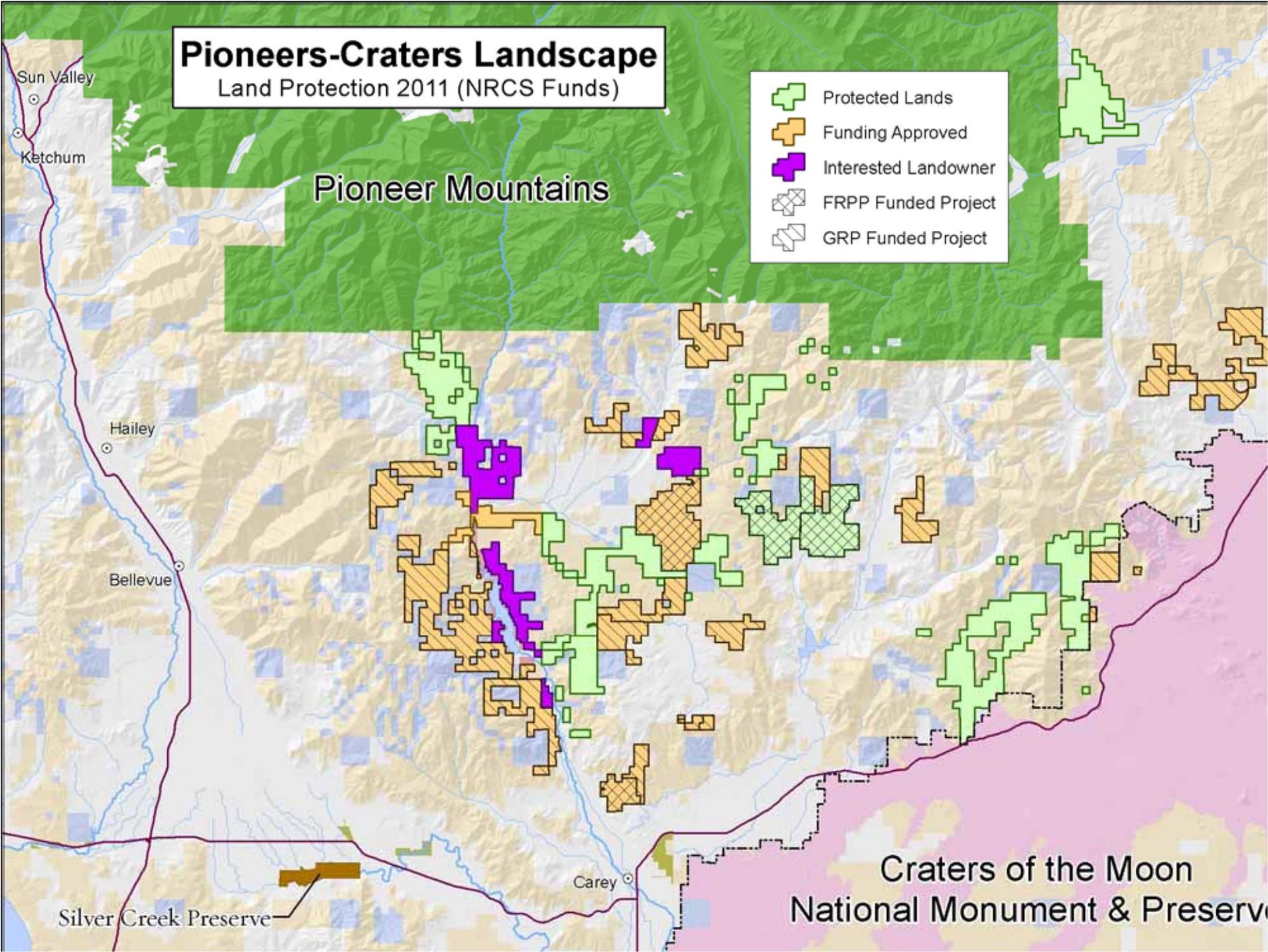
Silver Creek Preserve

# Pioneers-Craters Landscape

Land Protection 2011 (NRCS Funds)

- Protected Lands
- Funding Approved
- Interested Landowner
- FRPP Funded Project
- GRP Funded Project

Pioneer Mountains



Craters of the Moon  
National Monument & Preserve

# Funding

	EQIP	WHIP	GRP
2010	\$1,055,700	\$64,629	-
2011	\$1,698,196	\$109,313	\$9,503,450
2012	\$2,127,683	WL4W - ?	\$3,472,693

Idaho SGI Web Site:



[http://www.id.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/sage\\_grouse/index.html](http://www.id.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/sage_grouse/index.html)

# Questions?

