

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

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Controversial sage grouse the topic of a film and presentation at the High Desert Museum.

Rescuing Sage Grouse from a Habitat Crisis. Jan 21 at 6:30 pm.

Bend, Oregon — The High Desert Museum is hosting a presentation by Garth Fuller of the Nature Conservancy about a new, collaborative effort to restore sage grouse habitat.

Following Fuller's presentation there will be a screening of a documentary film by Steve Chindgren entitled *It's Just Sage Brush: The Life History of the Great Sage Grouse*. The film was given honorable mention for cinematography at the International Wildlife Film Festival.

This Museum after-hours event is presented in partnership with Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation. The cost is \$3 for Museum members; \$5 for non-members.

The greater sage grouse once numbered in the millions across the West's sagebrush steppe. Populations have declined precipitously over the last half-century, mostly due to habitat loss. Can the downward spiral be stopped or even reversed? The Nature Conservancy, along with other agencies, has launched an innovative habitat restoration effort to do just that.

"Sage grouse depend on much more than just an ocean of sagebrush," said John Goodell, Curator of Natural History. "Although they consume only sagebrush in the winter, they require a diverse mix of native forbs and bunchgrasses, especially in spring and summer. Past efforts to restore sagebrush steppe habitat have proven to be a tremendous challenge in the face of invasive plant pressure."

The conservation status of the sage grouse is controversial. Some believe the bird should be listed as an endangered species to keep it from declining further. Others oppose such action, saying it would lead to restrictions on energy development and on livestock grazing that would harm farms and ranches.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has until fall of 2015 to decide whether the sage grouse qualifies for protection under the Endangered Species Act. An official ESA listing could have a significant impact on ranchers and ranching communities.

About Oregon Wildlife

Oregon Wildlife supports projects that protect and restore Oregon's wildlife and improve access to our outdoor resources. Since its founding, Oregon Wildlife has directed millions of dollars in funding to fish, wildlife and habitat projects throughout Oregon. Oregon Wildlife and ODFW are working together to implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy, a blueprint and action plan for the long-term conservation of Oregon's native fish, wildlife and their habitats.

About Garth Fuller

Garth Fuller is the Eastern Oregon Conservation Director and Deserts Team Lead for The Nature Conservancy. Prior to working with TNC, Garth was a researcher and population biologist and his projects explored the population genetics of rare and endangered animals with the Smithsonian's National Zoo and the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. He has a Masters in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology from the University of Maryland and a Bachelor's degree in Ecology, Animal Behavior and Evolution from the University of Illinois.

About the High Desert Museum

The High Desert Museum is nationally acclaimed for inspiring stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of the High Desert. It offers wildlife encounters, living history performances, Native American and Western art, music, nature trails, tours and classes. It is located 10 minutes from downtown Bend on South Highway 97.

RSVPs are requested for this event, online at <http://www.highdesertmuseum.org/rsvp>

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