

# HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

W I L D L I F E *and* L I V I N G H I S T O R Y

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## *SAGE GROUSE EXHIBIT CONNECTS PEOPLE TO THE LAND AND CONSERVATION OF AN ICONIC BIRD* Photographer Noppadol Paothong to speak at opening reception October 16

Bend, OR – August 12, 2015 ~ *Sage Grouse: Icon of the Sagebrush Sea* opens at the High Desert Museum on October 16. The exhibit follows on the heels of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's determination to list the bird under the Endangered Species Act. A final decision by the agency is expected to be announced in September 2015.

"Sage grouse cannot survive without sagebrush habitat," said Curator of Natural History John Goodell. "Sage grouse numbered in the millions at the turn of the century, but now fewer than 400,000 birds live in the Intermountain West's High Desert."

Greater sage-grouse populations have disappeared from parts of their historic range due to habitat loss and degradation. Oregon, once considered a stronghold for the bird, has lost an estimated 50% of its sage grouse population over the past 20 years.

The exhibition explores the fascinating natural history, cultural significance and conservation efforts to protect sage grouse and their habitat. Under an unprecedented partnership including ranchers, researchers, conservation groups, and state and federal agencies - a sage grouse conservation plan is emerging that may stop or even reverse the decline. In addition to highlighting this work, the exhibit offers specific ways the public can directly support sage grouse conservation.

In partnership with The Nature Conservancy and with support from The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, Teton Waters Ranch and USDA/NRCS The Sage Grouse Initiative, *Sage Grouse: Icon of the Sagebrush Sea* will have a public opening reception on October 16 from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Noppadol Paothong, wildlife photographer of *Save The Last Dance: A Story Of North American Grassland Grouse*, an award winning book about North American grouse species, will give a special presentation during the opening reception. Cost to members is free and \$5 for non-members; RSVP at [highdesertmuseum.org/rsvp](http://highdesertmuseum.org/rsvp).

In addition, the High Desert Museum, in partnership with the University of Oregon, will host a Natural History Pub lecture on the sage grouse's Endangered Species listing decision at 7:00 pm on October 13 at McMenamin's Old St. Francis School. This event is free. Seating is limited; RSVP at [highdesertmuseum.org/rsvp](http://highdesertmuseum.org/rsvp).

For additional information, visit [www.highdesertmuseum.org](http://www.highdesertmuseum.org).

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