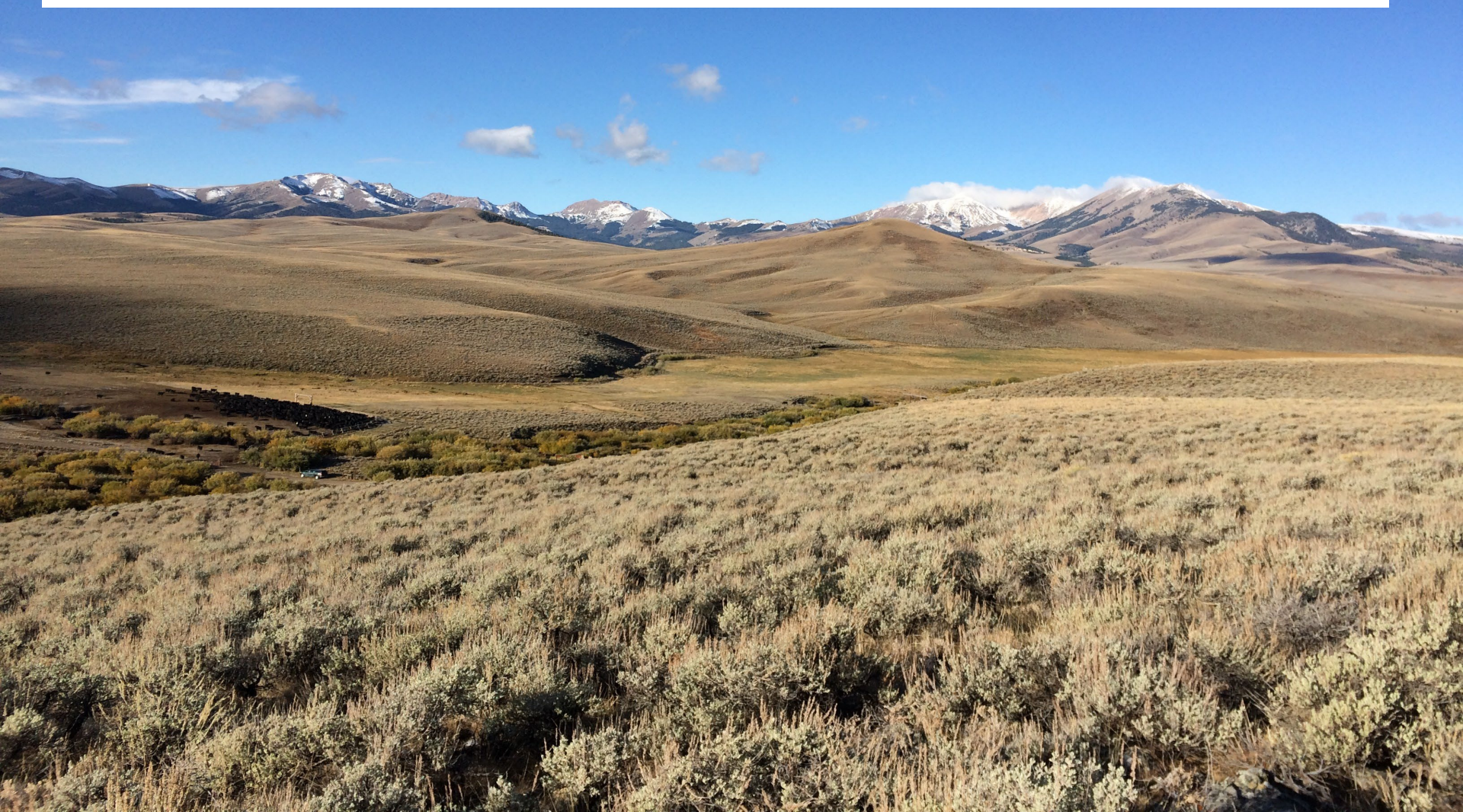




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Montana Focused Conservation



Why did we decide to change our business model?

- State Conservationist experience
- Outcomes are becoming increasingly important.
- Need enough of the right practices, in the right places, to make a difference.
 - Can't be everything to everyone
- Required a delivery model to accomplish this.



Tenets of Montana Focused Conservation

- Locally Led
- Partner Centric
- Leveraged Funds
- Focused and Targeted
- Results Oriented/Accountability
- Transparency



How do we deliver this approach?

- Local Working Groups
- Long Range Plans
 - Presents a vision of collaborative, effective land stewardship
 - Describes baseline and desired future conditions
 - Prioritizes resource concerns
- Targeted Implementation Plans (TIPs)
 - 3-5 year plan for addressing a priority resource concern
- General EQIP Funds
- Commitment from Leadership



Targeted Implementation Plans

Pollinator Habitat

Targeted Implementation Plan

Montana Focused Conservation Planning Strategy

Conrad USDA-NRCS Field Office

Submitted by:

Stacy Denny-Eneboe – NRCS Supervisory District Conservationist

Erin Fairbank – Partner Biologist, Pheasants Forever/NRCS



Glacier County CRP CP42 pollinator planting



Targeted Implementation Plan: Ravalli County

Sapphire Front Forest Health Project



A collaborative effort with Ravalli County partners to improve forest health and resilience to insects, diseases and fire as well as improve wildlife habitat.



Targeted Implementation Plan Outline

- Summary
- Geographic Delineation
- Primary Resource Concern
- Goals and Objectives
- Alternatives
- Proposed Budget
- Partnerships
- Outcomes



Table 1. NRCS Deliverables (core practices offered by NRCS)

Activities	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Forest Stand Improvement (666) (acres)	350	450	250	250	1,300
Woody Residue Treatment (384) (acres)	350	450	250	250	1,300

Table 2 outlines the projected NRCS budget for the SFFH TIP. The projected acres treated was based on previous CTA and outreach with landowners in the Focus Area. The FY2020 EQIP cost list was used in the budget projections.

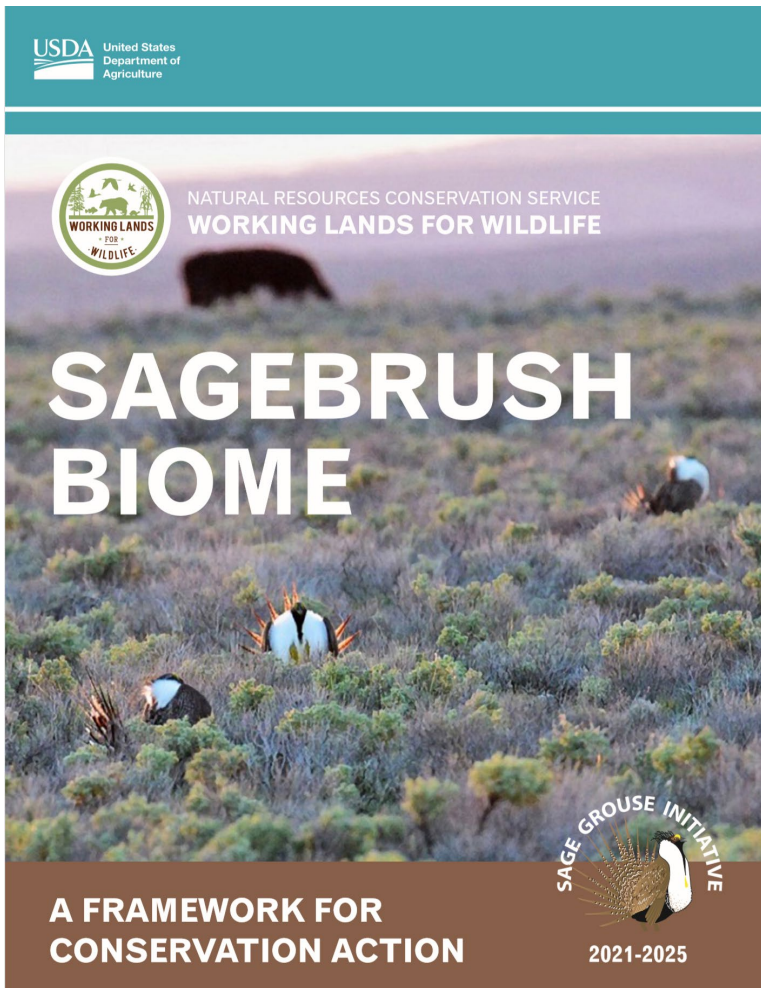
Table 2. NRCS Budget Projections

CONTRIBUTIONS	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
NRCS EQIP FA	\$350,000	\$450,000	\$250,000	250,000	\$1,300,000



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Alignment with Conservation Frameworks

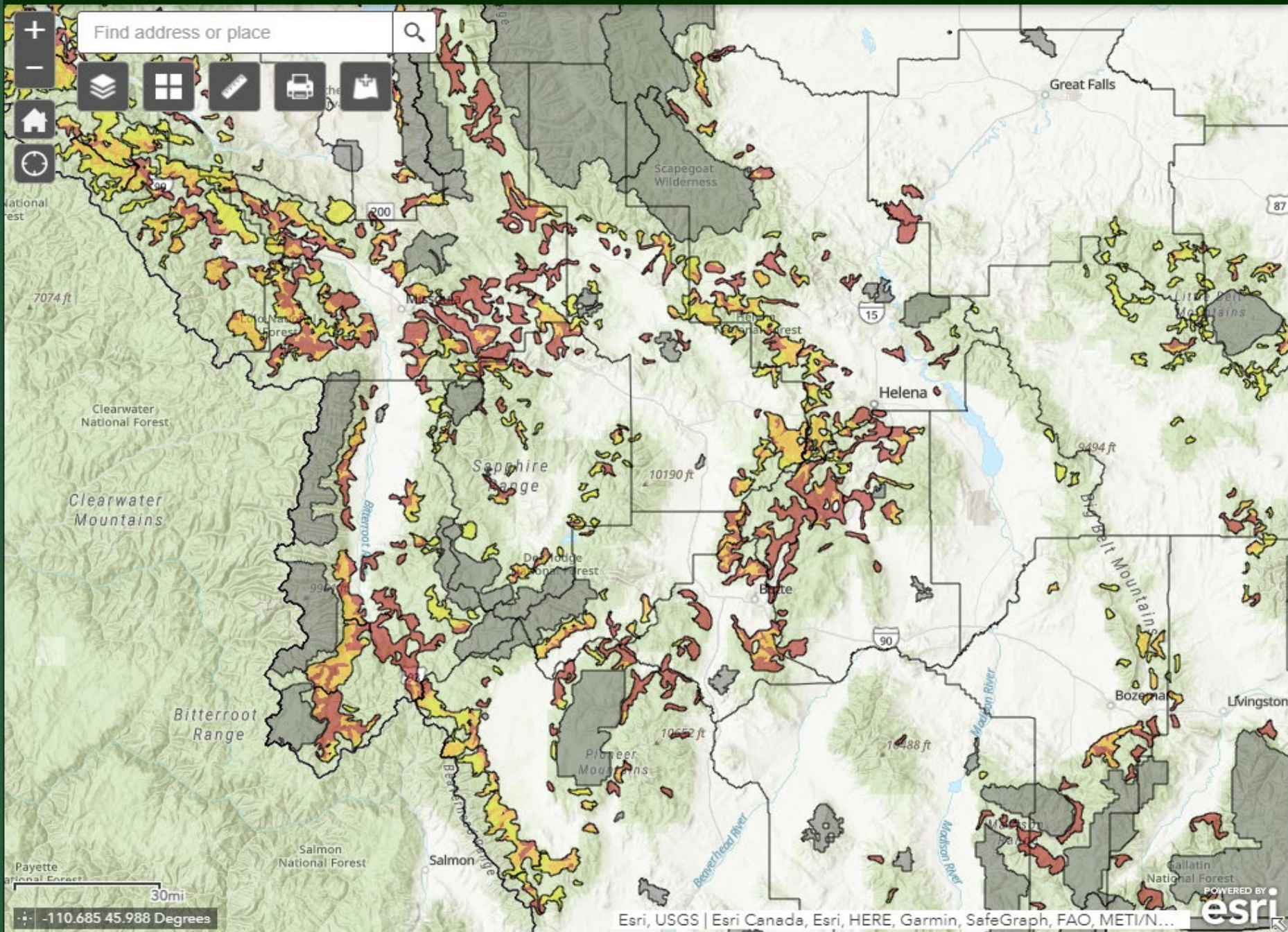


Natural Resources Conservation Service
nrcs.usda.gov/



Montana conifer encroachment: tools for targeting and outreach.

Scott Morford
RAP science team @ UMontana
NRCS Presentation - 2021.07.26





Ventenata Invasive Grass Control
Targeted Implementation Plan

Montana Focused Conservation Planning Strategy

Hardin USDA-NRCS Field Office

Submitted By:
Seanna Torske

Supervisory District Conservationist
Crow Agency, Hardin, and Billings Work Unit





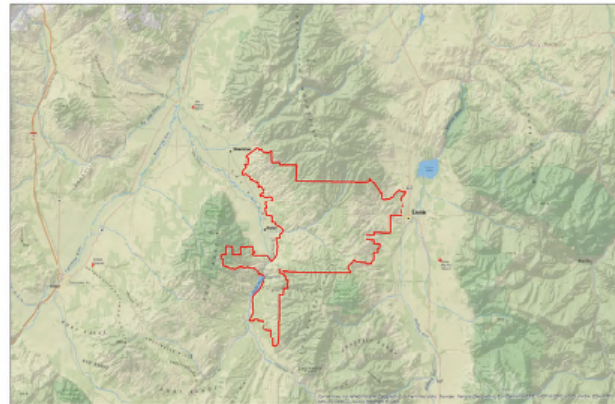
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SOUTH TOBACCO ROOT
RANGELAND AND
CONIFER
ENCROACHMENT PROJECT



"Montana Focused Conservation"

ABSTRACT

The South Tobacco Root Rangeland and Conifer Encroachment Project is a Targeted Implementation Plan to primarily address conifer encroachment into historically sagebrush – dominated ecosystems, in the tributary watersheds of the Lower Ruby River and Madison River. Treatments may include juniper eradication and thinning in mixed conifer forests. Expected outcomes are improved rangeland biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and water quantity for stream flows which are critical for irrigation in the valleys, as well as aquatic species.

Montana NRCS-
Sheridan Field
Office

2019



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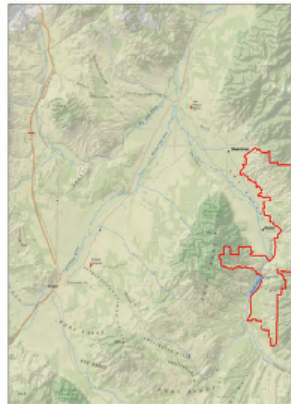
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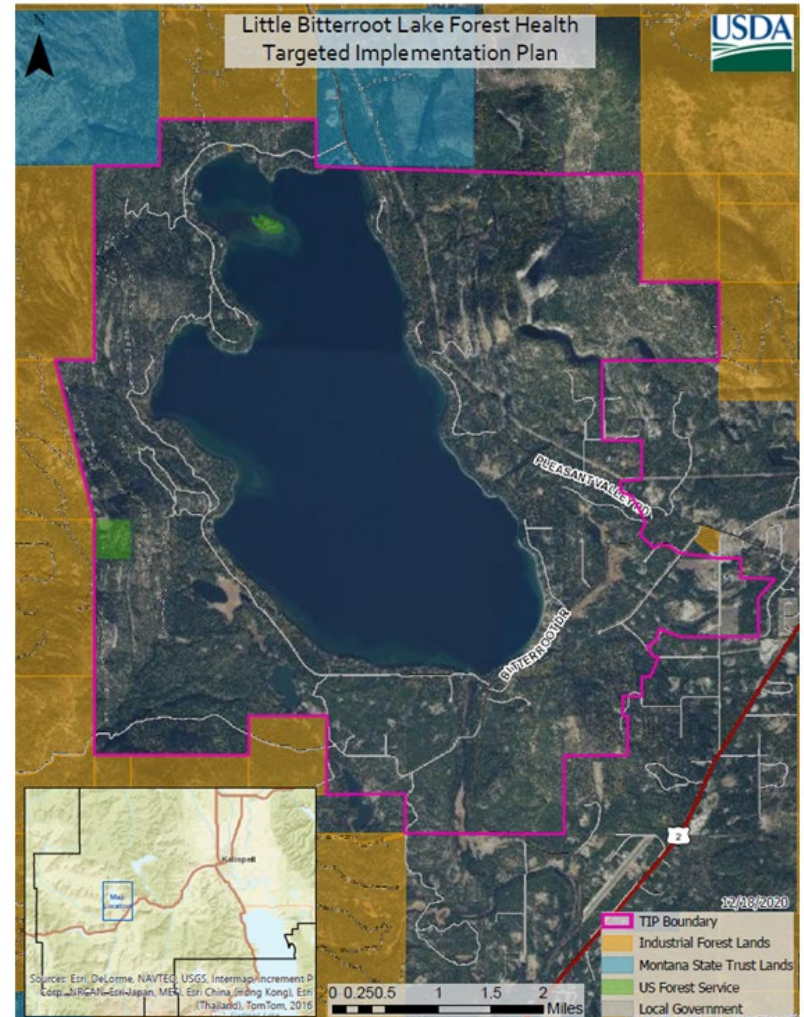
SOUTH TO RAN

ENCROACHM



Little Bitterroot Lake Forest Health Targeted Implementation Plan Flathead County

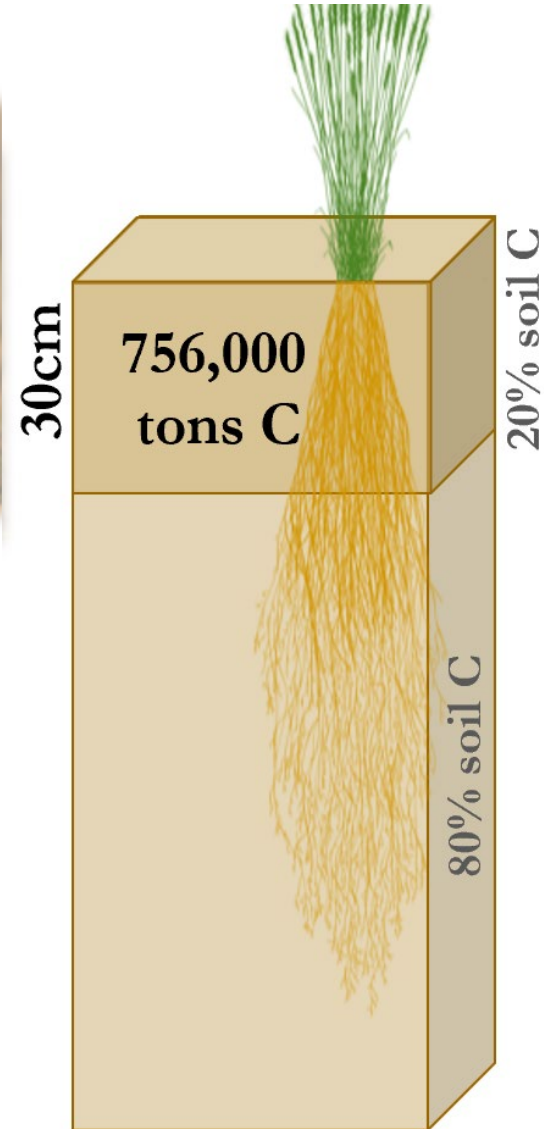
Promoting forest health and productivity by decreasing insect and disease issues, addressing present noxious weed populations, while also creating a more fire resilient forest within the Wildland Urban Interface.



Source: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., AirCANE-EntelJapan, MEK, Esri, China, Jirong Kongli, Esri (Thailand), TomTom, 2016

Outcomes Matter!

- Merriam.—
Outcome (n.) the way a story turns out; a consequence.
- Syn. Upshot, effect, conclusion





Songbird response to conifer removal in southwest Montana

A presentation by Elise Zarri and Dr. Thomas Martin

Hosted by the Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership

Date: January 13, 2021

Time: 1:00pm MST 30-40 minute presentation followed with Q&A



Graduate student Elise Zarri and Dr. Thomas Martin from the University of Montana will present their research into how conifer removals impact songbird communities. They have been working in conifer removal treatments in the Medicine Lodge Valley and investigating how removals affect abundance and reproductive success of sagebrush-obligate, sagebrush-associated, and generalist songbirds. They will provide initial results from the first two years of the study and future directions for the remaining two years.

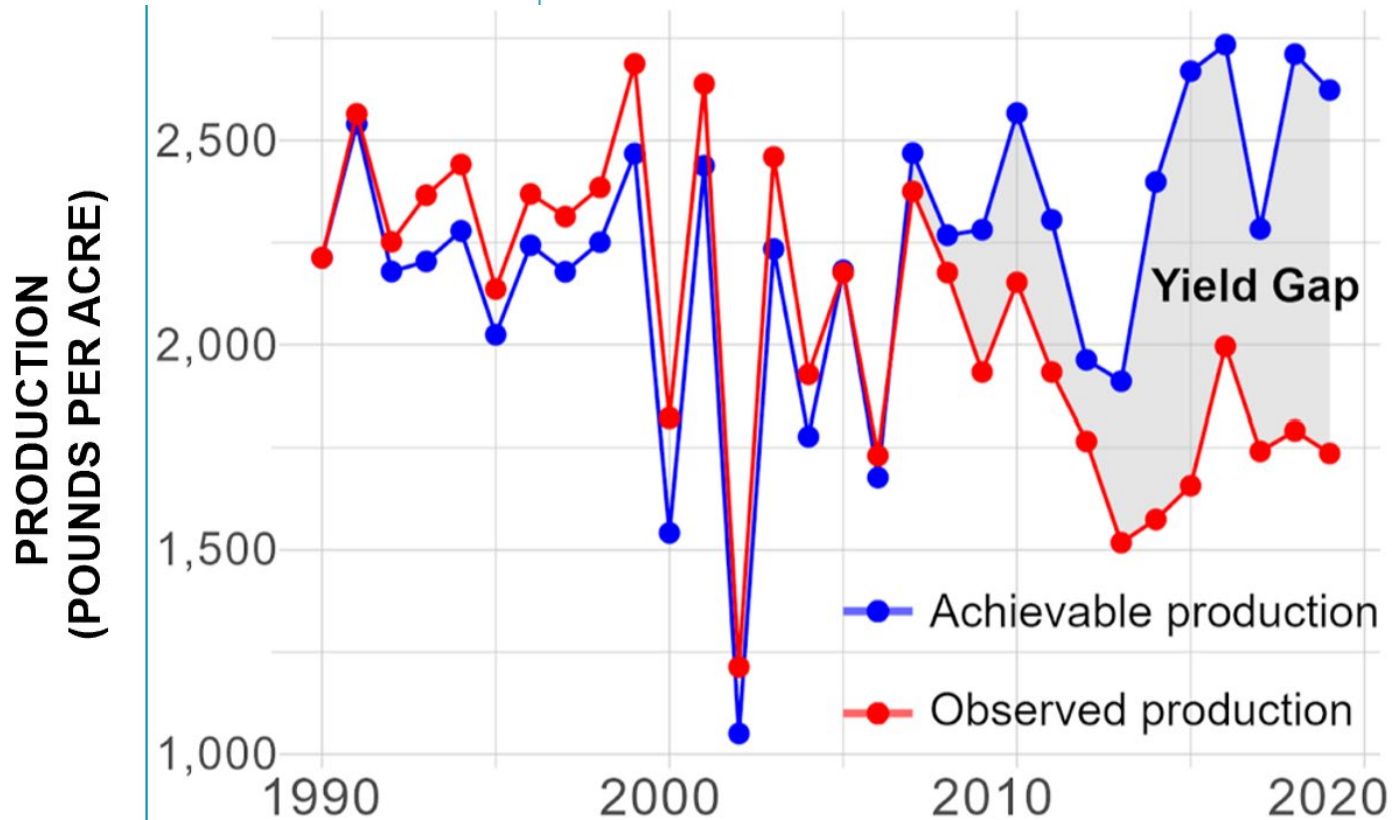
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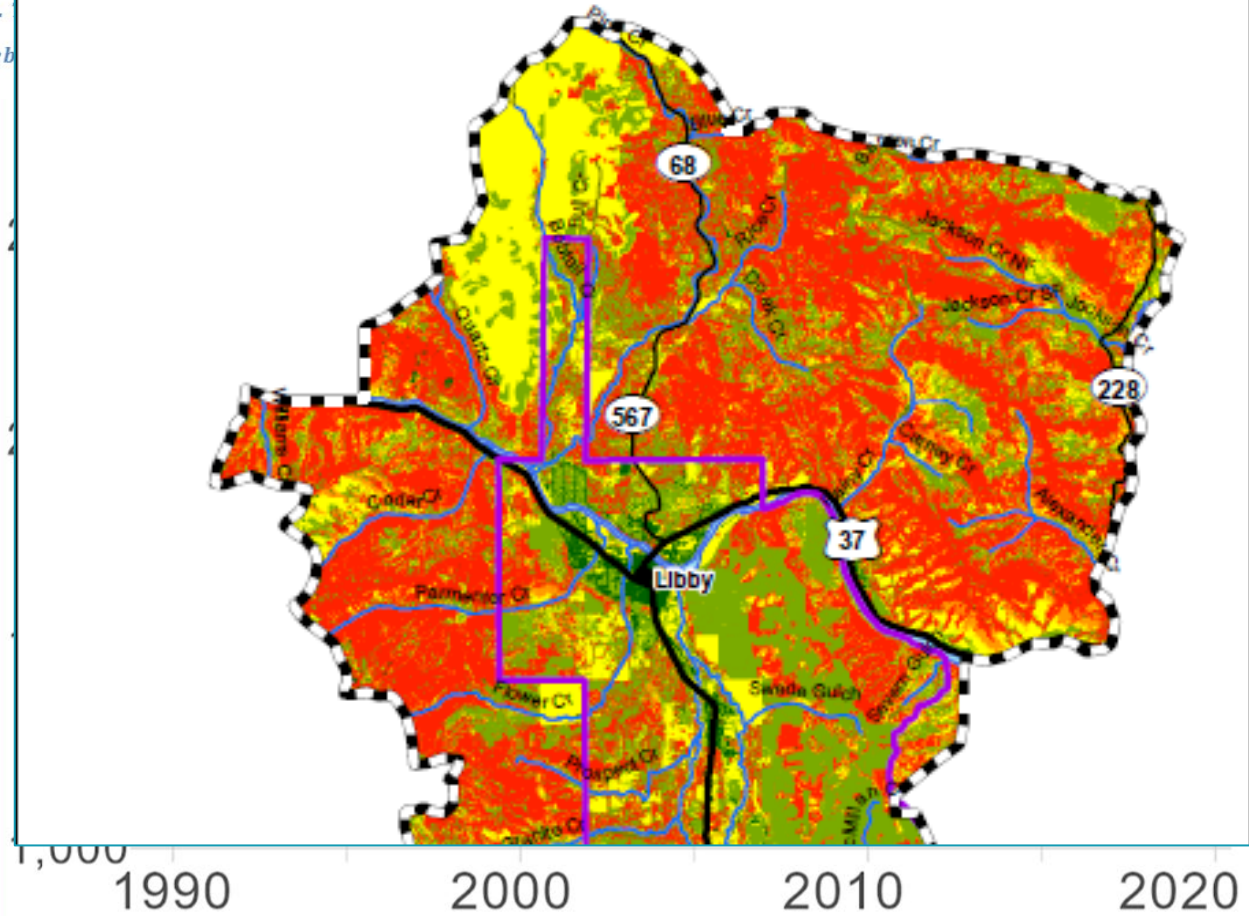
Date: January 13, 2021

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PRODUCTION
(POUNDS PER ACRE)

Libby Surround Stewardship Project
Joint Chief's Proposal
Libby Ranger District
Kootenai National Forest
Post Treatment Flame Length




Montana CRP to grazing lands highlight in Great Plains Framework

Success Spotlight

Building a Herd and Hope

In 2017, a record-setting drought in Phillips County, Montana left many ranchers in a panic, including Heather Martin. Luckily, Martin learned about an opportunity for installing a much-needed water source for her cattle. USDA, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the local conservation district, and the nonprofit Ranchers Stewardship Alliance had teamed up to help landowners put expiring CRP into sustainable grazing systems to reduce cultivation risk and maintain grasslands. As a priority habitat for grassland and upland birds, Martin's project was the perfect fit.

The partners provided cost-share funds for Martin to drill a new well, install pipeline, and build two wildlife-friendly water tanks. The new water system allows her to graze pastures in the winter, as well as rest other pastures in the spring and summer to promote fresh re-growth. The reinvigorated landscape is paying big dividends for birds and wildlife, but the most rewarding part is that it gave a young rancher the boost she needed to grow her herd.



“We want her ranching operations to be functional because that makes it functional for wildlife, too.”

- Martin Townsend, Soil and Water Conservation District of Montana and the Rancher's Stewardship Alliance

Lessons Learned

- Conservation community excitement
- Creativity from field
- There is no playbook, we work through challenges as a team
- We continue to work on outcomes vs outputs
 - CEAP Webinars
 - Investing in partners



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Thank you!

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