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Wires and Wildlife: Transmission Development and Western Migratory Species Success Story

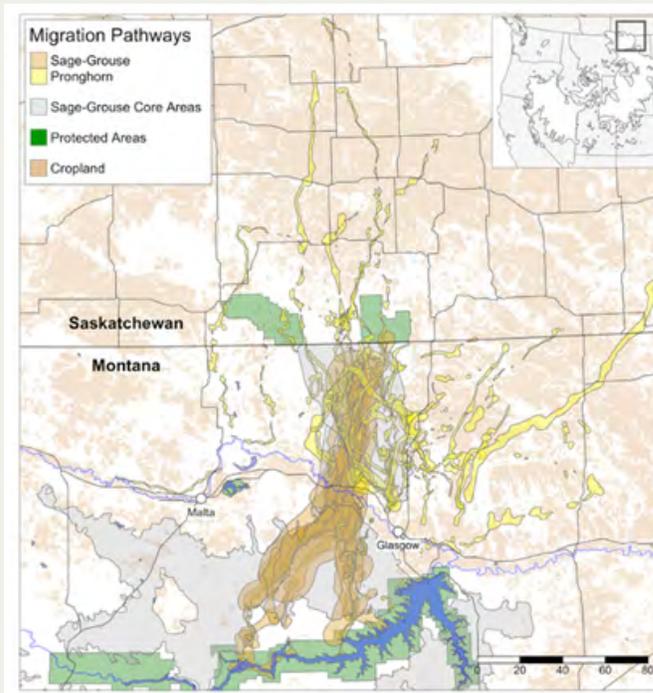


Data-Driven Restoration and Mitigation Projects Promoting Migrations and Preventing Unnecessary Takes



NWF's report, *Wires and Wildlife: Transmission Development and Western Migratory Species*, provides an overview of the threats facing some iconic migratory species, in light of their unique habitat needs, to better understand the potential implications of transmission buildout in the Intermountain West. Proactively planned and responsibly sited transmission developments are possible -- and they can help conserve crucial habitat while building a connected Western transmission grid.

One example of success in this space is from the Northern Sagebrush Steppe (NSS), a region that spans Montana and parts of Canada. The NSS experienced significant land changes due to agricultural settlement, urban development, resource extraction, and livestock grazing. The region also includes crucial habitat for multiple species. The longest recorded migratory movements made by pronghorn and greater sage-grouse were recorded across the NSS.



This image indicates spatial overlap between greater sage-grouse and pronghorn while migrating between seasonal ranges in North Central Montana and Southern Saskatchewan. Citation J.D. Tack et al., Beyond protected areas: Private lands and public policy anchor intact pathways for multi-species wildlife migration (2019)

Thanks to land stewardship by ranchers, and habitat management by federal, Tribal, and NGO partners, large portions of native grassland and sagebrush habitats in the NSS have been preserved. Community-driven and collaborative organizations like the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance have also implemented restoration projects using data-driven and targeted approaches -- such as fence modifications and reseeding native habitats -- that protect multiple wildlife species.

These organizations draw upon expertise from state and federal government, conservation organizations, and academic institutions. The work in the NSS offers insights for industry, showing how the impacts of future development can be mitigated in ways that protect multiple species, and with methods supported by local communities.



Other key lessons learned:

- Data-driven, targeted approaches to conserve wildlife needs can inform restoration projects.
- Sharing restoration project costs can be implemented by aligning tribes, NGOs, state and federal agencies, and developers.
- Simple fence modifications can reduce impacts to multiple species of wildlife.
- Habitat connectivity can be preserved and enhanced through proactive transmission planning.



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