



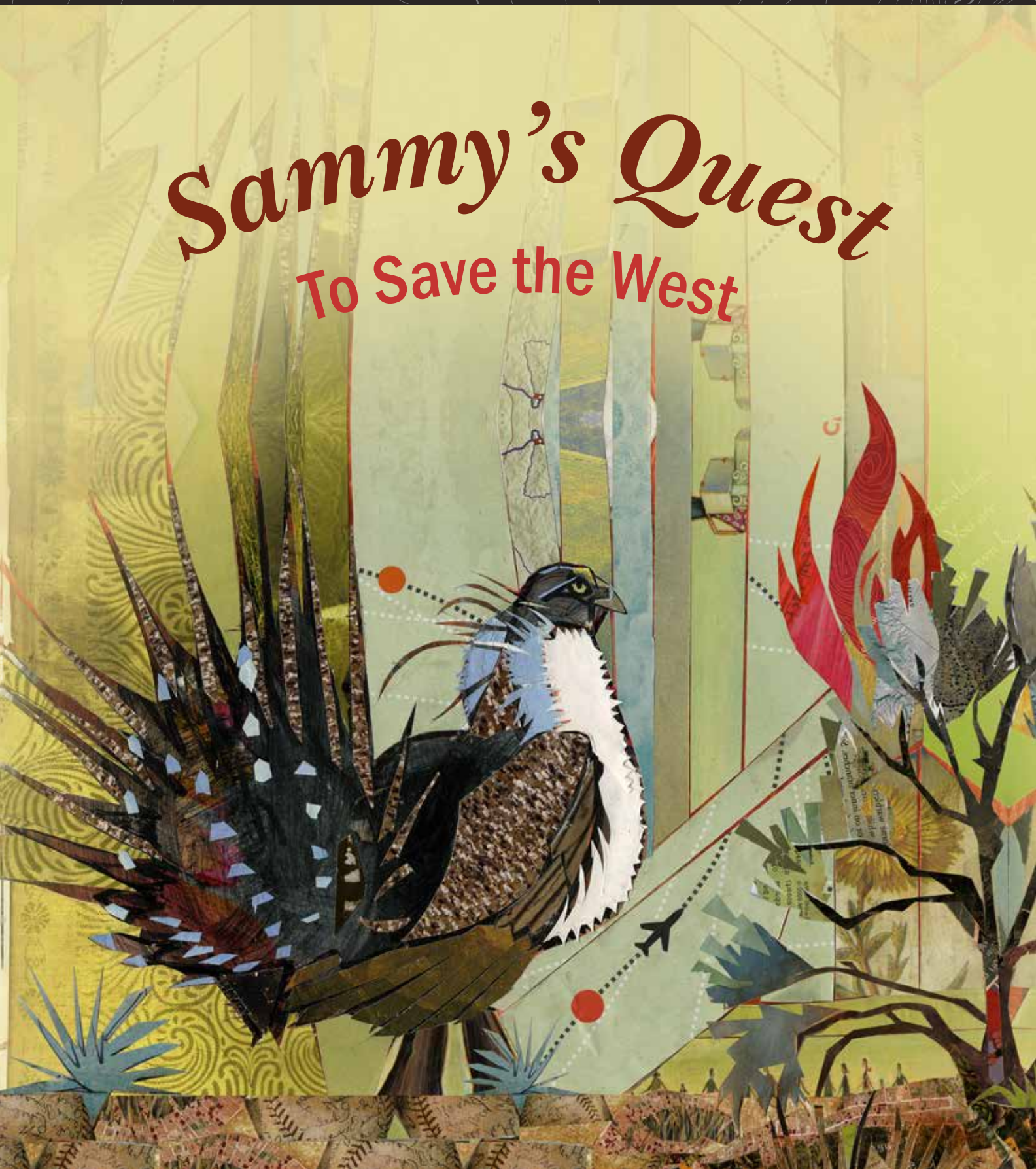
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

JUNIOR RANGER SERIES



# Sammy's Quest

## To Save the West



# The Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a federal government agency that takes care of nearly 245 million acres of public lands containing over half of the sagebrush community of plants and animals in the United States. These lands, primarily in the western states, belong to you and all Americans. The BLM also manages a number of smaller public land sites in the eastern United States.



These lands provide habitat for wildlife, food for livestock and timber. They provide many other natural resources, too, such as coal, oil, natural gas and minerals. The lands contain evidence of the past, such as dinosaur bones and plant fossils. Archaeological sites on public lands help us learn about people who lived here long ago. Today, people like you enjoy exploring the vast open spaces on public lands.

## The Junior Ranger Program



M. Meier

The Junior Ranger Program introduces young adventurers to public lands and the resources they contain. After you complete the activities in this booklet, clip out the Junior Ranger Certificate on the last page, recite the Junior Ranger pledge and sign your name. Then, keep the pledge as you continue to explore your public lands.



This publication is part of the BLM Junior Ranger series of the BLM Division of Education, Interpretation, and Partnerships. Visit our website to learn more about the BLM Junior Ranger Program at [www.blm.gov/learn/youth-and-educators/junior-ranger-program](http://www.blm.gov/learn/youth-and-educators/junior-ranger-program).

For answers to the activity pages or a copy of this Junior Ranger guide, visit [www.idahofireinfo.com/p/sammy-sage-grouse.html](http://www.idahofireinfo.com/p/sammy-sage-grouse.html).





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# Sammy's Quest

## To Save the West

BLM Fire and Aviation  
Idaho State Office  
1387 South Vinnell Way  
Boise, ID 83709  
208-373-3963

# The Quest in Idaho

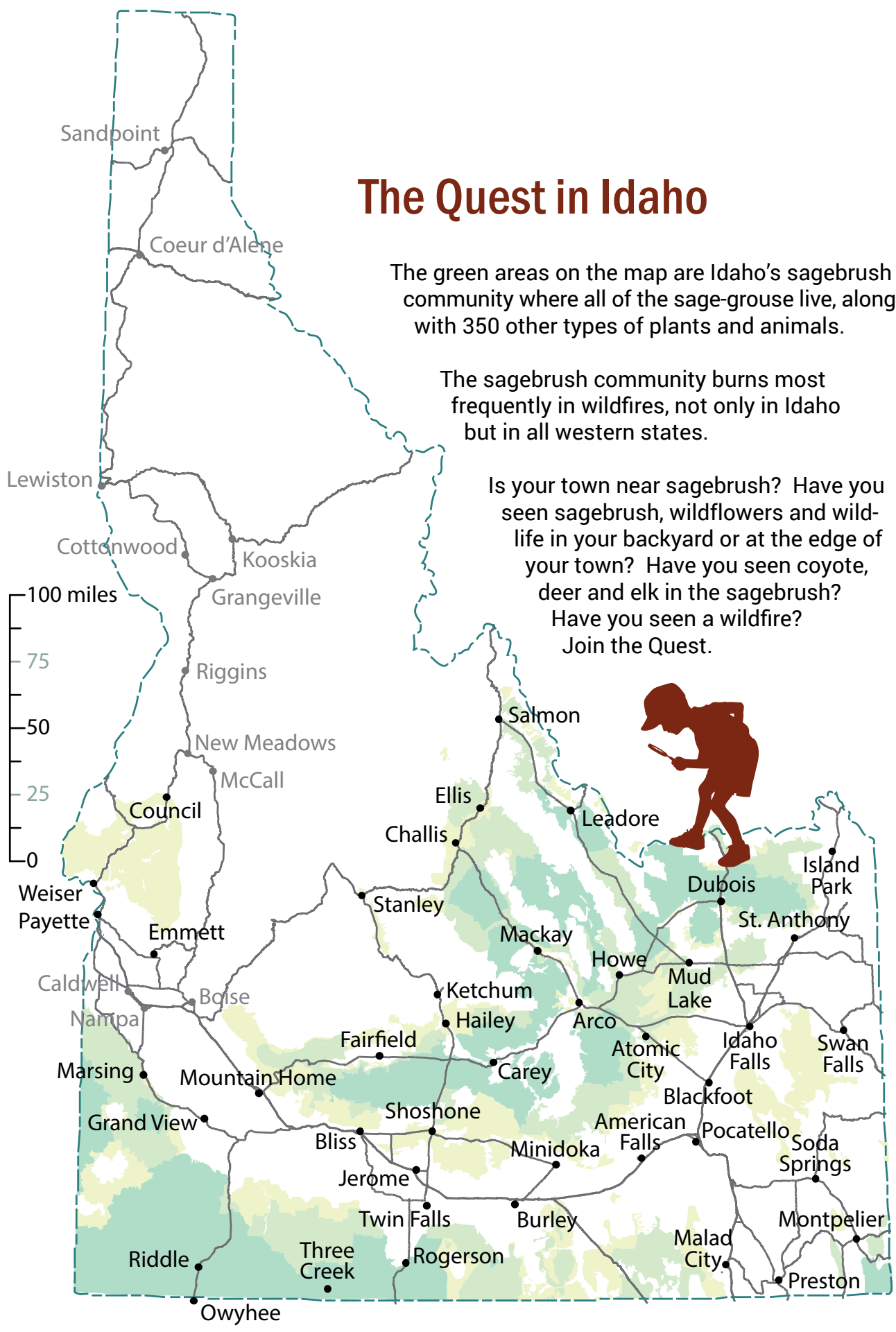
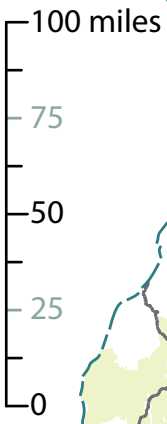
The green areas on the map are Idaho's sagebrush community where all of the sage-grouse live, along with 350 other types of plants and animals.

The sagebrush community burns most frequently in wildfires, not only in Idaho but in all western states.

Is your town near sagebrush? Have you seen sagebrush, wildflowers and wild-life in your backyard or at the edge of your town? Have you seen coyote, deer and elk in the sagebrush? Have you seen a wildfire? Join the Quest.



SCALE







Greater sage-grouse males have a white collar, black belly feathers and are less colorful during the summer, fall and winter. Tom Koerner, USFWS





Sammy, a Greater Sage-grouse male, is very colorful during the spring mating season.

Tom Koerner, USFWS



# Hello, Junior Ranger!

My name is Sammy. Sage-grouse like me and over 350 plants and animals call sagebrush lands home. We need sagebrush and the insects and other plants found around it to survive. We live nowhere else on Earth but western North America—including Idaho—which gives us a chance to get to know each other.

## *Our sagebrush home...*

- serves as a nursery that protects young elk, golden eagles, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, pygmy rabbits and sagebrush lizards so they can grow into strong adults.
- is home to tribal nations, who hunt, fish and gather plants and minerals.
- provides beautiful open spaces where people find fun, recreation and renewal.
- yields food for livestock and materials for roads, schools, homes and cars.
- contains energy resources to fuel the country's economy.
- is part of America's western heritage.

## *Why care about our sagebrush home?*

- Wildfire burns more of it every year than any other kind of place in the United States.
- It is only half the size it used to be, because of wildfires, invading plants and other factors.
- Many partners are working together to restore healthy plants to benefit wildlife and people.

I can't wait to show you around and introduce you to all the interesting places that you'll find here. We'll do some fun activities that explain how we sage-grouse meet various challenges to our survival and will help you find ways to protect the sagebrush lands and all of us who live here.

Thanks for letting me share this unique world with you!

*Your friend, Sammy*



Greater Sage-grouse:

- weigh about five pounds, about as much as a chicken
- have white speckles on brown and black feathers
- stay on the ground most of the time because of their large size
- can fly at speeds of up to 50 miles per hour, to escape predators or wildfire



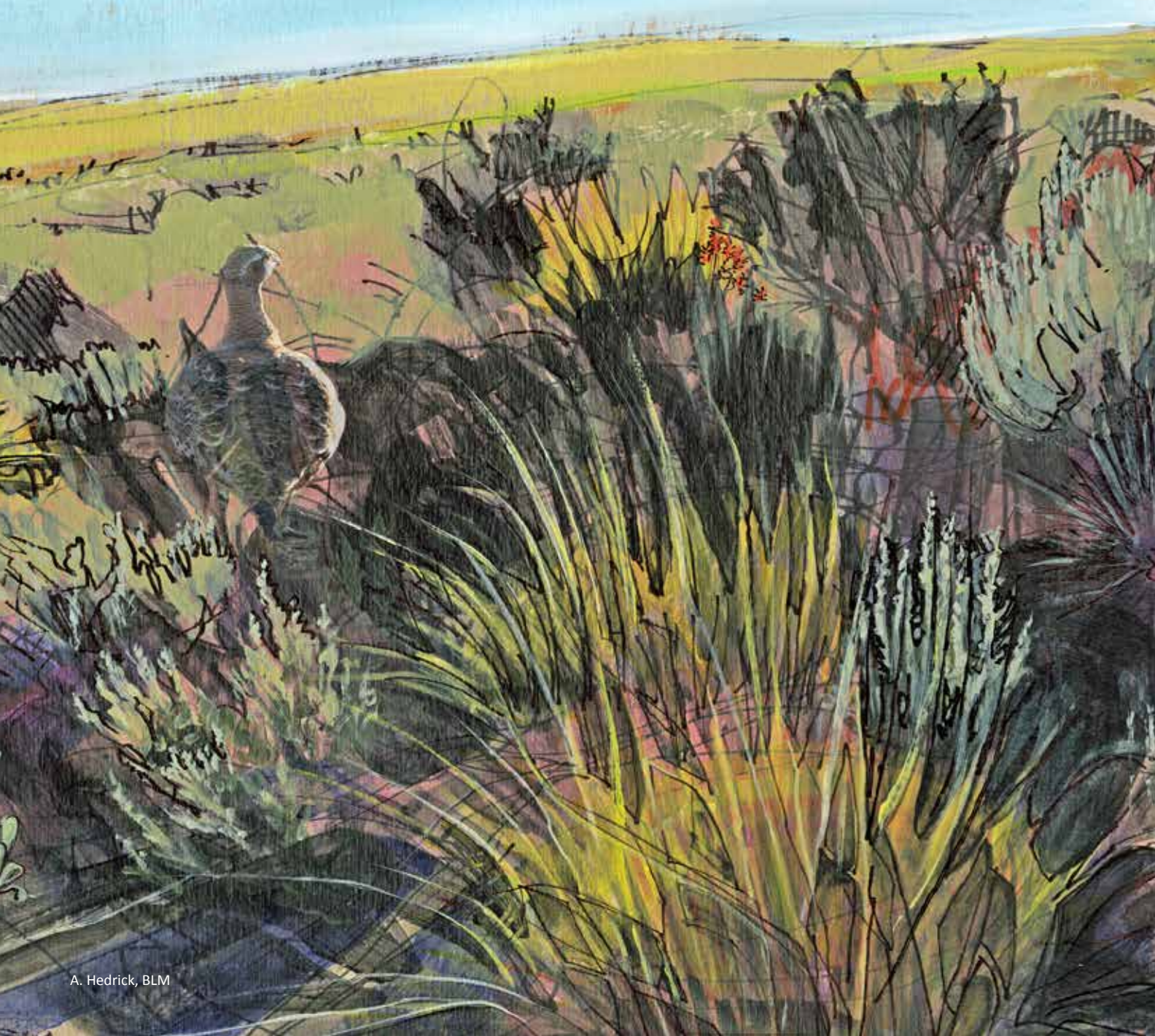
Volunteers watch a biologist from the Idaho Fish and Game demonstrate how to plant a sagebrush seedling in an area burned by wildfire.  
Photo BLM



# At Home in the Sagebrush Steppe

Many wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and cactuses grow where I live. There are also trees like mountain mahogany and juniper. This community of plants and the animals they support is called an **ecosystem**. The ecosystem shown below is called the **sagebrush steppe**. "Steppe" is a word for a large, flat grassland. In Idaho, sagebrush steppe is the area between rivers and forests. It is usually hot and dry in the summer and cold and windy in winter.

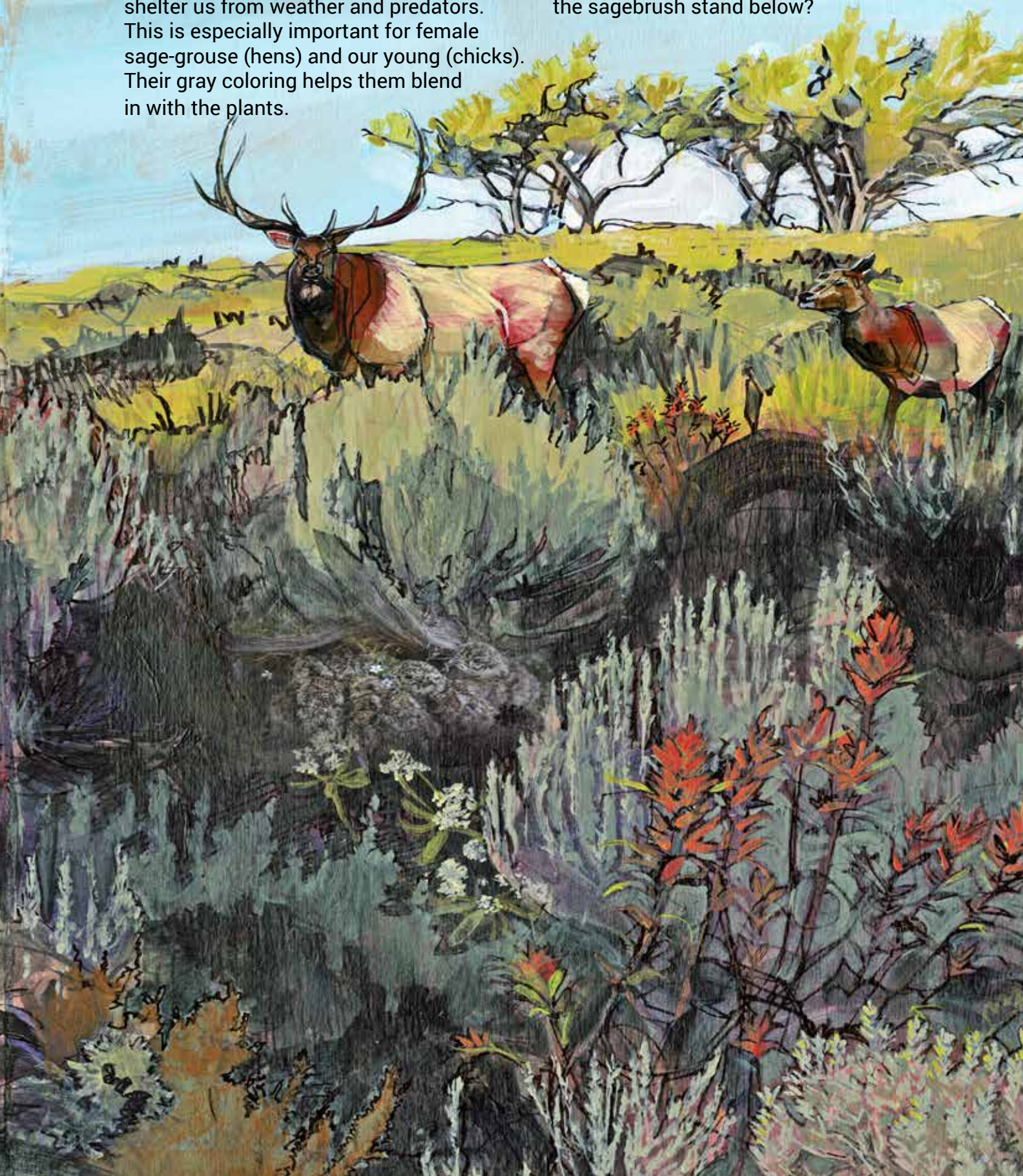
We sage-grouse rely completely on sagebrush and other plants of the steppe for our health and survival. Sagebrush is our favorite food and just about the only thing we eat in the winter. In other seasons, we eat native grasses, leaves, flowers, buds and insects that also live on these plants.





The sagebrush and taller grasses also shelter us from weather and predators. This is especially important for female sage-grouse (hens) and our young (chicks). Their gray coloring helps them blend in with the plants.

Can you find my **hen** and **chicks** hidden in the sagebrush stand below?





# Plants Growing in the Sagebrush Steppe

DRAW AN ARROW TO MATCH EACH PLANT NAME TO THE CORRECT PHOTO.

## *Bluebunch Wheatgrass*

grows in large grassy bunches and is named for its bluish-green coloring.

## *Arrowleaf Balsamroot*

has yellow flowers that look like sunflowers with large, pointed leaves.

## *Lupine*

has purple flower clusters and grows 10-15 leaves from a single center point.

## *Indian Paintbrush*

has bright red leaves that grow taller on a stalk than the green leaves.



## *Did You Know?*

There are about 200 kinds of plants in the sagebrush steppe.





DRAW AN ARROW TO MATCH EACH PLANT NAME TO THE CORRECT PHOTO.

*Juniper*

is a bushy-looking tree that has very small blue berries.



*Wild Onion*

has white to pink flowers and small underground bulbs.



*Rabbitbrush*

is a shrub that grows in a mound with small yellow flower clusters.



*Mountain Mahogany*

is a tree that grows on steep slopes and provides an umbrella for shade.



*Western Yarrow*

has white flower clusters and leaves that look like ferns.



# What's for Supper?

*Sagebrush—my favorite!*

Of the 21 different types of sagebrush, the low-growing kind feeds me during the winter. I also eat my favorite wildflower, sulfur buckwheat, western yarrow, leaves, buds and some insects.

I cannot survive without sagebrush. This is true for other animals like pygmy rabbits. We are called sagebrush obligates.



Sulfur Buckwheat

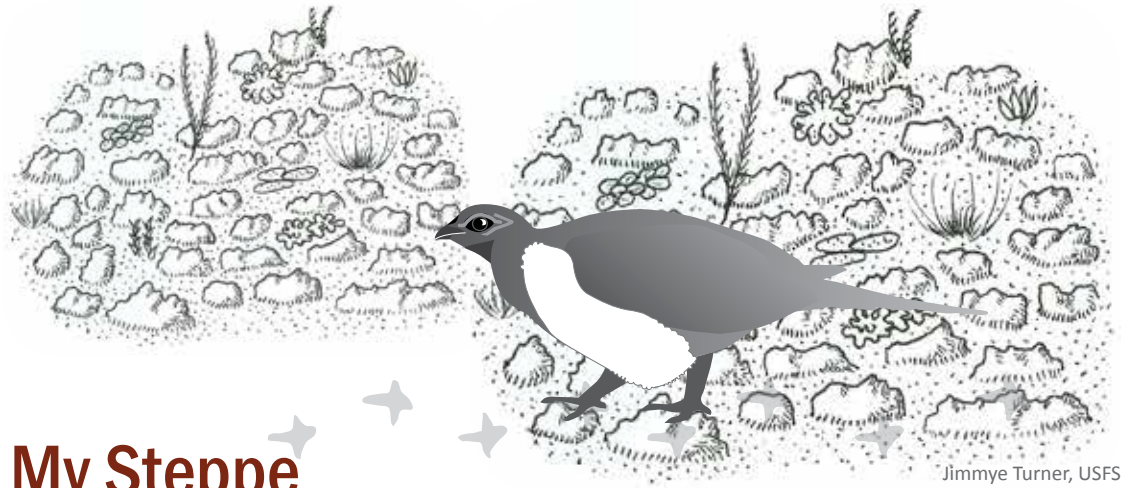


## *Did You Know?*

There are 35 different types of insects that live in sagebrush, more than 55 types use rabbitbrush and 25 types that like sulfur buckwheat? How many types of insects is that in all?







## Watch My Steppe

We sage-grouse can fly, but we prefer to walk to get around. Moist **biocrusts** give us hiking paths and walkways. Biocrusts are like multi-colored carpets made of algae, moss, lichens, fungi, bacteria and minerals—the building blocks for soil. They hold moisture that can be scarce in sagebrush steppe. Without biocrusts, soil wears down or erodes, and native plants die for lack of water or a place to take root. That leaves us sage-grouse with nothing to eat and no walking paths.

Biocrusts can also be crushed or trampled in areas heavily traveled by people or other animals. Then, weeds can fill in, grow very tall, take moisture out of the soil and make it hard for me to move around. Weeds also burn very easily in wildfires, making fires happen more often and allowing them to move faster over more area.

So, watch your step in the steppe, and stay on trails when you're on wheels.





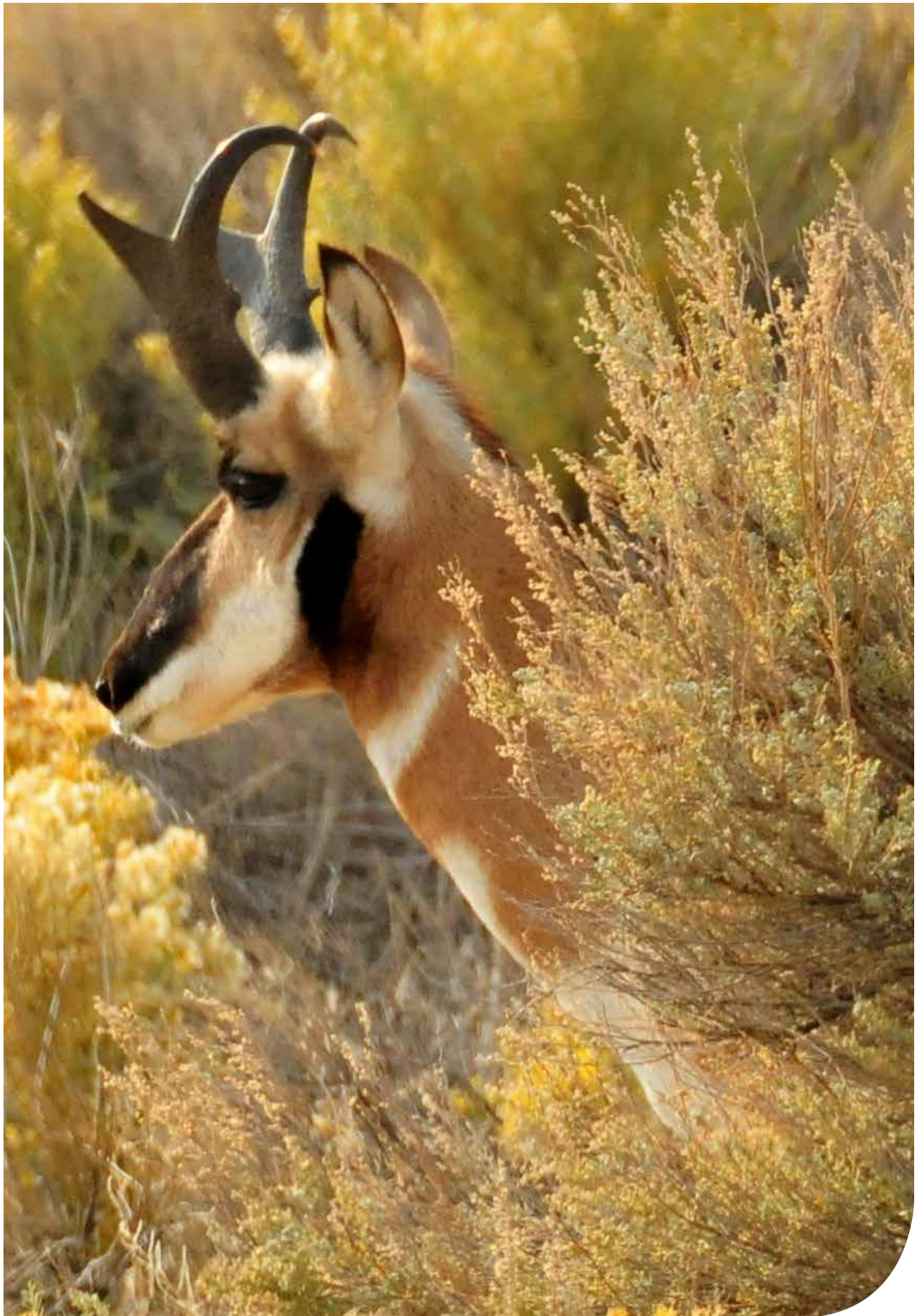
A diorama depicting a sagebrush landscape. At the top, a blue jay is perched on a branch, its body and wings made of blue and black paper with green leaf cutouts. Below it, a coyote is shown in profile on the left, and a hawk is perched on a branch on the right. The background features a yellowish-green sky with a faint circular pattern. The entire scene is constructed from various colored papers and cutouts, creating a textured, three-dimensional effect.

## Sagebrush Protects Me

Ravens, coyotes, hawks, eagles and other **predators** can't see me because my colors blend in with the sagebrush.

Sagebrush also shelters me in cold or stormy weather.





Pronghorn antelope live in the sagebrush steppe. Tom Koerner, USFWS



# Pushy Grasses Invade the Steppe

After a wildfire, there is a good chance that plants like cheatgrass, medusahead and other noxious weeds will sprout. They can take the place of **native** plants that keep the sagebrush steppe healthy. These invaders grow quickly and steal water, sunlight and space from native plants.

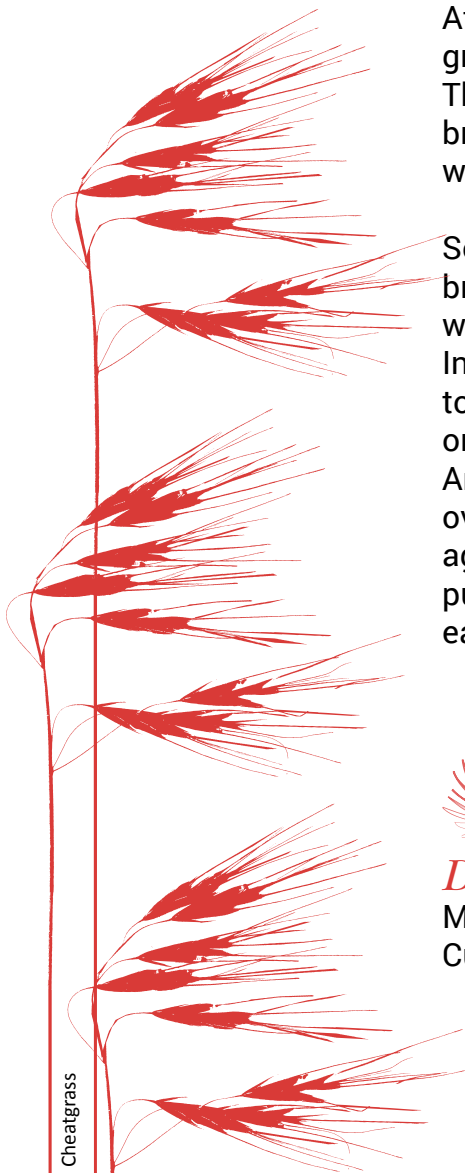
Soon, these invaders are the only thing growing, and the sagebrush steppe becomes a **monoculture**. No more bluebunch wheatgrass, lupine, wild onion, western yarrow, Indian paintbrush, rabbitbrush or sagebrush to feed and shelter me and other wildlife, or wild horses, cows or sheep, either! And once these invaders have taken over, the steppe burns over and over again, year after year, because these pushy plants burn and return more easily than native plants.



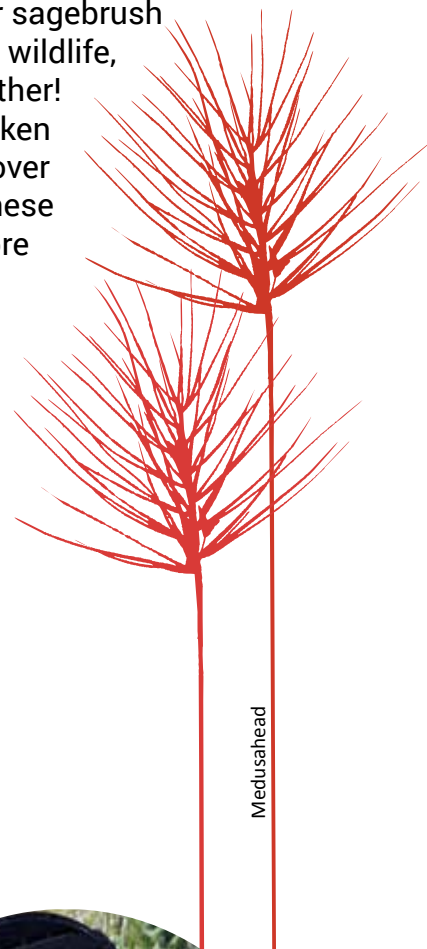
## *Did You Know?*

Mono = one, only, or single  
Culture = group or species

Cheatgrass



Medusahead



Cheatgrass takes over after a wildfire.



Medusahead forms a thick mat that chokes out native plants.



# Bushy, Pushy Trees

Juniper trees are a beautiful, natural part of sagebrush lands. But their seeds spread, sprout and grow downhill onto the flat steppe. These new trees push out sagebrush and other native plants that we sage-grouse and other animals need to survive.

Too many junipers soak up all the water in the ground, block out the sunlight for wildflowers and grasses, and give predator birds high perches from which to hunt me and other small animals and birds.

We like to push out all the other plants!

Junipers are also very volatile meaning they burn very hot and fast during a wildfire.





# Animals in My Neighborhood

Unscramble the words to find birds, reptiles, insects and mammals.  
Here are a few to look for:

sage sparrow  
pygmy rabbit  
badger

mule deer  
harvester ant  
ground squirrel

coyote  
sage-grouse  
rattlesnake

pronghorn  
golden eagle  
raven

ootcey = \_\_\_\_\_

nrohrongp = \_\_\_\_\_

lsetnatkear = \_\_\_\_\_

gesa reogsu = \_\_\_\_\_

gympy abirtb = \_\_\_\_\_

druong reiulrqs = \_\_\_\_\_

deglno aeegl = \_\_\_\_\_

lume reed = \_\_\_\_\_

vsetrerah tan = \_\_\_\_\_

drbgae = \_\_\_\_\_

gase rwopsar = \_\_\_\_\_

vrena = \_\_\_\_\_



# Walk Me Home

Now that you know which plants and animals are good for me, guide me along the safest path to my family at the center of the maze. Keep to routes with good sagebrush, wildflowers, insects and native grasses. Avoid predators and plants that I don't like to eat.





# True or False

*You've learned a lot about plants and animals in the sagebrush steppe.*

Think about each statement below and write "t" next to the ones that are true and "f" next to the false statements.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sage-grouse, like Sammy, prefer walking to flying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Steppe is a name for a large, flat grassland.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Coyotes, ravens, hawks and eagles hunt sage-grouse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Only 5 animals live in the sagebrush steppe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sagebrush provides protection and shelter for Sammy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrowleaf balsamroot has purple flowers that look like sunflowers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sammy loves to eat cheatgrass and medusahead grass.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sammy loves to eat wildflowers, insects and sagebrush.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pygmy rabbits and ground squirrels live in the sagebrush steppe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Algae, moss, lichen and fungi are part of the soils that nurture plants.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Algae, moss, lichen and fungi are some of the biocrusts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Biocrusts are moist carpets where Sammy walks between grasses and shrubs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Juniper trees are a natural part of Sammy's home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Juniper trees can takeover other plants' growing areas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ More than 350 plants and animals live in the sagebrush steppe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sage-grouse can fly.



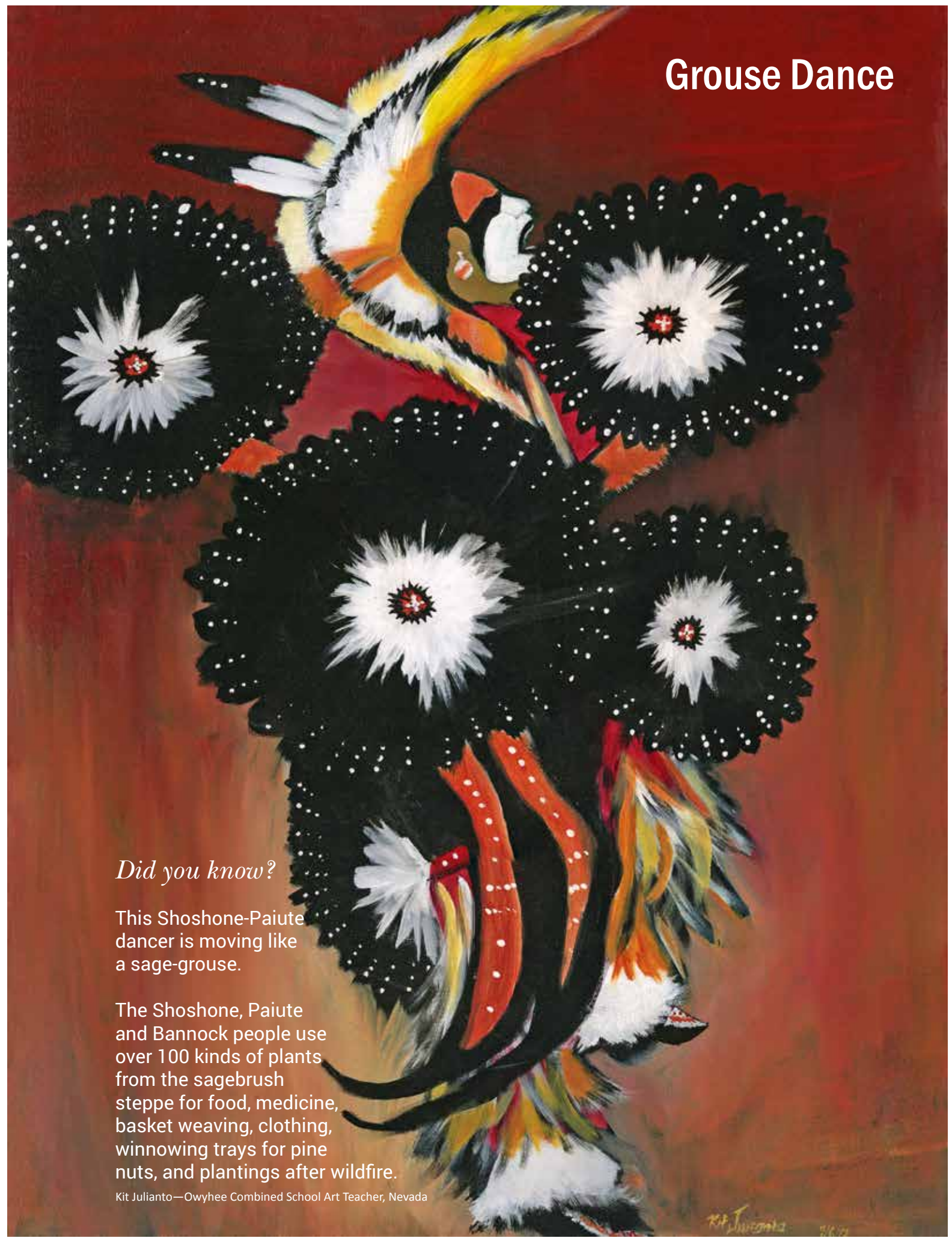
# Grouse Dance

## *Did you know?*

This Shoshone-Paiute dancer is moving like a sage-grouse.

The Shoshone, Paiute and Bannock people use over 100 kinds of plants from the sagebrush steppe for food, medicine, basket weaving, clothing, winnowing trays for pine nuts, and plantings after wildfire.

Kit Julianto—Owyhee Combined School Art Teacher, Nevada





# Smart Words

As you explore the sagebrush-steppe, get to know these words.

Match each word in the left column with its correct definition in the right column.  
Find clues in this book.

*Biocrusts*      *plants and animals sharing the same place*

*Community*      *algae, moss, lichen, fungi and bacteria*

*Hen and Chick*      *hunter*

*Predator*      *name of female and baby sage-grouse*

*Monoculture*      *wearing away*

*Erosion*      *one group or species*

*Native*      *Sammy's favorite wildflower to eat*

*Sulfur Buckwheat*      *large, flat grassland*

*Steppe*      *natural*





# You Can Help Us!

*Keep our young safe and sound*

We need...

- a roof of sagebrush overhead.
- moist biocrust carpets to use for escaping coyotes that find our nest.
- a nearby lunch line with wildflowers and insects.



So please...

- stay on trails—don't crush our carpets and sidewalks of biocrusts.
- be very careful and safe with campfires and fireworks.
- keep wildflowers, sagebrush, grasses, and other plants from burning.
- learn how plants affect your life.
- look for opportunities to volunteer planting sagebrush or other seedlings.

Thank you, Junior Ranger



A young student writes about his experiments planting sagebrush seedlings in native and commercial soils in Owyhee, Nevada.  
Drew Nash, Times-News Photo



Gerrit Vyn, Cornell Lab



# Wildfire is the Biggest Threat to the Sagebrush Steppe.

Wildfires are a huge threat to me, my friends and the sagebrush steppe plants. Sagebrush grows very slowly. It can take 75 years for a single sagebrush to grow into a large, mature bush that supports wildlife.



Many wildfires in Idaho are caused by lightning. Many wildfires are caused by careless people.



# Be Very Careful With Fire and Fireworks

*Carelessness causes many wildfires every year.*

- Put out your campfire and fireworks completely, and use them only in places where they are permitted.
- Keep your fire away from grass, brush and trees.
- Use a fire pan and have water nearby.
- Before you leave, drown your fire with water.
- Stir the coals. Add more water, and stir again.
- Feel the coals to be sure your fire is out cold.
- Fireworks threaten the health of the sagebrush steppe, forests and the wildlife within.



*"I hope you'll help prevent fires in the places where you and I live."*





The red dots on this map show reported wildfires on public land in the past 10 years.

The green area shows the sagebrush steppe community of plants and animals.

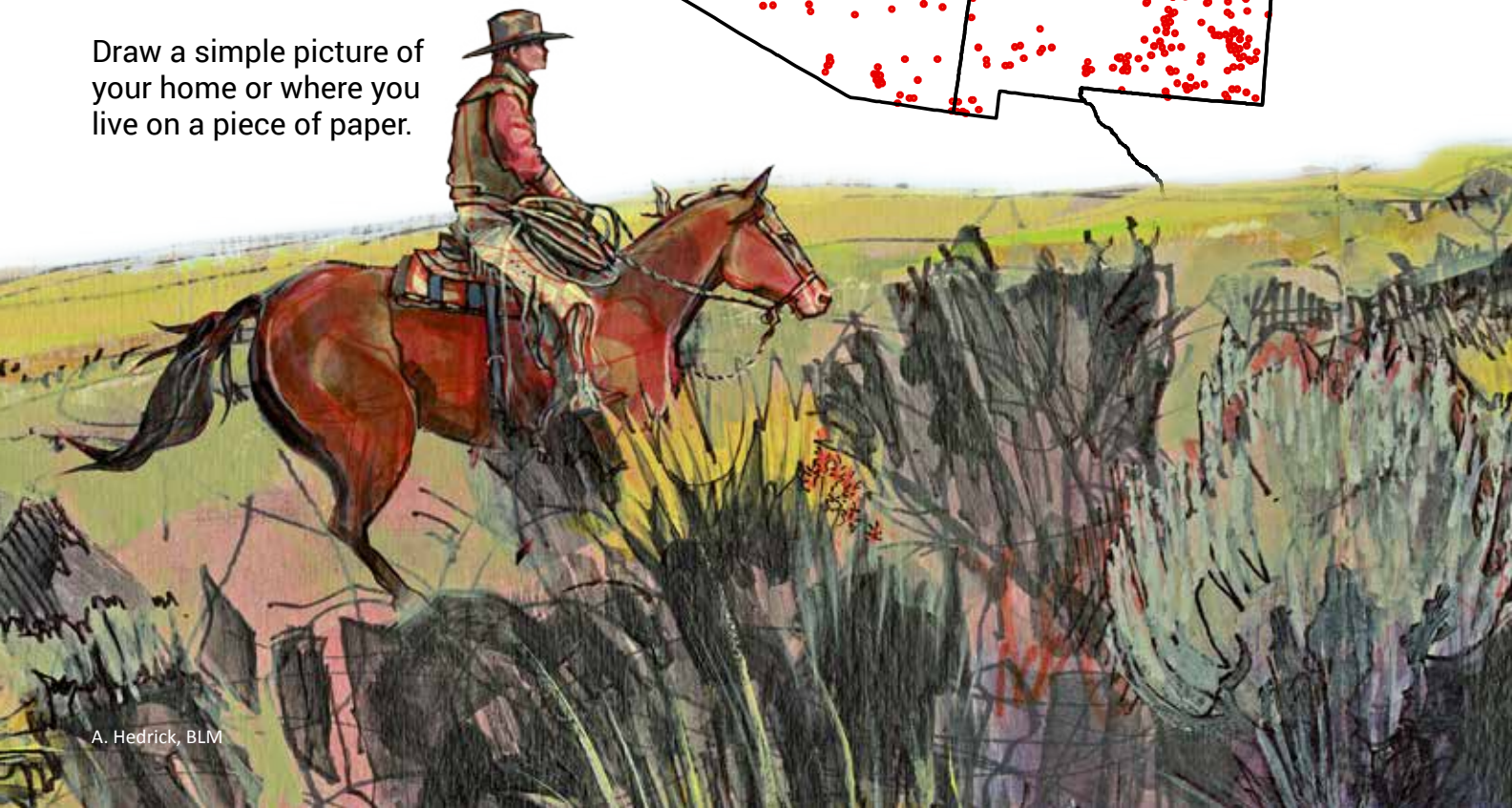
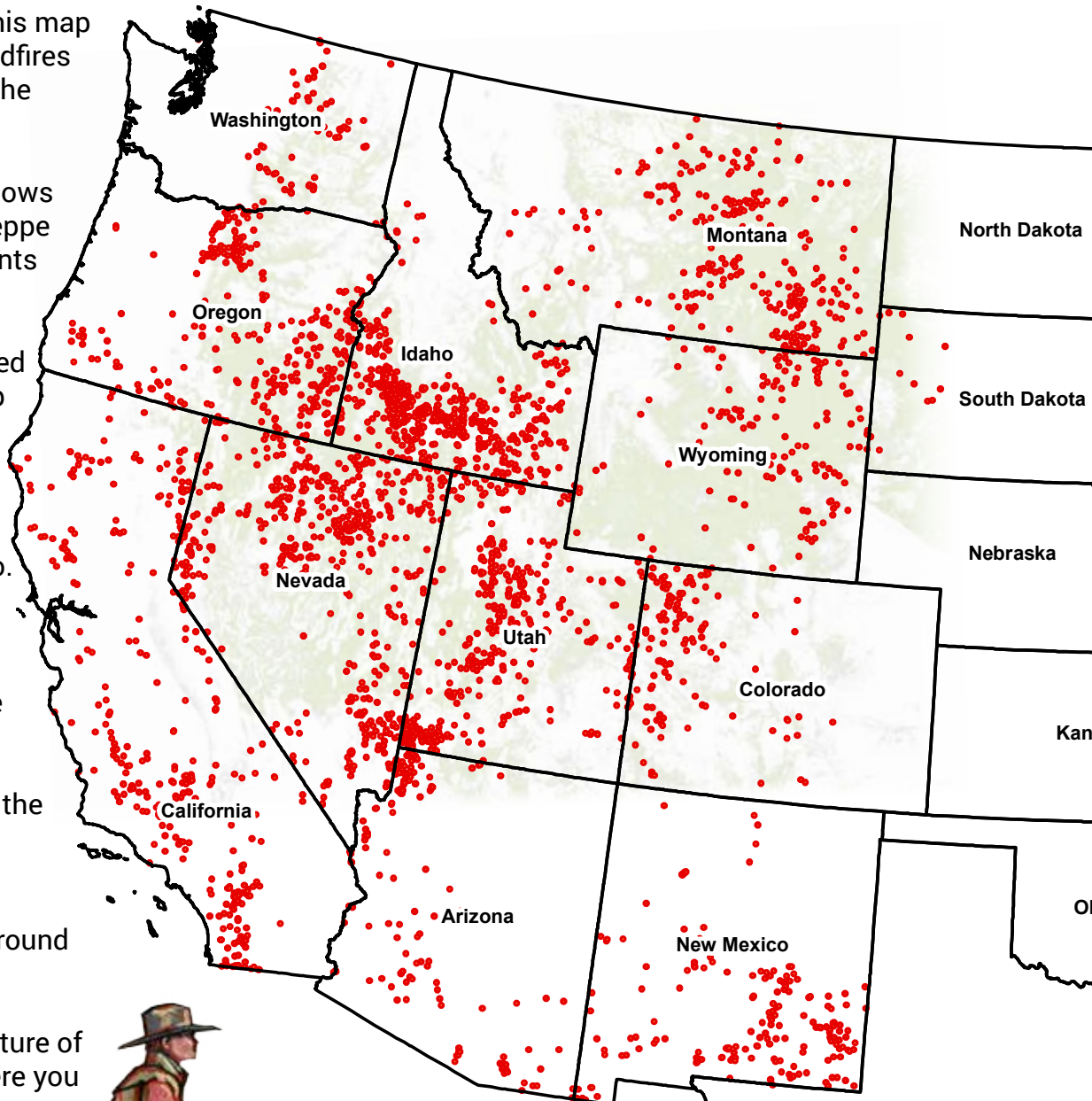
Each fire consumed from 299 acres up to 653,000 acres.

One megafire burned from Nevada into Idaho. Its area was the size of 500,000 football fields of sagebrush-steppe plants!

What states have the most wildfires on public land?

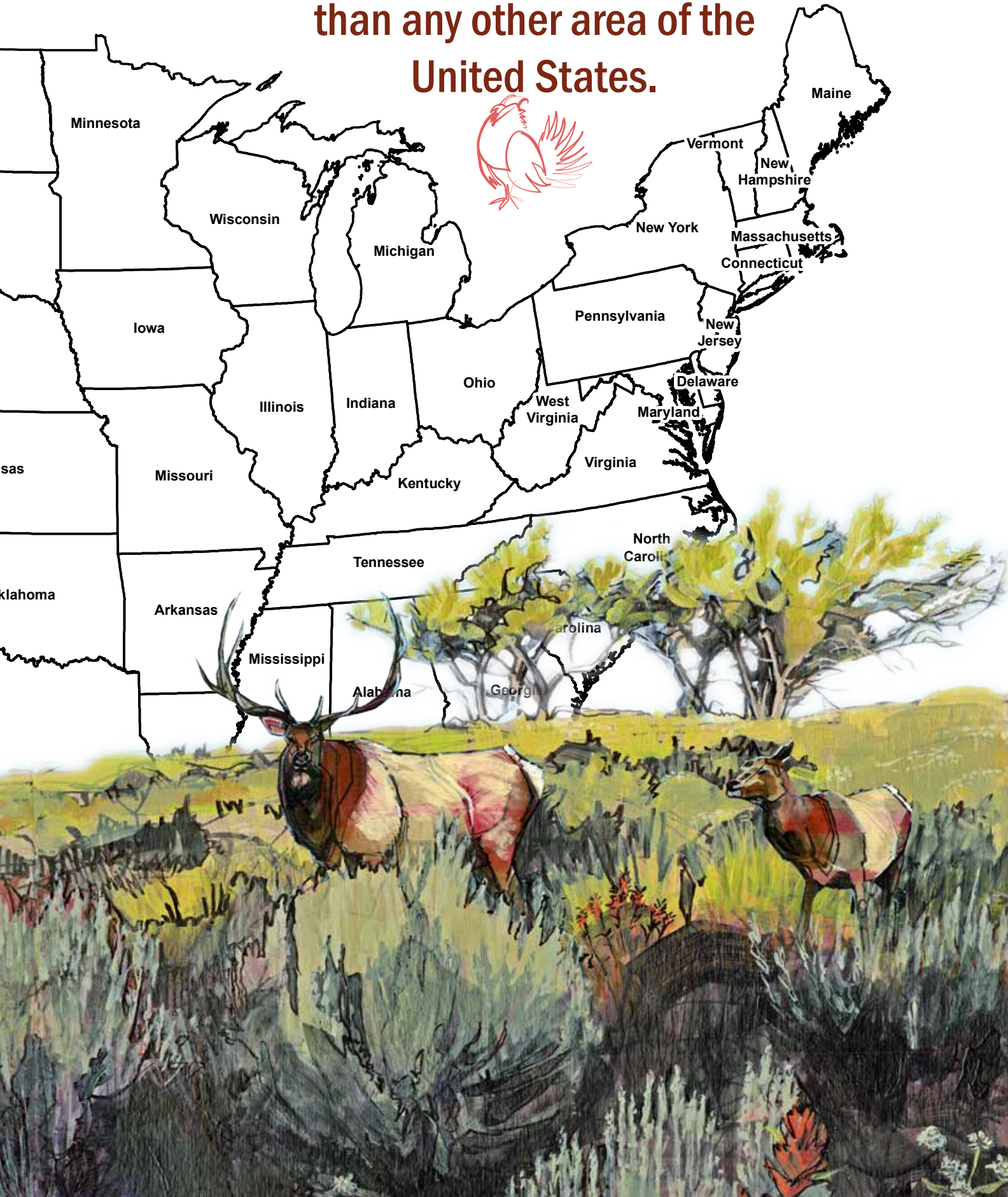
Draw an outline around your state.

Draw a simple picture of your home or where you live on a piece of paper.





# Wildfire burns more in the sagebrush steppe than any other area of the United States.





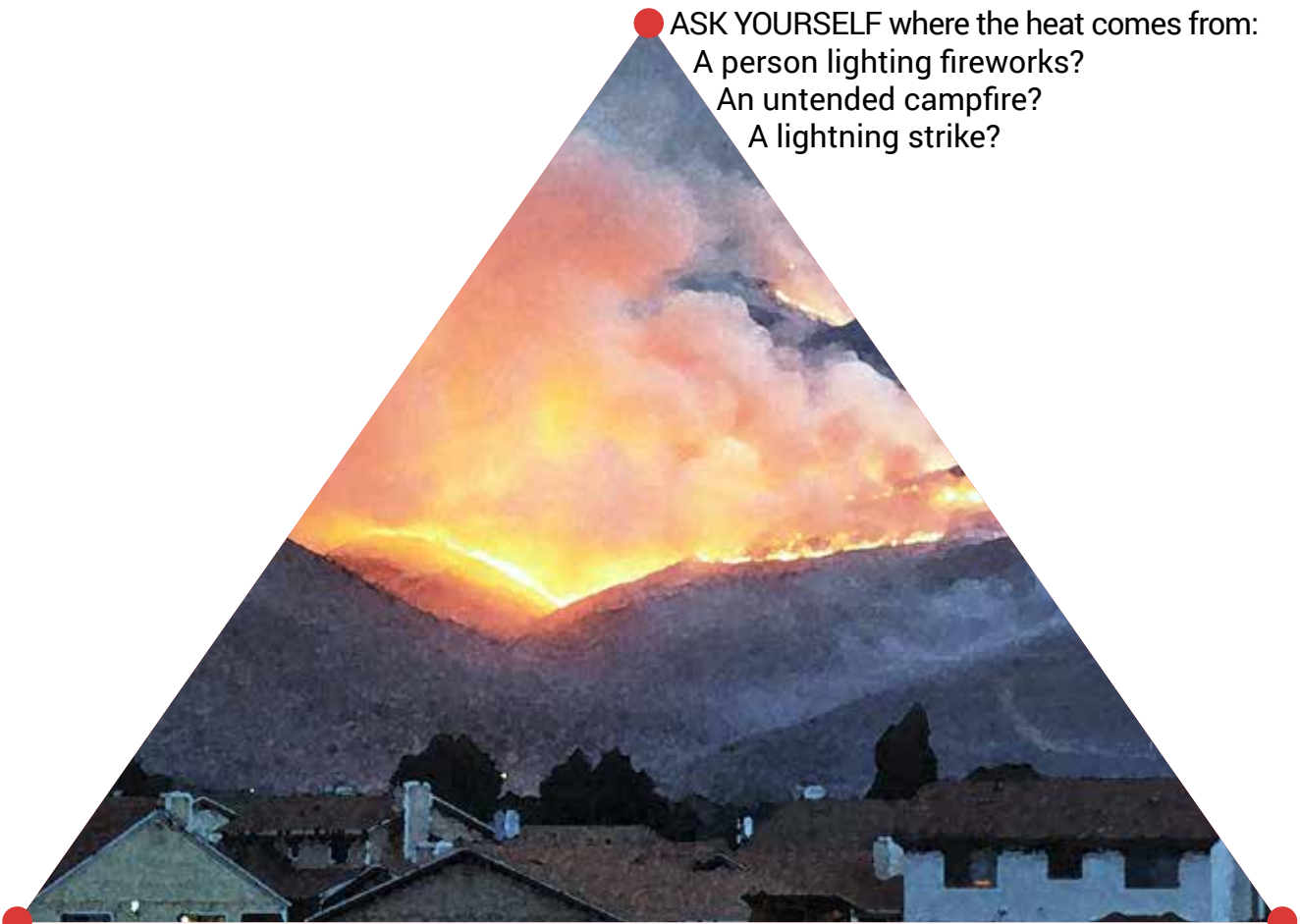
# What Feeds a Fire?

Fires need heat, fuel, and oxygen. If any one of the three is eliminated, the fire will go out. Remember this fire triangle.

Lightning, fireworks, campfires, wood stoves, your furnace at home or a burning cigarette provide heat that can easily start a wildfire.

## Heat

● ASK YOURSELF where the heat comes from:  
A person lighting fireworks?  
An untended campfire?  
A lightning strike?



## Fuel

ASK YOURSELF what is burning: juniper or mahogany trees, sagebrush, grasses, wildflowers or homes?

## Oxygen

ASK YOURSELF where the fire gets the oxygen it needs to burn?

# Test the Triangle

## Experiment 1

Supplies: 7-10 toothpicks, 7-10 gumdrops

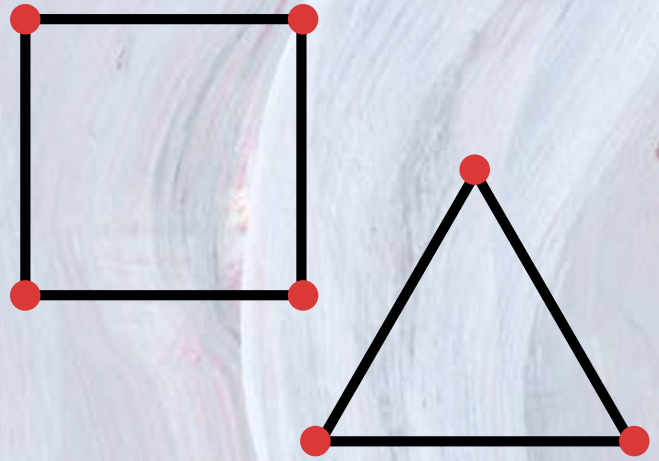
Step 1: Form a square using the toothpicks for the sides and the gumdrops to hold them together.

Step 2: Push gently on the sides. Does the square shape hold?

Step 3: Form a triangle using more toothpicks and gumdrops.

Step 4: Push gently on the sides. Does the triangle shape hold?

Step 5: Write down what you observed. Which shape is stronger?



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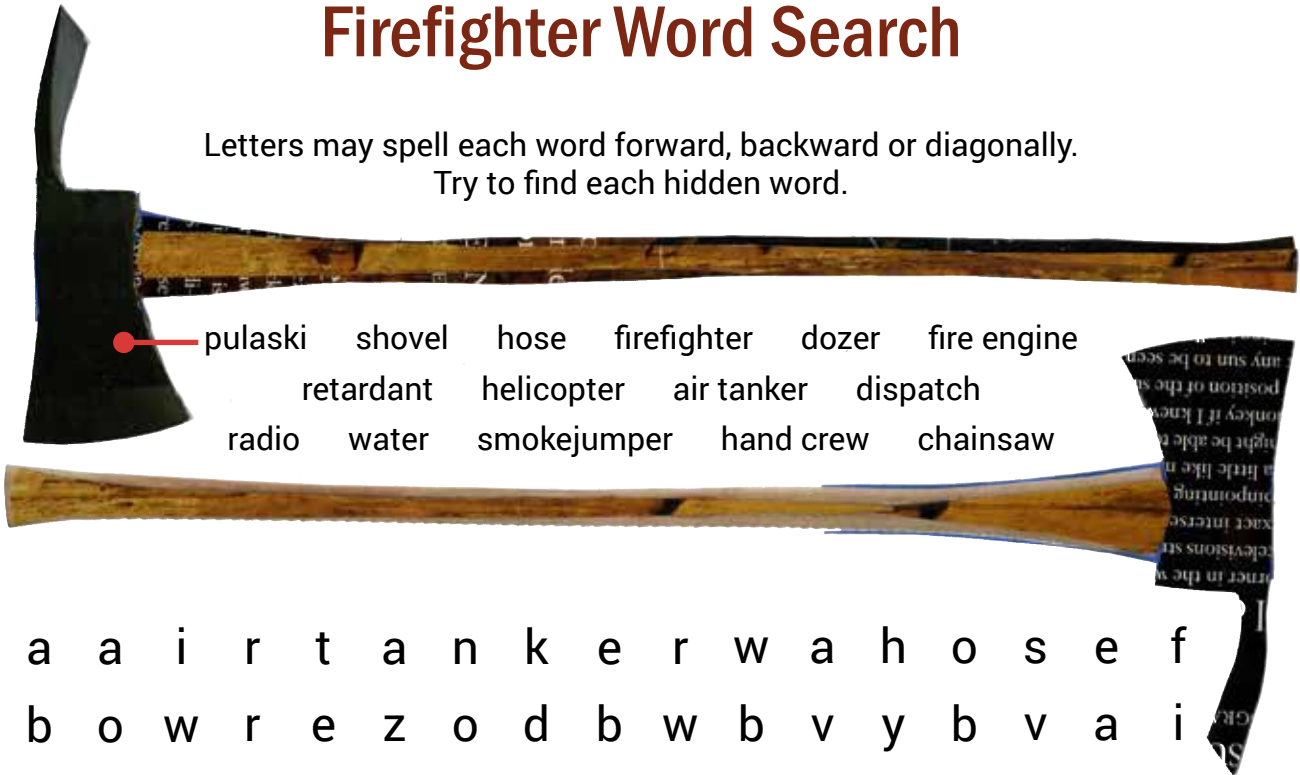


Firefighters remove oxygen from the fire by covering the flames with dirt.



# Firefighter Word Search

Letters may spell each word forward, backward or diagonally.  
Try to find each hidden word.



- pulaski   shovel   hose   firefighter   dozer   fire engine
- retardant   helicopter   air tanker   dispatch
- radio   water   smokejumper   hand crew   chainsaw

a	a	i	r	t	a	n	k	e	r	w	a	h	o	s	e	f
b	o	w	r	e	z	o	d	b	w	b	v	y	b	v	a	i
x	c	w	c	w	c	x	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	r
d	d	i	s	p	a	t	c	h	h	c	t	a	p	s	h	e
e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	m	e	a	e
f	i	r	e	f	i	g	h	t	e	r	r	o	f	w	i	n
g	x	y	g	q	g	h	i	g	g	e	k	g	s	a	n	g
h	a	n	d	c	r	e	w	h	t	e	h	h	h	t	s	i
i	w	q	i	a	i	a	k	p	j	l	i	i	o	e	a	n
j	f	j	k	j	t	k	o	u	e	j	m	j	v	r	w	e
k	r	k	o	z	k	c	m	v	k	n	k	k	e	k	n	k
l	a	l	r	l	i	p	o	l	p	l	i	l	l	q	l	l
m	d	m	m	l	e	h	o	m	m	m	m	w	m	m	m	m
n	i	n	e	r	x	o	p	u	l	a	s	k	i	n	n	n
o	o	h	o	b	c	p	q	t	n	a	d	r	a	t	e	r

# Working Together to Fight Wildfires

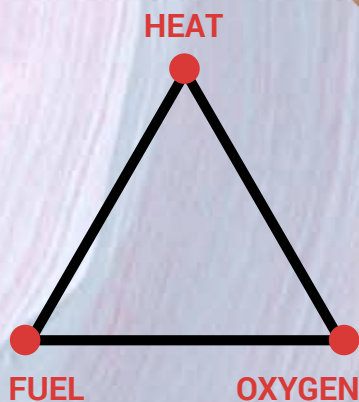
Wildland firefighters put out unwanted wildfires as quickly as possible to save the plants and animals in the sagebrush steppe.



Firefighters remove heat, remove fuel (plants) or remove oxygen by smothering the fire.

*Firefighters have many tools.*

- To remove *heat* or *oxygen* from the wildfire, they spray water, foam, or retardant on the flames using engines, airplanes or helicopters.
- To remove *fuel* from the wildfire, they use shovels, pulaskis, chainsaws, dozers, and mowers to remove vegetation or reduce vegetation height. This creates a line, known as a fire break, that stops large wildfires from spreading.



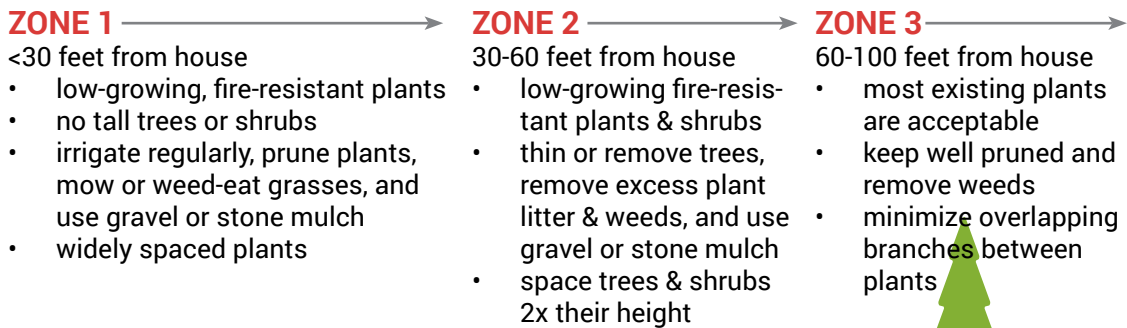


# Is Your Home Firewise?



We sage-grouse can't protect our home from wildfires, but you can protect yours. If you live near public land or a National Forest, your family should **make your home Firewise**. It's easy!

Clear brush, branches and fallen leaves away from your house. Make sure your grass stays green and moist. Trim tree limbs lower than six feet above the ground, and cover openings like vents and space under porches with a screen. These steps can help stop a wildfire from spreading to your home.



Fire travels faster uphill. If your house is on a steep slope, widen your zones.

# Steps to a Healthy West for Everyone

What happens when wildfire consumes healthy land?



We have to make a plan!

A healthy West has a mix of sagebrush, native grasses, wildflowers and respectful people.



When vegetation at higher elevations is consumed, no action is needed: nature will return on its own.

*"Healthy native plants mean healthy wildlife."*

15-20 years after fire.

If no plants survive the fire, we have to reseed and plant new seedlings.

Healthy native plants have more moisture and are resistant to wildfires.



5 years after fire.



With time, native plants will grow taller and healthy.



2 years after fire.

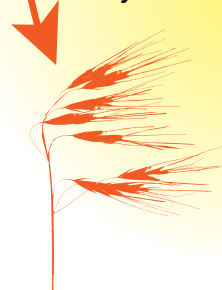
**BAD NEWS**  
Cheatgrass and medusahead will push out all of the native plants if nothing is done. Then more wildfire will burn the same places every summer and we lose our home.

**GOOD NEWS**

When native seedlings grow, we keep checking on their progress during the year. If they do not survive, we will replant new seedlings.



**SADLY**  
This is happening all over the West and we need your help.





# Care For This Unique Place

I hope you continue to learn about, enjoy and protect the over 350 plants and animals in the sagebrush steppe. Visit a Firewise garden near you in Boise at the Idaho Botanical Garden, Pocatello at Zoo Idaho or Twin Falls at the Breckenridge Endowment Farm on the College of Southern Idaho campus.

Because we are losing our home to wildfire and non-native invaders, we hope you will do your best to be careful with fire, obey fireworks restrictions and travel only on trails or roads when you are in the sagebrush steppe.

You can volunteer to help re-plant areas burned by wildfire. You can work as a botanist, wildlife or fish biologist, firefighter, writer or teacher when you finish school. You can also be a wildlife artist or photographer, or learn to dance like a sage-grouse.



High school students plant sagebrush, bitterbrush and other native plants after a wildfire, started by illegal fireworks, destroyed houses and over 2500 acres of native plants near Boise. Sagebrush seedlings were provided by high school students from Owyhee, Nevada. Deer, elk, pronghorn, birds and other wildlife have lost food and shelter for several years to come. Tetona Dunlap, Times-News Photo

# True or False Two

*You've learned a lot about wildfire and the devastating effects of pushy, non-native plants in the sagebrush steppe.*

Read the statements below, do your best thinking about them, and write a "t" next to the ones that are true and an "f" next to those that are false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Lightning, fireworks, campfires, stoves and cigarettes are heat sources..
- \_\_\_\_\_ The sagebrush steppe is the most frequently burned part of the U.S.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is OK to light fireworks in the sagebrush steppe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Planting seedlings in burned areas helps to restore the land after a wildfire.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wildland firefighters use different tools to remove heat from a wildfire.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Chainsaws can be used to remove vegetation that fuels an oncoming wildfire.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All wildfires are started by careless people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You can protect yourself by removing flammable plants near your house.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fire needs four elements to burn.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Making your home Firewise makes firefighting easier.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Juniper trees do not burn very easily.
- \_\_\_\_\_ After a fire, native grasses and plants always come back quickly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ After a fire, it can take 75 years for a single sagebrush to grow back to full size.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is good to use toothpicks after eating gumdrops.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It's good to ride your motorcycle off the road on biocrusts and native plants.












# Field Trip!

Visit an area where you can observe the sagebrush steppe.  
Sketch a picture of the land, a plant or animal you saw.



*Remember to be part of nature by:*

- respecting native plants, animals and people as a living community
- keeping campfires and fireworks away from Sammy's home
- leaving nature as you find it for the next person to enjoy
- not littering—take your trash home to throw away

*Trading Cards: Steppe into the Sagebrush*

Tear along perforated lines to assemble your collection of trading cards. Use, share and remember the sagebrush steppe.



**Western Harvester Ant**

*Pogonomyrmex occidentalis*

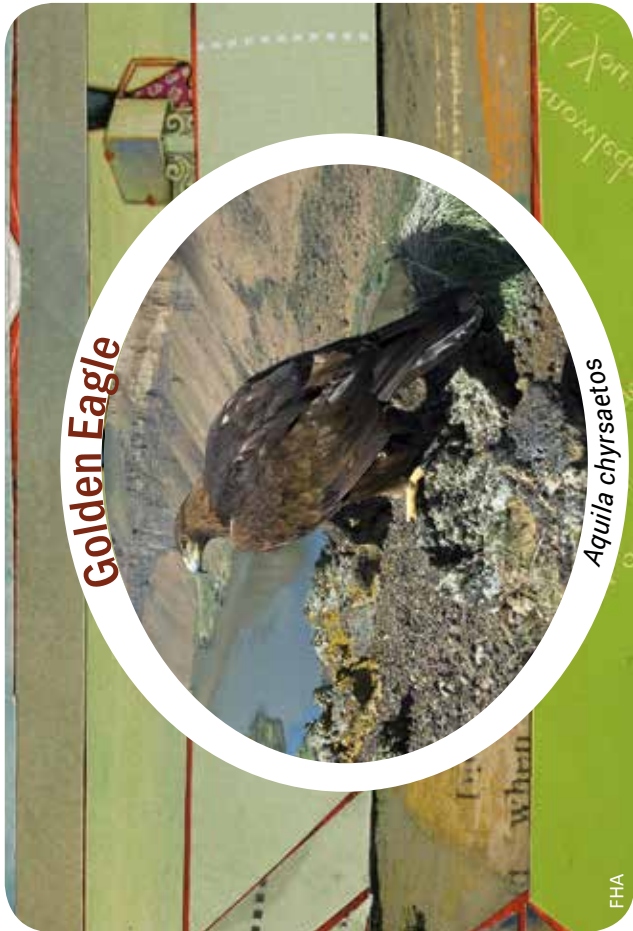
Joseph Berger



**Mule Deer**

*Odocoileus hemionus*

Oregon Fish and Wildlife



**Golden Eagle**

*Aquila chrysaetos*

FHA



**Coyote**

*Canis latrans*

NPS

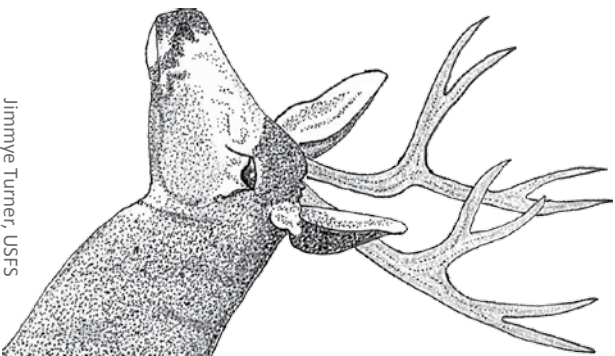


***Fun Fact:***

Mule deer can see better at night than humans, but not during the day.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Firefighters use thermal nighttime imagery to find hot spots of fire. They cool them down with water and dirt. You can also put out your campfire with water and dirt.



Jimmye Turner, USFS

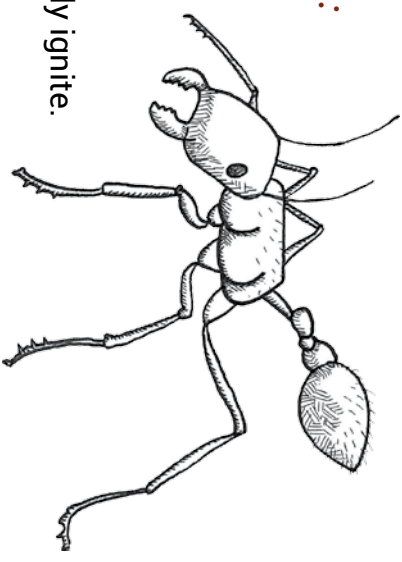
***Fun Fact:***

Ants make their homes by digging nests in the ground. They remove all vegetation from an area in a circular pattern, so they are easy to spot.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

When building a fire, remove anything that will burn in a 10-foot circle to keep your fire from spreading.

Dry vegetation can easily ignite.



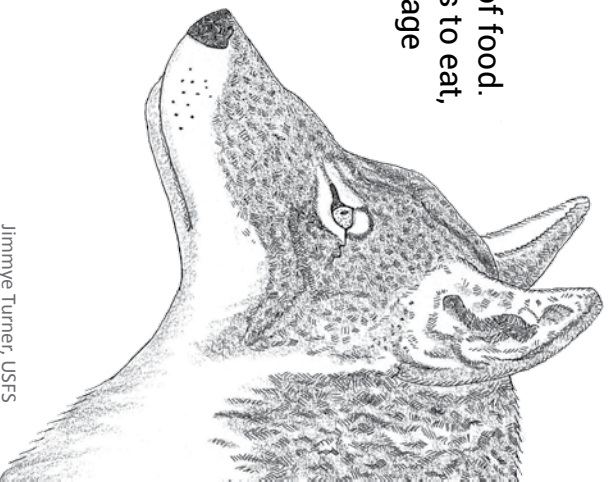
Jimmye Turner, USFS

***Fun Fact:***

A coyote eats a wide range of food. If it cannot find mice or voles to eat, lizards, insects, or even garbage will do.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Composting is safer than burning outdoors. You can compost unwanted food, trash and yard waste.



Jimmye Turner, USFS

***Fun Fact:***

Golden Eagles have binocular vision that allows them to see depth and judge distances accurately.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

If you see a wildfire, tell an adult, call 911 and leave the area.



Jimmye Turner, USFS



*Trading Cards: Steppe into the Sagebrush*

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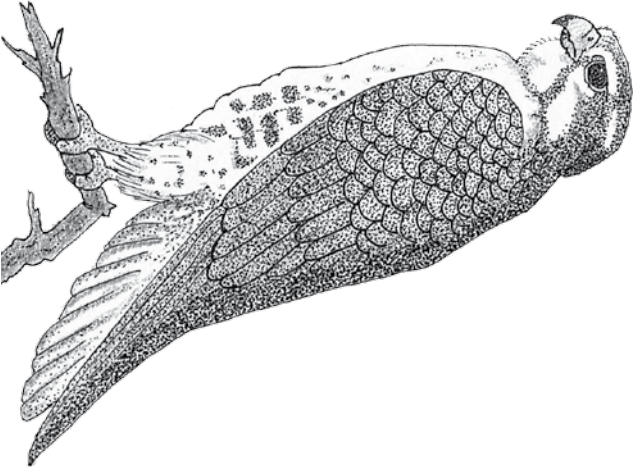


***Fun Fact:***  
Prairie falcons hunt by chasing small prey close to the ground with fast, skillful flying.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***  
Helicopter and airplane pilots fly close to wildfires to drop water or fire retardant.

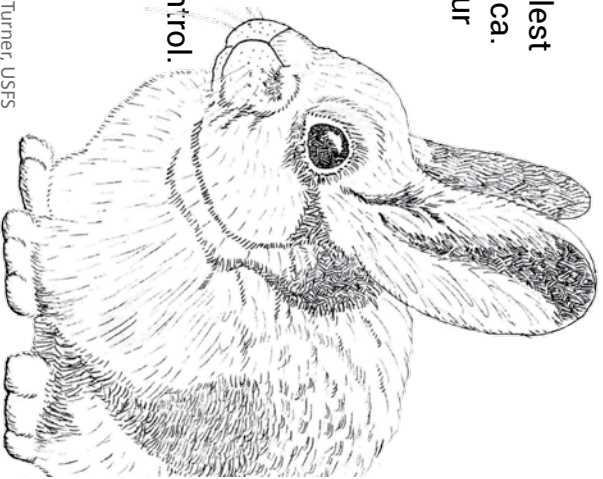
Keep your drones out of their way so they can do their job safely.

Jimmye Turner, USFS



***Fun Fact:***  
The pygmy rabbit is the smallest rabbit species in North America. It fits easily in the palm of your hand. In the winter, it gets 99% of its food from sagebrush.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***  
A spark or fire smaller than your hand can easily lose control. Be a fire lookout - help watch for sparks on dry grass when adults are mowing.

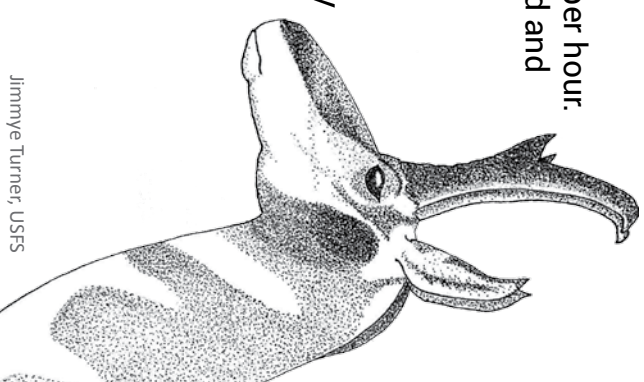


Jimmye Turner, USFS

***Fun Fact:***  
Pronghorn can run up to 55 miles per hour. They depend on sagebrush for food and hiding places for their fawns.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***  
Wildfires can move up to 14 miles per hour in grasslands. Leave early and safely if you are threatened by a wildfire.

Jimmye Turner, USFS



***Fun Fact:***  
Sage-grouse have a specialized stomach that digests tough sagebrush, their main food.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***  
Protect sagebrush, their food source and home, by preventing wildfires.



A. Hedrick, BLM



*Trading Cards: Steppe into the Sagebrush*

Tear along perforated lines to assemble your collection of trading cards. Use, share and remember the sagebrush steppe.



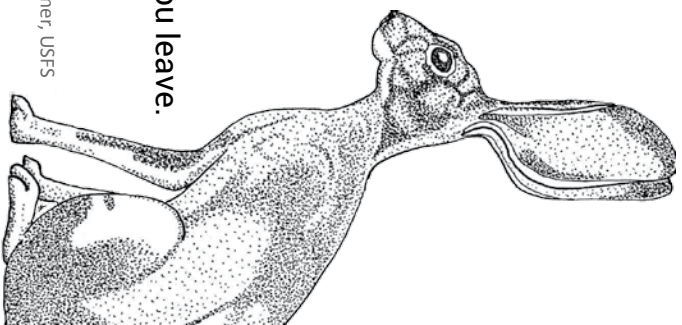


***Fun Fact:***

The jack rabbit can camouflage with brown fur in the summer and white fur in the winter.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Jack rabbits can change their color, but finding a new home is not so easy. Protect their home by making sure your campfire is always completely out before you leave.



Jimmye Turner, USFS

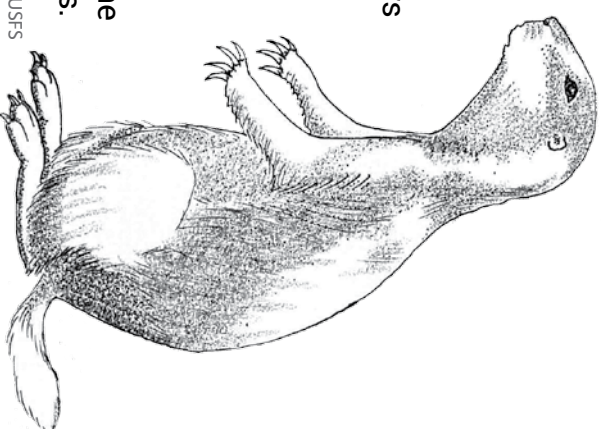
***Fun Fact:***

Prairie dogs have listening posts near the exits of their burrows, so they can alert others of danger with a warning bark.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Listen to nature's warning—hot, dry and windy days signal high fire danger. Please read and follow all fire warnings in the news or posted in campgrounds.

Jimmye Turner, USFS

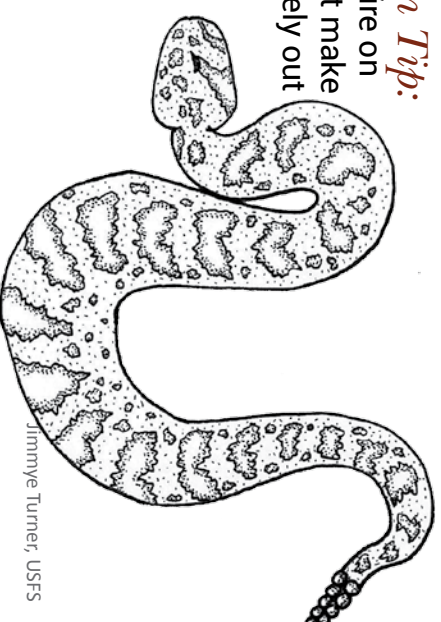


***Fun Fact:***

In hot weather, rattlesnakes hide during the day and wait until night when it is cooler to hunt.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Enjoy your campfire on cool evenings, but make sure it is completely out before you go to sleep, so it does not cause a wildfire.



Jimmye Turner, USFS

***Fun Fact:***

Badgers use their long, sharp front claws to dig for rodent prey. This sometimes attracts coyotes, which wait nearby for prey to make a break for it.

Jimmye Turner, USFS



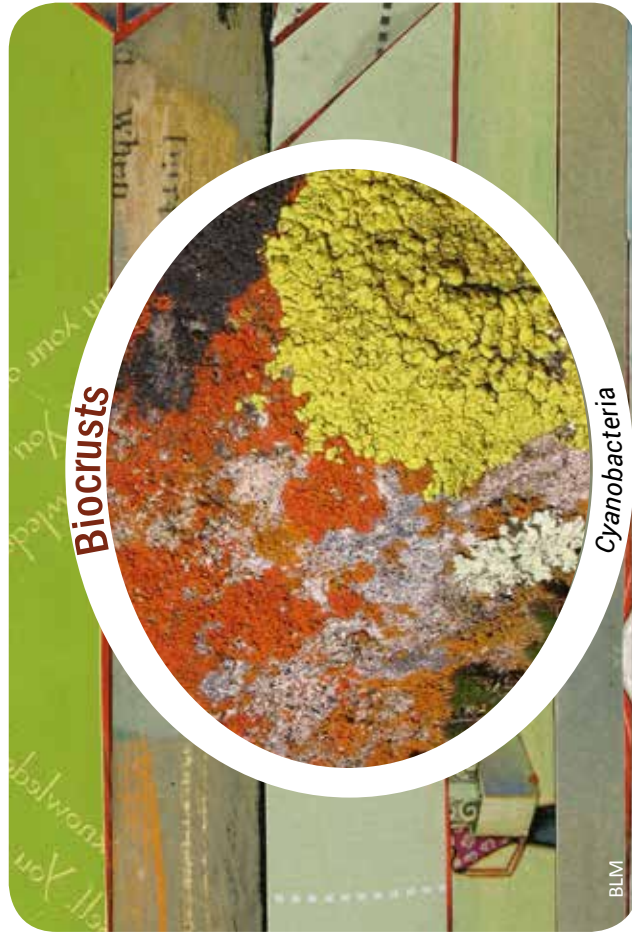
***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Dig, stir, and drown your campfire to make sure it is dead out.



*Trading Cards: Steppe into the Sagebrush*

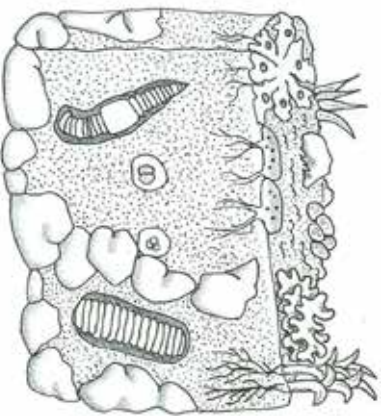
Tear along perforated lines to assemble your collection of trading cards. Use, share and remember the sagebrush steppe.





***Fun Fact:***

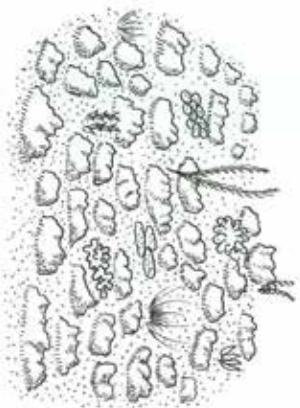
Your footprint can smash me down for a very long time and is very harmful. Please watch out for me, too.



Jimmye Turner, USFS

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

During hunting season, remember wildfire and hunter safety while enjoying the outdoors.



***Fun Fact:***

I sprout very soon after a fire, ready to use the nutrients in the ashes.



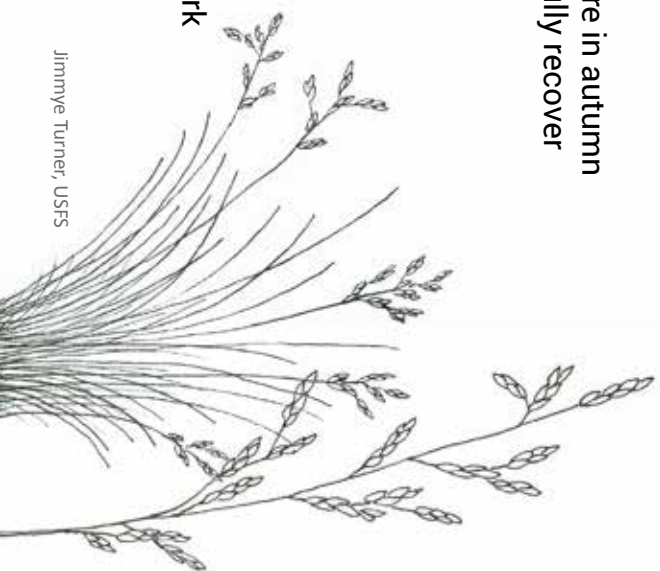
Jimmye Turner, USFS

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Sparks may fly and ignite a wildfire if your chainsaw spark arrestor is not properly serviced or the tip of the bar strikes a rock.

***Fun Fact:***

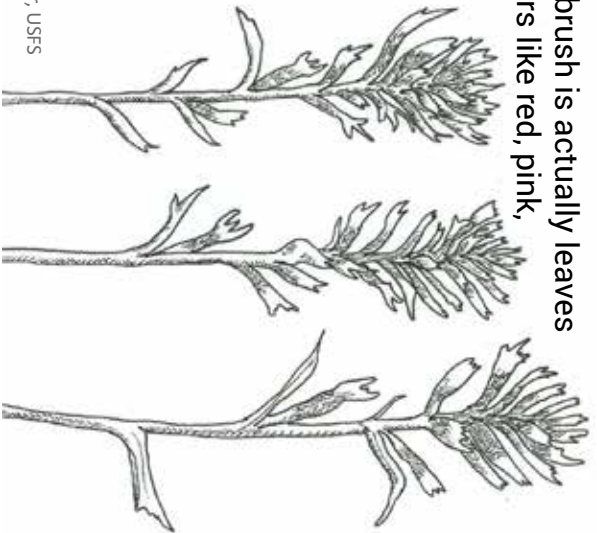
We are fairly tolerant of fire in autumn but require 2-3 years to fully recover after burning in a wildfire.



Jimmye Turner, USFS

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Whenever an open flame is used to start a fire, safety and caution are necessary. Watch where flames are at all times.



Jimmye Turner, USFS

*Trading Cards: Steppe into the Sagebrush*

Tear along perforated lines to assemble your collection of trading cards. Use, share and remember the sagebrush steppe.







Jimmye Turner, USFS

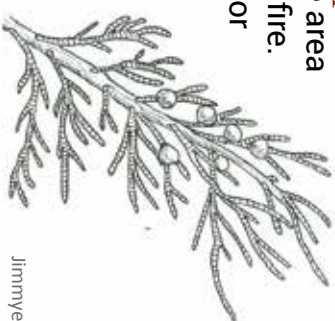
***Fun Fact:***  
I resemble a bonsai tree and live for a very long time.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***  
Before building a camp fire, verify local fire restrictions and weather conditions.

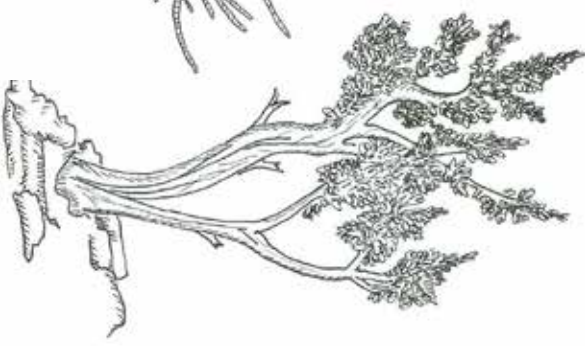


***Fun Fact:***  
Idaho has at least three species of juniper. Notice how they spread into the flatter sagebrush area in the front photo.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***  
When hiking, leave the area at the first sign of wildfire. Use established trails or roads. Think about wildfire safety.

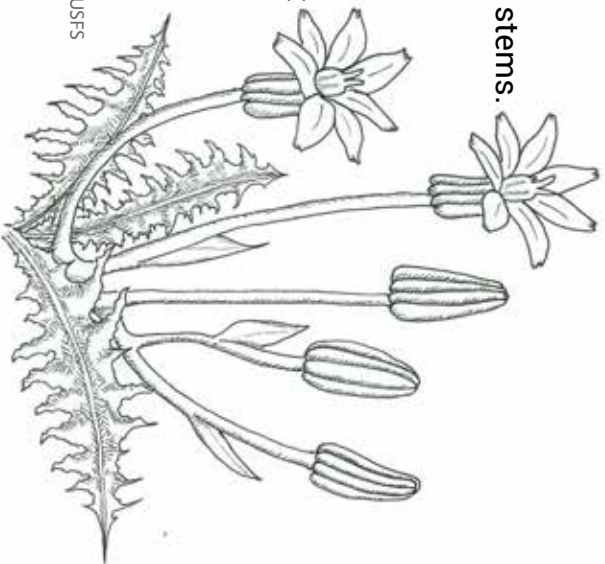


Jimmye Turner, USFS



***Fun Fact:***  
Native Americans ate raw stems.

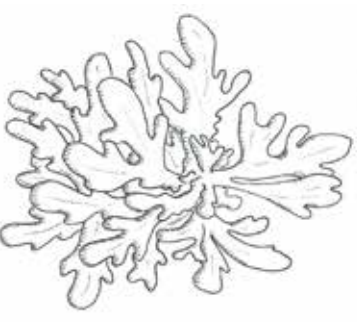
***Fire Prevention Tip:***  
Know before you go. When you go out to play on public land, know what fire rules and restrictions are in place for your area.



Jimmye Turner, USFS

***Fun Fact:***  
Cowboys used sagebrush as a deodorant before heading to town.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***  
Before your road trip, check your wheel bearings, brakes and muffler. Make sure no metal parts are dragging underneath your vehicle.



Jimmye Turner, USFS



*Trading Cards: Steppe into the Sagebrush*

Tear along perforated lines to assemble your collection of trading cards. Use, share and remember the sagebrush steppe.





***Not-so-fun Fact:***

We are an invasive, noxious weed not eaten by sage-grouse. We are sometimes eaten by grazing animals when we are green.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Fireworks burn cheatgrass very fast and have destroyed homes. Please do not ignite fireworks on public land or at the edge of your town!

A sparkler tip burns at a temperature of more than 1,200 degrees; it can easily ignite dry grass or debris.



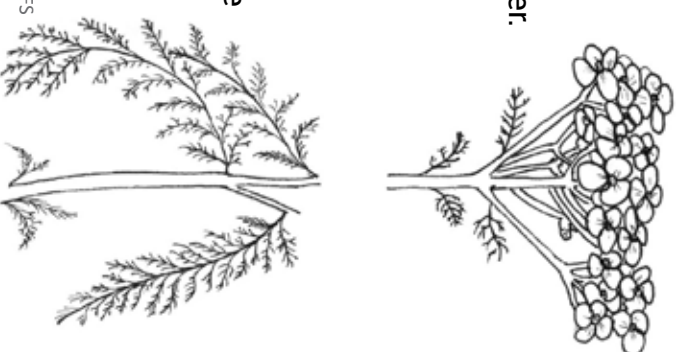
Jimmye Turner, USFS

***Fun Fact:***

We are found in many native plant communities. We are a food source for bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope and deer. Sage-grouse and other upland birds rely heavily on our foliage as food.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Accidental fires caused by fireworks destroy valuable plants every year. Wildlife depends on these plants, so please do not ignite fireworks on public land or forests.



Jimmye Turner, USFS

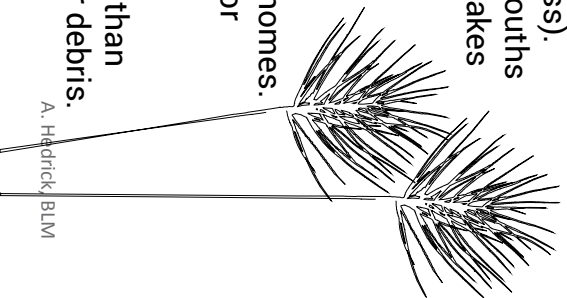
***Not-so-fun Fact:***

Medusahed has little value for wildlife. Most wildlife will not eat it because it has a high level of silica (glass).

Seeds can cause injury to eyes, noses, and mouths of animals who eat it. Medusahed typically takes over sites where the native plants have been destroyed by fire or eaten up.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Fireworks burn very fast and have destroyed homes. Please do not ignite fireworks on public land or at the edge of your town!



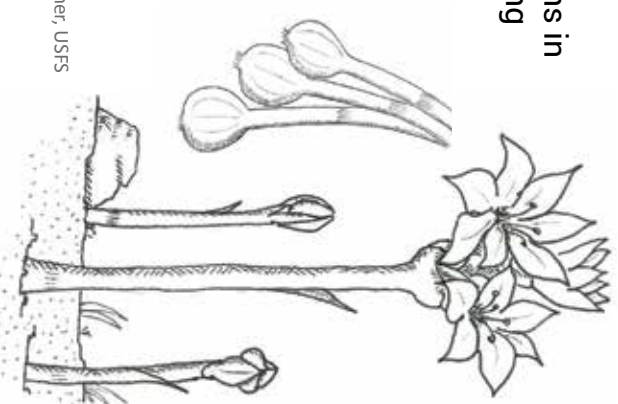
A. Hedrick, BLM

***Fun Fact:***

My entire plant smells like the onions in your kitchen like when you're cooking spaghetti sauce.

***Fire Prevention Tip:***

Each time you use fire for warmth, cooking or just enjoyment indoors and outdoors, be responsible and safe with and around it.



Jimmye Turner, USFS

JUNIOR  
RANGER

# Pledge

## Join the Quest

*As a BLM Junior Ranger, I promise to*

- Do all I can to help protect and preserve natural and cultural resources on public lands.
- Be aware of how my actions can affect living things and evidence of our past.
- Keep learning about the importance of nature and our heritage.
- Share what I have learned with others.

*Congratulations!*

.....  
you sign here

.....  
date here







**Join the Quest!**  
—Be a friend to wildlife in the west.  
—Volunteer to help gather and plant.  
Healthy native plants = healthy wildlife.

