



Photo: Sara Demek

# ON COLORADO'S COMMON GROUND

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**“Our public lands and wildlife are fundamental to Colorado's lifestyle and the efforts to save the greater sage-grouse and its habitat are crucial to sustaining not only the bird but also big game like mule deer, pronghorn and bighorn sheep.”**

**-Suzanne O'Neill, Colorado Wildlife Federation, Executive Director**



## COLORADO'S GOT GAME:

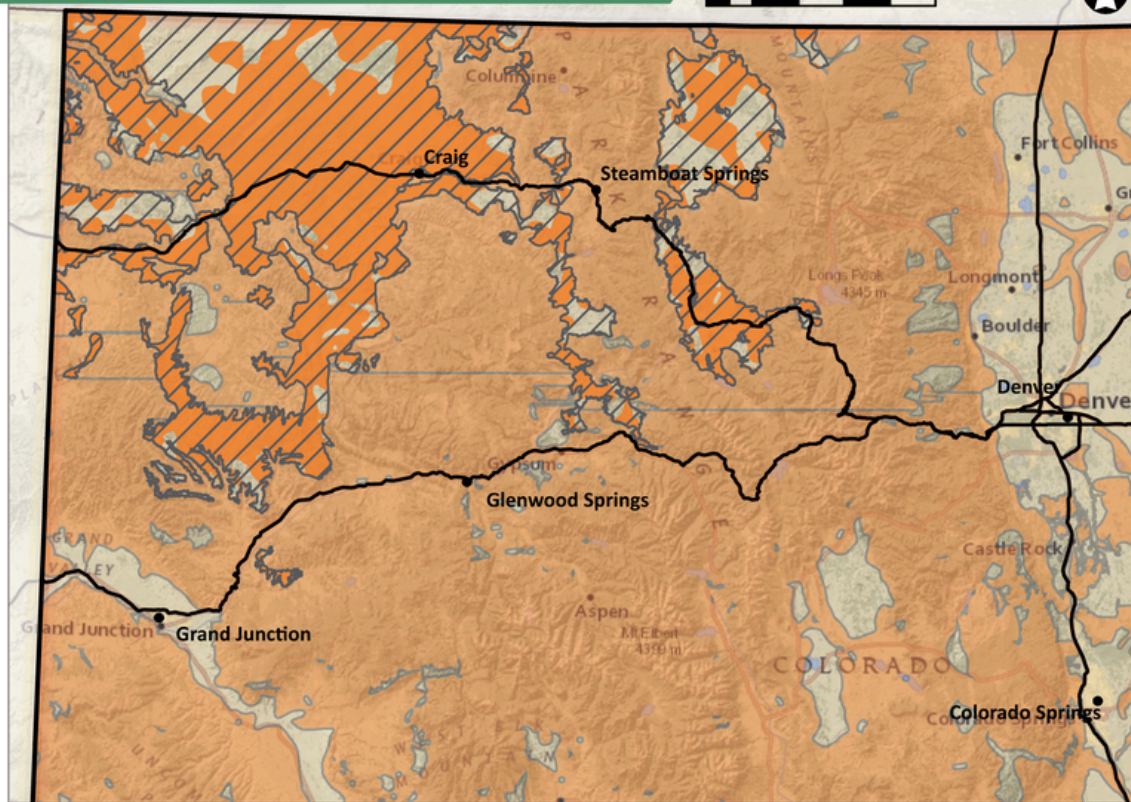


**What is important habitat for big game?**  
In Colorado it is a combination of habitat for pronghorn, bighorn sheep, elk and mule deer. Identified and mapped for Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

**What is overlapping habitat?**  
These are areas where sage-grouse and big game share the same sagebrush lands.

Data Sources:  
BLM, CPW, Esri, WAFWA

Map Prepared by: Alison Gallensky  
Rocky Mountain Wild



GREATER SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT

IMPORTANT BIG GAME HABITAT

OVERLAPPING HABITAT

## Big Game and Sage-Grouse

### What's the connection?

When snow blankets vegetation in the foothills and mountains, big game animals like mule deer, elk and pronghorn depend on sagebrush lands, the same habitat that sustains greater sage-grouse. Wildlife biologists point out that healthy habitat is key for healthy wildlife populations.

For sportsmen and women who roam sagebrush country each fall, the connection between sage-grouse and other wildlife is clear. They know what's good for the bird is good for the herd. That's why they want to conserve sage-grouse and their habitat.

Sage-grouse used to number in the tens of millions across the West, but now number an estimated 200,000 to a half-million. Sage-grouse are seen as a bellwether species for the health of sagebrush lands. And sage-grouse conservation plans developed by the states, Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service with input from locals on the ground are the way forward for Western big game.

### Westerners forge a path forward

The Colorado Wildlife Federation are one of the many organizations supporting the sage-grouse conservation strategies shaped by the sporting community, landowners and elected officials, including most Western governors. The plans include safeguards for sage-grouse habitat that will benefit hundreds of other plant and wildlife species, including mule deer, elk and pronghorn.

**Colorado by the numbers: Over 90% of sage-grouse habitat in NW Colorado is also important to big game herds - roughly 3.7 million acres**

### An Uncertain Future

But the fate of all the work and collaboration that went into the plans is uncertain as the Trump administration considers major changes. These plans helped convince the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that sage-grouse didn't need to be added to the endangered species list. Failure to move forward with the conservation efforts could lead to the very outcome the plans were intended to avoid - a listing of the bird and the restrictions that come with it.

Governor Hickenlooper and other Western governors have said wholesale changes to the conservation plans aren't needed and have voiced support for focusing on sage-grouse habitat to rebuild the bird's population.

### Hunters 'get it' - You can help too

For hunters, conservation of habitat is a priority, because they know it sustains strong wildlife herds. Here's how you can help to keep the conservation plans on track.

### Join the Cause:

The Bureau of Land Management is collecting public comment on the sage-grouse conservation plans until Nov. 27. It is important that they hear from sportsmen and women from around the West. Tell them that they should give the plans a chance to work.

Go to: [nwf.org/beherdforthebird](http://nwf.org/beherdforthebird) to take action.