

Native Prairie Speaker Series

Title: The Effects of Grazing on Greater Sage-Grouse and Their Habitat in Central Montana

Speaker: Lorelle Berkeley, Ph.D., Research Wildlife Biologist, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Summary: Livestock grazing is the largest land management practice in the world. Yet little is known about the direct impacts of grazing on wildlife. The greater sage-grouse is a bird species whose range largely overlaps that of ranches and livestock grazing in the West. Greater sage-grouse were recently considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The main reason for its decline has been habitat loss in various forms. In Montana, much of sage-grouse habitat occurs on privately owned ranches, and a conservation priority is keeping working ranches intact. How does livestock grazing on these ranches affect sage-grouse and their habitat? FWP began the sage-grouse grazing study in 2011 to help answer this question. Get a peek behind the scenes with one of FWP's wildlife research biologists who studies sage-grouse, and learn how FWP's research program is contributing to the management and conservation of greater sage-grouse in central Montana.

About the Speaker: Lorelle Berkeley, Ph.D. has been a Biologist with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) since 2011. She currently works with prairie grouse, but also collaborates on work with songbirds and invertebrates. She has a background in Wildlife Ecology and Management with a Bachelor's degree and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, and a Masters degree from the University of Nebraska, Omaha. Lorelle has had the pleasure of working with several species including monarch butterflies in Minnesota, acorn woodpeckers in California, dickcissels in Nebraska, ruffed grouse in Minnesota, and greater sage grouse in Montana, but her favorite place is Montana! Broadly, her career focuses on conducting applied research that can be used in wildlife management and conservation.

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