

## Idaho State Wildlife Grant Success Stories

In the five years since its inception, the State Wildlife Grants Program has played an important role in the conservation of Idaho's wildlife. The following are some of the projects funded through State Wildlife Grants:



*Pygmy Rabbit, Photo Courtesy of Idaho Fish and Game*

### **Research: Gathering Information to Take Action Pygmy Rabbit Population Status**

Pygmy rabbits live in sagebrush, a type of habitat which is quickly disappearing in Idaho. Along with their habitat, pygmy rabbit populations have declined and, at one point, it was recommended that the US Fish and Wildlife Service list the species as threatened or endangered. During three years, State Wildlife Grant funding allowed researchers in southern and eastern Idaho to study rabbit populations and provide data on their range and dispersal. Eventually, the data was used to support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's recent decision to not federally list pygmy rabbits, saving costly conservation actions and avoiding potential legal hang-ups. Today, the data collected during the study has played a key role in protecting sagebrush habitat and laid the groundwork for other Idaho conservation efforts.



*Sage Grouse Habitat, Photo Courtesy of USDA*

### **Management: Proactive Efforts that Benefit Wildlife and People Crooked Creek Ranch Conservation Project**

Similar to pygmy rabbits, the sage grouse also depends on sagebrush for its food and protection. To curb the decline of sage grouse populations, the Crooked Creek Ranch conservation project has maintained and enhanced 70,000 acres of prime greater sage grouse habitat. This project also provided an opportunity for various wildlife and conservation agencies to achieve common goals as partners. This model demonstrates how to plan, implement, and evaluate effective landscape/habitat management in sage grouse habitat where multiple land use challenges and ownership exists.



*Columbia Spotted Frog, Photo Courtesy of USFWS*

### **Conservation: Protecting Imperiled Land, Water, and Wildlife Sam Noble Springs Conservation Lease**

In southwestern Idaho, the Sam Noble Springs wetlands complex provides habitat for one of the largest Idaho populations of Columbia spotted frogs, a species being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. To help conserve this species and its habitat for future generations, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game purchased a 101-acre conservation lease on the complex. This purchase protects a key Columbia spotted frog population and also allows livestock grazing to continue on adjacent lands, benefiting both wildlife and people.

**Congress has appropriated \$4.3 million in State Wildlife Grants to Idaho since 2001. This has been matched with at least \$2.5 million state and partner dollars.**