

Efforts failing to save U.S. West sagebrush land

By Keith Riddler, AP

BOISE, Idaho – Public lands managers are losing a battle against a devastating combination of invasive plant species and wildfires in the vast sagebrush habitats in the U.S. West that support cattle ranching and recreation and are home to an imperiled bird, officials said.

The Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies in a 58-page report released this month says invasive plants on nearly 160,000 square miles of public and private lands have reached enormous levels and are spreading.

That could mean more giant rangeland wildfires that in recent decades destroyed vast areas of sagebrush country that support some 350 species of wildlife, including imperiled sage grouse.

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