

# WCCF finish up sagebrush work

Inmates at Warner Creek Correctional Facility (WCCF) are part of a hands-on program that provides much-needed native sagebrush for greater sage-grouse and wildlife habitat that has been burned by wild fires or is degraded. In April, inmate participants filled thousands of containers with soil and sowed miniscule sagebrush seed. Every day since, they have carefully watered, fertilized and thinned their seedlings - the results are healthy, robust plants that are ready to be out-planted by the BLM.

The "Sagebrush in Prisons Project," is a collaborative project where Bureau of Land Management (BLM) field offices in Lakeview, Klamath Falls and Astoria, Calif., Oregon Department of Corrections, Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE), Sustainability in Prisons Project and funding from the BLM in Washington, D.C. are coming together to contribute to habitat restoration for the iconic and rare greater sage-grouse and other wildlife.

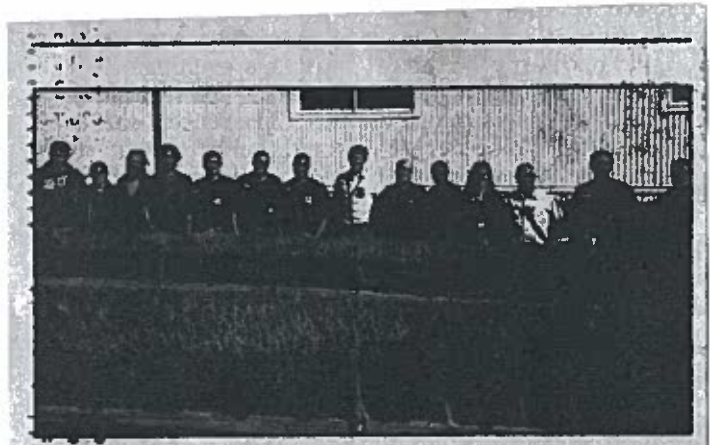
An important aspect of the "Sagebrush in Prisons Project," is the lecture series; an educational component that reaches those inmates who are interested in learning about local ecology and conservation. On Sunday, Sept. 27, Dr. Tom Kaye, executive director of Institute for Applied Ecology, gave an informational talk to inmates, DOC staff and visitors from the Lakeview BLM office. His talk entitled, "Things are changing: Climate, Junipers and Monarchs," focused on the expansion of juniper in much of Oregon and surrounding states as well as the perils that native pollinators, such as monarch butterflies are currently facing. The talk was well received with inmates asking lots of questions.

Inmates and community partner stakeholders viewed the sagebrush propagation area following the lecture, where inmates on the sagebrush propagation team talked about their planting and growing protocols. Several team members talked about cold stratification of their bitterbrush seeds, mixing the soil for the sagebrush and the meticulous daily care of the sagebrush plants.

Inmates at WCCF, together with BLM staff, started boxing-up 7,625 plants on Monday, Nov. 7. An inmate crew will help Lakeview BLM plant out the plants on nearby areas. Stacy Moore, Ecological Education Coordinator at Institute for Applied Ecology, will coordinate the plant preparation and a certificate ceremony for the inmates. "Inmates are learning key horticulture and ecology concepts while promoting a healthy environment," commented Moore. "Inmates are learning how plants, people and our environment are all connected."

WCCF Supt. Steve Brown shared, "Working with the Institute for Applied Ecology has been a wonderful opportunity for Warner Creek to partner with an external stakeholder. This partnership has helped to develop inmate awareness of sustainability issues and to enable these inmates to take sustainability skills with them as they prepare for re-entry."

For more information, contact WCCF Public Information Officer, Sharon Ball, at 541-947-8219.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

WCCF inmates gather around sagebrush saplings that will help rejuvenate the greater sage-grouse population in Lake County.