

## **Project Summary**

### **Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit**

**Project Title:** Sagebrush Steppe Mapping and Prairie Pothole Assessment

**Discipline:** Natural  
**Type of Project:** Technical Assistance  
**Funding Agency:** USGS  
**Other Partners/Cooperators:** University of Montana  
**Effective Dates:** 8/1/2012 - 7/31/2017  
**Funding Amount:** \$72,750 [FY13: \$14,000; FY12: \$58,750]

**Investigators and Agency Representative:**

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**Project Abstract:** The purpose of this agreement is to develop adequate spatial information for sage-steppe habitat and to provide a comprehensive monitoring and assessment of wetlands in the Williston Basin. As a result, to develop a prototype layer for the National Wildlife Refuge (CMR NWR) and its adjacent lands that is covered by available SPOT imagery cells. The prototype will need to provide, at a minimum, the 5 vegetation classes needed for Greater Sage-Grouse habitat suitability analysis: sage-steppe, grass, conifer, riparian and barren. The intent is for this layer to be used to support connectivity studies and for it to be used as the sampling frame for future monitoring efforts. Additionally, to assess approximately 60 wetlands in the Williston Basin using protocols developed by the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP). Rapid assessments will be conducted to assess and document wetland conditions in order to detect any early signs of ecosystem stress, document any emerging trends in ecosystem conditions, and document responses to particular management actions and policies.

**Outcomes with completions dates:**

**Keywords:** map, sage-steppe habitat, wetland assessment, Williston Basin USGS, University of Montana, Montana Natural Heritage Program