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## SAGEBRUSH STORIES

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Wildlife habitat management approaches are often based on success stories we like. The justification for using fire to control juniper encroachment of sagebrush in western Oregon is well founded. Application of this approach in western Montana can have long term negative consequences because the recovery time of our plant species are much slower. Improving sage-brush habitats with fire appeals to our sense of stewardship, even though most sagebrush taxa do not have any evolutionary adaptations to fire. Management suggestions taken from other areas for residual grass heights do not match the vegetation of sage-grouse core areas in Montana because of differences in climate and plant species. Some managers suggest we need to reduce sagebrush cover to promote forb production even though this relationship has not been demonstrated in many places in Montana. We are drawn to stories that are simple and that share our view of the world. Improved management begins when we test these stories.