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Conservation Districts Program
Natural Heritage Program
State Historic Preservation Office

STATE OF NEVADA
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

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Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Team Announced

Multidisciplinary team represents state departments of Conservation, Wildlife and Agriculture

The members of the newly formed five-member Sagebrush Ecosystem Team, an interagency multidisciplinary entity, were announced today.

The team is part of the State of Nevada's overall strategy to preclude listing of the Greater Sage-grouse and to focus on the health and vibrancy of this important ecosystem. The team will focus full time on this effort and bring to bear the staff expertise of the agencies that they represent. The team will be formally introduced to members of the Governor-appointed Sagebrush Ecosystem Council when the body holds its first meeting on February 21, 2013, at 9 a.m. in the Kenny C. Guinn Room within the Capitol Building.

The Sagebrush Ecosystem Program will have its own office location in Carson City at 201 S. Roop Street, Suite 101. The team will open the new office effective February 11.

The team's technical staff includes:

Lara Niell - Wildlife Staff Specialist representing the Nevada Department of Wildlife. Niell holds an M.S. in Biology from the University of Nevada, Reno, and has extensive experience with wildlife and environmental issues in the Great Basin and Sierra Nevada, including a strong background related to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Niell has worked since mid-2007 as a biologist for Tetra Tech Inc in Reno. At Tetra Tech Niell worked on myriad projects requiring data collection and field work, preparation of technical reports and review of environmental documents, development of remediation efforts, geographic information system analysis, studies and monitoring, as well as project management. Niell has also served as a research assistant for the University of Nevada and as a field technician for the U.S. Forest Service in Nevada. Her B.A. is in Environmental Studies from Dartmouth College.

John Copeland - Forester III representing the Nevada Division of Forestry. Copeland currently serves as a Resource Management Officer for the Division of Forestry, a position he has held for more than three years. In total, Copeland has worked 19 years in Forestry in a variety of

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capacities, including Fire Protection Officer, Stewardship Forester, Conservation Crew Supervisor and Assistant Conservation Camp Supervisor. He has designed and managed fuels management projects, fuel breaks and fire rehabilitation efforts, as well as prescription fire plans. Copeland brings a full range of experience in wildland fire and range health including fire prevention, suppression and rehabilitation. His work has included public outreach and multi-stakeholder project coordination, as well as supervision of crews performing conservation projects and fighting wildland fire. He has also worked as an arborist in the private sector. Copeland has a B.S. in Agriculture (Range Option) from California State University, Chico.

Melissa Faigeles - Environmental Scientist III and Watershed Restoration Specialist representing the Nevada Division of State Lands. Faigeles currently serves as Environmental Manager for the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, where she administers permits and oversees the NEPA process for projects on tribal lands, as well as monitors, inventories and prepares plans to manage tribal natural resources in the sagebrush steppe. She also manages staff and contractors and plans, organizes and directs environmental projects including air and water quality monitoring. She has previously worked as an environmental scientist for the California Tahoe Conservancy designing, monitoring and assisting with large-scale river restoration projects, for the Nature Conservancy in Bend, Oregon, working with multi-stakeholder groups on issues and projects in the sagebrush steppe habitat, and for the Washoe County/Truckee River Flood Management Authority and the University of Wisconsin. Faigeles has a B.A. in Ecology from the University of Pittsburgh.

Kelly McGowan - Conservation Staff Specialist II representing the Nevada Department of Agriculture. McGowan currently serves as an environmental scientist for the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) in its Safe Drinking Water Bureau. In that position he works with drinking water operators throughout the state and reviews and approves operator certification, as well as conducting meetings of the Nevada Drinking Water and Wastewater Operators Forum. Prior to joining NDEP, McGowan served for more than eight years on the staff for the Nevada Division of Conservation Districts, where he provided technical, environmental and administrative assistance to the state's 28 conservation districts. For seven years prior to working with the state program, McGowan was the district manager for the Mason and Smith Valley Conservation Districts. McGowan has a B.S. in Geography (Land Forms and Climatology) and is a Certified Public Manager.

Serving as the **Sagebrush Ecosystem Program Manager** and leader of the team will be state administrative veteran **Tim Rubald**. Rubald currently serves as the program manager for the State Conservation Districts Program, where he serves as staff to the State Conservation Commission and assists the state's conservation districts and district elected officials. In addition to program development and management, Rubald has led collaborative efforts to strengthen the Conservation Districts Program in the state. Before leading the conservation districts effort, Rubald served as a consultant on various projects including working with rural communities to develop a "Main Street" program in Nevada similar to one he led for nearly nine years as executive director of the Laramie Downtown Development Authority in Laramie, Wyoming. Rubald's prior State of Nevada service includes more than nine years with the Nevada Commission on Economic Development, where he served first as the Commission's Director of Research and Development and later as its Executive Director.

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