



NEWS RELEASE



U.S. Forest Service, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

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Forest Service Releases Bi-State Sage-Grouse Final EIS and Draft Record of Decision

Sparks, NV; February 6, 2015 – Today Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Supervisor Bill Dunkelberger released the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Greater Sage-grouse Bi-state Distinct Population Segment (Bi-state sage-grouse) Forest Plan Amendment. This Bi-state sage-grouse population occurs in portions of Douglas, Esmeralda, Lyon, and Mineral counties in Nevada and portions of Alpine, Inyo, and Mono counties in California.

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is amending the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (TNFLRMP), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to amend the Carson City District and Tonopah Field Office Resource Management Plans to conserve, enhance, and/or restore habitats to provide for the long-term viability of the Bi-state sage-grouse.

The management plan amendments will specifically enhance management direction for the Bi-state sage-grouse habitat. The amendments would add further goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines to the existing management plans to address the key threats identified by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in its October 28, 2013, proposal to list the Bi-state sage-grouse as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

"This decision includes new Forest Plan standards and guidelines that will result in the conservation and restoration of Bi-state habitat," explained Dunkelberger. "The approved amendment will require the Forest to either avoid or mitigate disturbance to habitat from nearly every authorized activity occurring in Bi-state sage-grouse habitat. Where that is not possible the Forest is required to prepare a site-specific Forest Plan amendment that would analyze the effects of the action and limit the amount of disturbance to the greatest extent possible."

The FEIS was developed following the publication of the Revised Draft EIS in July 2014. The Forest and BLM used public comments to finalize the FEIS. The Forest then prepared the Forest Service Draft Record of Decision (draft ROD) based on the FEIS analysis, previous drafts, and project record information. The draft ROD is being published as a pre-decisional document subject to objections. For the next 60 days, people with standing may file objections to the draft ROD.

The draft ROD displays the approved amendment that would be included in the TNFLRMP following the objection period. It provides the decision rationale, a comparison of the approved amendment to the FEIS alternatives, and a description of how the amendment addresses the issues.

The FEIS and Forest Service draft ROD are available for 60-day formal objection period following publication of the Legal Notice for the beginning of the Objection Period in the newspaper of record (*Reno Gazette Journal*).

The FEIS and draft ROD are available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=40683>, or a hard copy may be requested from the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest by contacting James Winfrey at 775-355-5308.

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The BLM will publish a separate ROD based on the FEIS. The BLM will not issue a final decision on the proposal for at least 30 days after the date that the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its notice of availability in the Federal Register. For more information, contact Colleen Sievers at 775-885-6168.

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The Humboldt-Toiyabe's spectacular 6.3 million acres make it the largest national forest in the lower 48 states. Located in Nevada and a small portion of eastern California, the Forest offers year-round recreation of all types.

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