

BLM defers oil and gas leases in sage grouse areas

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The Bureau of Land Management is deferring Nevada parcels in sage grouse habitat from an upcoming oil and gas lease sale.

The sale will be held Tuesday at the BLM office in Reno.

But the BLM says 33 parcels originally part of the offering have been withdrawn to comply with the agency's interim policies for sage grouse management. The bird is a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Public notice of the sale was amended to reduce the number of parcels offered from 75 to 42. All are in the Elko and Ely areas.

Total acreage involved fell to 72,000 from 133,000.

Successful bidders pay \$1.50 per acre each year for an oil and gas lease. After five years, the rent rises to \$2 per acre.