

BLM receives thousands of comments

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ELKO — The sage grouse issue drew 530 “unique written” public comments and 14,700 form letters for the Great Basin region alone, according to JoLynn Worley, deputy chief of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management’s state office in Reno.

The BLM and U.S. Forest Service received these comments for use in the preparation of an environmental impact statement on conservation of the sage grouse that will in turn be used by the BLM and forest districts in the Great Basin region to update land management plans.

“In general, there is strong support for dealing with the sage grouse at the local level to tailor management to local conditions, and there were requests for transparency and access to all maps, models and data used in decision making,” Worley said Monday.

“The top resource concerns include impacts to livestock grazing and energy development, impacts from wildland fire and predators,” she said.

The comment deadline was March 23.

Each region in the West will be doing studies on managing the bird, all as part of an effort to keep the sage grouse from being listed as an endangered species. In the meantime, the BLM issued an interim policy for conserving the sage grouse.