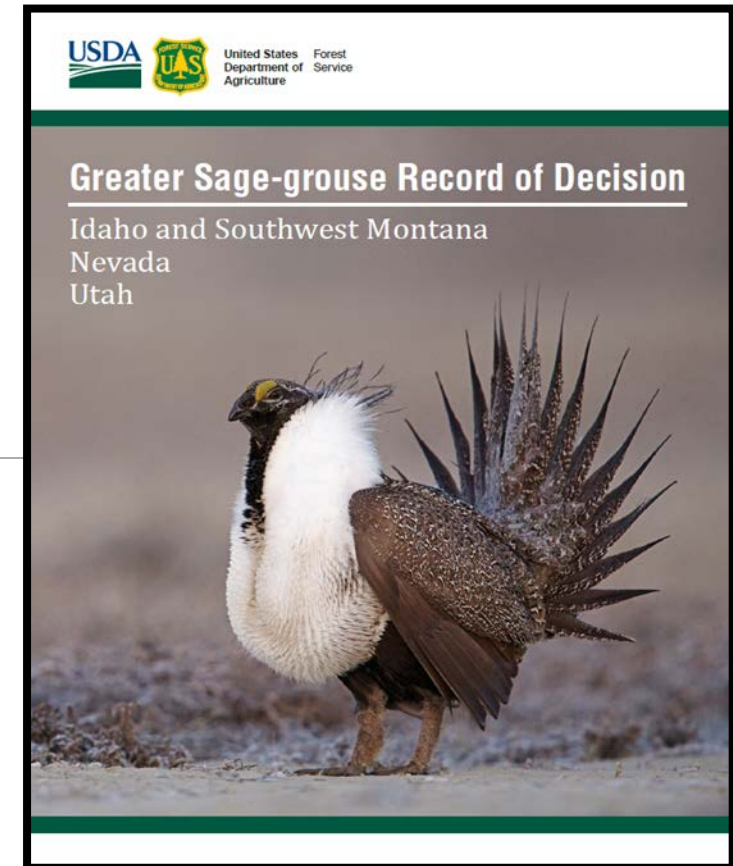




DEIS Update: Greater Sage-Grouse Forest Plan Amendment in Nevada



Ongoing Assessment, Public Participation



- FS assessed plans during 3 years of implementation
- The Sage-grouse Task Force, State agencies, and other groups (e.g., SEC) helped identify additional concerns
- NOI in November, 2017 regarding functioning of plans
--53,000 comments
- Supplemental NOI, with proposed changes, closed Aug 15
--8,700 comments

How We Incorporated Comments



- Examined issues brought up by comments
- Aligned as possible with State and BLM approaches
- Many comments provided conflicting input; we are striving for the best approaches to multiple use management

Purpose and Need



“...to incorporate new information to improve the clarity, efficiency, and implementation of greater sage-grouse plans, including better alignment with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and State plans, in order to benefit greater sage-grouse conservation on the landscape scale”



Structure of Forest Service Plans: Adapting to the 2012 Rule

Plan Components



- **Desired Condition** - A description of specific social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics of the plan area, or a portion of the plan area, toward which management of the land and resources should be directed. Desired conditions must be described in terms that are specific enough to allow progress toward their achievement to be determined, but do not include completion dates.

Plan Components



- **Objective** - A concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a desired condition or conditions. Objectives should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets.

Plan Components



- **Standard** - A mandatory constraint on project and activity decision making, established to help achieve or maintain the desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements.

Plan Components



- **Guideline** - A constraint on project and activity decision making that allows for departure from its terms, so long as the purpose of the guideline is met. Guidelines are established to help achieve or maintain a desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements.

New: Other Plan Content



- **Management Approach** - Management approaches describe the principal strategies and program priorities the Responsible Official intends to employ to carry out projects and activities developed under the plan. Management approaches can convey the management emphasis, relate to desired conditions and may indicate the future course or direction of change. These may discuss potential processes such as analysis, assessment, inventory, project planning, or monitoring.

Future changes to plans



- Any changes that alter where a component applies requires an amendment (e.g., maps)
- *Other plan content* may be changed administratively

Proposed Actions



- Goal: Improved plan and positive changes for conservation
- More staying the same than changing
- We have to balance precision with flexibility
 - No numbers = no plans; too many numbers = impossible plans
- These are proposed actions → decision later
- One large EIS → multiple Records Of Decisions likely

Proposed Actions in DEIS Chapter 2



No Action Alternative (Nevada)	Proposed Action (Nevada)	Issue/Clarification
<p>GRSG-GEN-DC-001-Desired Condition</p> <p>The landscape for greater sage-grouse encompasses large contiguous areas of native vegetation, approximately 6 to 62 square miles in area, to provide for multiple aspects of species life requirements. Within these landscapes, a variety of sagebrush- community compositions exist without invasive species, which have variations in subspecies composition, co-dominant vegetation, shrub cover, herbaceous cover, and stand structure, to meet seasonal requirements for food, cover, and nesting for greater sage-grouse.</p>	<p>GRSG-GEN-DC-001-Desired Condition</p> <p>The landscape for greater sage-grouse encompasses large contiguous areas of native vegetation, approximately 6 to 62 square miles in area, to provide for multiple aspects of species life requirements. Within these landscapes, a variety of sagebrush- community compositions exist without invasive species, which have variations in subspecies composition, co-dominant vegetation, shrub cover, herbaceous cover, and stand structure, to meet seasonal requirements for food, cover, and nesting for greater sage-grouse. <u>Sagebrush vegetation communities provide contiguous habitat for greater sage grouse, which is resistant and resilient to disturbances such as fire and invasive plants.</u></p>	
<p>GRSG-GEN-DC-002-Desired Condition</p> <p>Anthropogenic disturbance is focused in non-habitat areas outside of priority and general habitat management areas and sagebrush focal areas². Disturbance in general habitat management areas is limited, and there is little to no disturbance</p>	<p>GRSG-GEN-DC-002-Desired Condition</p> <p>Anthropogenic disturbance is focused in non-habitat areas outside of priority and general habitat management areas.</p> <p>Disturbance in general habitat management areas is limited, and there is little to no disturbance in priority habitat management</p>	<p>Elimination of Sagebrush Focal Areas</p>

Management Approaches



- Many guidelines, especially in Fire, Recreation, Roads/Trails and Minerals were inconsistent with definition of a Guideline in the 2012 Planning Rule
- Retained intent, but converted to management approaches to be consistent with the 2012 Planning Rule



Desired Conditions

- “...Sagebrush vegetation communities provide contiguous habitat for greater sage-grouse, which is resistant and resilient to disturbances such as fire and invasive plants.”

GRSG-GEN-MA-004-Management Approach

- “Seasonal use periods for greater sage-grouse on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest are in Appendix D, Table D-1. Seasonal habitat preferences for use during habitat assessment are in Appendix D, Table D-3.”

Sagebrush Focal Areas



- References to SFAs are being removed from the text
- Former SFA area will be managed by underlying designation consistent with the State and BLM, in many cases as PHMA or GHMA

Maps and Management Areas:



GRSG-GEN-MA-007-Management Approach

- “The Forest Service will conduct a NEPA sufficiency review to update the habitat management area maps as new data...are incorporated into...Coates et al. 2014, 2016”

Adaptive Management



GRSG-AM-MA-014-Management Approach

- Hard triggers (signals) represent a threshold that indicates that immediate action needs be considered to stop or reverse a severe deviation from GRSG conservation goals and objectives. The process for evaluating and responding to hard triggers is documented in Appendix D.

Adaptive Management



GRSG-AM-MA-015-Management Approach

- Soft triggers represent an intermediate threshold that indicates that management changes should be considered at the project or implementation level to address GRSG population and/or habitat declines. If a soft trigger is reached, consider additional implementation level management responses to address the known or probable causes...

Compensatory Mitigation



- FS is not removing requirements for compensatory mitigation
- Maintaining *net conservation gain* standard
- Emphasis on using State mitigation programs

Compensatory Mitigation



GRSG-GEN-MA-009-Management Approach

- The State of Nevada's Habitat Quantification Tool, or other standardized method, will be used to quantify the residual impacts from project activities and any pursuant compensatory mitigation projects.

Invasive species



GRSG-GRSGH-DC-029-Desired Condition

- Invasive annual grasses are either not present or in low abundance and not increasing in sage-grouse habitat.

GRSG-GRSGH-MA-039-Management Approach

- Prioritize treatments for established invasive plant populations that have the potential to impact sage-grouse habitat in priority habitat management areas. Early detection and rapid response treatments remain the focus.

Livestock Grazing:



Removes Table 3 (7" and 4"), based on analysis of:

- Current science on habitat preferences
- Existing Forest Plan direction for each national forest
- Habitat assessment data
- Upland droop height and meadow stubble height measurements
- Other forest monitoring data

Livestock Grazing: Monitoring



S3 HAF Summary - Breeding Habitat (2016-2017)				
Row Labels	No. of Plots	No. of Allotments	No. Suitable	Less Than Suitable re; Grazing
Idaho	382	37	21	0
Boise	75	8	7	0
Caribou-Targhee	20	5	0	0
Salmon-Challis	106	13	8	0
Sawtooth	181	11	6	0
Nevada	129	15	8	0
HTNF	129	15	8	0
Utah	587	41	33	3
Ashley	98	7	7	0
Dixie	177	14	12	0
Fishlake	116	5	2	3
Manti-La Sal	35	2	2	0
Sawtooth	16	2	1	0
UWC	145	11	9	0
Wyoming	141	13	4	0
BTNF	141	13	4	0
Grand Total	1239	106	66	3

S4 HAF Summary -Summer Upland (2016-2017)				
Row Labels	Sum of No. of Plots	No. of Allotments	No. Suitable	Less Than Suitable re; Grazing
Idaho	678	68	57	0
Boise	177	12	9	0
Caribou-Targhee	13	3	1	0
Salmon-Challis	125	14	14	0
Sawtooth	363	39	33	0
Nevada	133	15	10	0
HTNF	133	15	10	0
Utah	855	69	49	6
Ashley	24	4	4	0
Dixie	237	23	14	5
Fishlake	154	9	7	1
Manti-La Sal	40	3	2	0
Sawtooth	113	7	1	0
UWC	287	23	21	0
Wyoming	117	21	21	0
BTNF	117	21	21	0
Grand Total	1783	173	137	6

Livestock Grazing:



GRSG-LG-DC-042-Desired Condition

- Grazing management contributes to proper functioning condition in riparian areas and mesic meadows in priority, general, and other habitat management areas.

GRSG-LG-MA-047-Guideline

- Utilization in riparian areas and mesic meadows will be managed to promote cover, diversity, and health of important/key plant species to support sage-grouse...
- During the growing season, manage grazing in riparian areas and mesic meadows to allow recovery of riparian vegetation

Livestock Grazing:



GRSG-LG-GL-045-Guideline

- In greater sage-grouse habitat, if livestock grazing is limiting achievement of seasonal desired conditions, adjust livestock management, as appropriate, to address greater sage-grouse habitat requirements.

GRSG-LG-MA-046-Management Approach

- Conduct greater sage-grouse habitat assessments in allotments. If the assessment identifies the habitat is in less than Suitable Condition, determine factors limiting achievement of the Suitable Condition.

Livestock Grazing: Water Developments



GRSG-LG-ST-043-Standard

- In priority and general habitat management areas, do not approve construction of water developments if the development would cause adverse effects to greater sage-grouse habitat.
- Was, “...unless beneficial to greater sage-grouse habitat”

Livestock Grazing:



GRSG-LG-GL-048-Guideline

- Bedding sheep and placing camps within 2.0 miles from an active or pending lek during lekking should be restricted to prevent disturbance to breeding and nesting GRSG.

Livestock Grazing:



GRSG-LG-GL-049-Guideline

- During the breeding and nesting season, trailing livestock through breeding and nesting habitat should be avoided to the extent practicable to prevent disturbance to breeding and nesting GRSG. Specific routes should be identified, existing trails should be used, and stopovers on active leks are not allowed.

Fluid Minerals: Exceptions



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- ~~“unanimous concurrence from a team of agency greater sage-grouse experts from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service”~~
 - The location of the proposed authorization is determined to be unsuitable...lacks the ecological potential... and would not result in direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on greater sage-grouse and its habitat.
 - Impacts from the proposed action could be offset through use of the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, minimize, mitigate)...

Minerals: Stipulations



- Stipulations: Management Approach in Appendix
- One page, clear instruction

NO SURFACE OCCUPANCY STIPULATION

Greater Sage-Grouse in Priority Habitat Management Areas

GRSG-M-FMUL-ST-071 (NW CO); GRSG-M-FMUL-ST-089 (NV); GRSG-M-FMUL-ST-074 (UT)

No surface occupancy or use is allowed on the lands described below (legal subdivision or other description).

Insert applicable legal land description here.

For the purpose of:

Protecting Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) habitat.

Exceptions: An exception could be granted by the authorized officer if:

- there would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to the GRSG or its habitat; or
- granting the exception provides an alternative to a similar action occurring on a nearby parcel; and
- the exception provides not net loss to the GRSG; and
- When an exception is considered, all existing discrete anthropogenic disturbances must cover less than 3% of the total GRSG habitat within the applicable Biologically Significant Unit and the proposed project area, regardless of ownership, and the new use will not cause exceedance of the 3% cap; or where the disturbance would exceed 3% of the Biologically Significant Unit and proposed project area, and the disturbance is approved by the Forest Supervisor with concurrence from the Regional Forester after review of new or site-specific information that indicates the project would result in a net conservation gain at the Biologically Significant Unit and proposed project area scale;
- In NW CO only: when an exception is considered, the density of activities related to oil and gas development or mining activities are limited to no more than an average of one energy or mining facility per 640 acres in a proposed project area.

Modifications: None.

Waiver: None.

Any changes to this stipulation will be made in accordance with the land use plan and/or the regulatory provisions for such changes. (For guidance on the use of this stipulation, see BLM Manual 1624 and 3101 or FS Manual 1950 and 2820.)

Predators



GRSG-P-MA-114-Management Approach

- Efforts by other agencies to minimize impacts from predators on the greater sage-grouse should be supported and encouraged where needs have been documented.

Intended Timeline



- Chapters, as they are drafted, to Cooperating Agencies
 - Aim for 1 week review (now)
- DEIS published: Sept. 21, 2018, comments close Dec. 20
- FEIS and draft ROD: February 4, 2019
- Objection period ends April 4, 2019.
- Final ROD could be as early as late April, or late July 2019, depending on scope and complexity of objections