



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Oregon State Office

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**In Reply Refer to:**

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EMS TRANSMISSION 07/31/07

Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2007-073

Expires: 9/30/2008

To: DMs, Staff and Branch Chiefs

From: State Director, Oregon/Washington

Subject: Sage-Grouse Guidelines

**Program Area:** Wildlife, Range and Special Status Species Management

**Purpose:** This Instruction Memorandum (IM) provides clarifications to conflicting guidance between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Greater Sage-grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystems Management Guidelines of 2000 (BLM Interim Guides) and the Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon (OR State Strategy).

**Policy/Action:** Districts should consult management actions and guidelines as recommended in the OR State Strategy. Recommendations in the OR State Strategy are more comprehensive and utilize the most current science over recommendations contained in the BLM Interim Guides.

**Timeframe:** This guidance is in effect immediately.

**Budget Impact:** Minimal

**Background:** The OR State Strategy encourages the BLM (pg 70) to continue to implement the BLM Interim Guides as part of the Oregon BLM overall strategy for managing sage-grouse. A few conflicts exist in the management recommendations between the documents. However, a recent review revealed that the OR State Strategy actions and recommendations are more comprehensive and in many cases contain the same guidance as the BLM Interim Guides.

The major difference between the documents occurs with recommendations for specific vegetation management for seasonal sage-grouse life requirements. In at least one reference, habitat recommendations contained in the BLM Interim Guides are ambiguous relative to scale and unachievable on a landscape scale for Oregon sage-steppe habitats. Therefore, vegetation management for sage-grouse in Oregon should focus on maintaining the 70% sagebrush goal as

outlined on page 66 of the OR State Strategy with emphasis on sagebrush classes 3, 4 and 5 as defined in the BLM Technical Bulletin 417. The 70% sagebrush goal is consistent with goals contained in the Southeast Oregon Resource Management Plan and considered achievable on a landscape scale in Oregon. Each district should refer to the OR State Strategy for district specific management objectives to retain the objective of 70% sagebrush. The 70% sagebrush goal should be applied at a sage-grouse subpopulation or district level in consultation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Additional references such as the Connelly guidelines (Connelly, J.W., M. A. Schroeder, A.R. Sands and C.E. Braun. 2000. *Guidelines to manage sage-grouse populations and their habitats*. Wildlife Society Bulletin 28(4): 967-985) continue to be considered the benchmark for specific sage-grouse life history requirements and should be reviewed for site or seasonally specific management recommendations.

**Coordination:** It is essential that all programs implementing or approving ground disturbing activities coordinate projects to ensure success with sage-grouse specific vegetation management.

**Contact:** If you have any questions, please contact George Buckner, Wildlife Biologist, at 503-808-6081.

**Districts with Unions** are reminded to notify their unions of this Instruction Memorandum and satisfy any bargaining obligations before implementation. Your servicing Human Resources Office or Labor Relations Specialist can provide you assistance in this matter.

Signed by  
Lynda B. Stelzer  
Acting Associate State Director

Authenticated by  
Paj Shua Cha  
Records Section