

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## ES.1 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directs the United States Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop and periodically revise or amend its resource management plans (RMPs), which guide management of BLM-administered lands.

The BLM Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) Proposed Plan provides a layered management approach that offers the highest level of protection for GRSG in the most valuable habitat. Land use allocations in the Proposed Plan would limit or eliminate new surface disturbance in Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA), while minimizing disturbance in General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA). In addition to establishing protective land use allocations, the Proposed Plan would implement a suite of management tools, such as disturbance limits, GRSG habitat objectives and monitoring, mitigation approaches, adaptive management triggers and responses, and other protective measures throughout the range. These overlapping and reinforcing conservation measures will work in concert to improve and restore GRSG habitat condition and provide consistency in how the BLM will manage activities in GRSG habitat in the planning area.

### ES.1.1 Rationale for the Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy and Land Use Plan Amendment

This land use plan amendment is the result of the March 2010 US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) 12-Month Finding for Petitions to List the Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) as Threatened or Endangered (75 *Federal Register* 13910, March 23, 2010). In that finding, the USFWS concluded that GRSG was “warranted, but precluded” for listing as a threatened or endangered species. A warranted, but precluded determination is one of three results that may occur after a petition is filed by the public to list a species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This finding indicates that immediate

publication of a proposed rule to list the species is precluded by higher-priority listing proposals; that is, a species should be listed based on the available science, but listing other species takes priority because they are more in need of protection.

The USFWS reviewed the status of and threats to the GRSG in relation to the five listing factors provided in Section 4(a)(1) of the ESA. Of the five listing factors reviewed, the USFWS determined that Factor A, “the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the habitat or range of the GRSG,” and Factor D, “the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms,” posed “a significant threat to the GRSG now and in the foreseeable future” (75 *Federal Register* 13910, March 23, 2010). The USFWS identified the principal regulatory mechanisms for the BLM as conservation measures in RMPs.

Consistent with the National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy (BLM 2011)<sup>1</sup>, the BLM as the lead agency, together with the Forest Service as a cooperating agency, is preparing 15 environmental impact statements (EISs), with associated plan amendments and revisions. These documents provide a set of management alternatives focused on specific conservation measures across the range of the GRSG (see **Figure ES-1**, Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy Boundaries).

Science-based decision-making and collaboration with state and local partners are fundamental to the Greater Sage-Grouse planning strategy. The 15 GRSG RMP/EISs address threats to GRSG identified by state fish and wildlife agencies, the BLM National Technical Team, and the USFWS in the context of its listing decision and the Conservation Objectives Team (COT) report. The COT report was prepared by wildlife biologists from state and federal agencies and provides a blueprint for the overall conservation approach set forth in the BLM and Forest Service GRSG Land Use Plan (LUP)/EISs (USFWS 2013).<sup>2</sup> Where consistent with conservation objectives, the GRSG LUP/EISs adopt unique state and stakeholder developed approaches and priorities. Additional science-based reviews by the US Geological Survey and related scientific literature provided further guidance on specific issues that arose in developing the final BLM and Forest Service GRSG LUP/EISs. In addition, regular meetings with the Western Governors Association Sage-Grouse Task Force provided additional opportunities for coordination with member states.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BLM (US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management). 2011. Instruction Memorandum 2012-044, BLM National. Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Planning Strategy. Washington, DC. December 27, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> USFWS (US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service). 2013. Greater Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) Conservation Objectives: Final Report. USFWS, Denver, CO. February 2013.

<sup>3</sup> The Western Governors Association Sage-Grouse Task Force works to identify and implement high priority conservation actions and integrate ongoing actions necessary to preclude the need for the GRSG to be listed under the ESA. The Task Force includes designees from the 11 western states where GRSG is found as well as

Figure ES-1



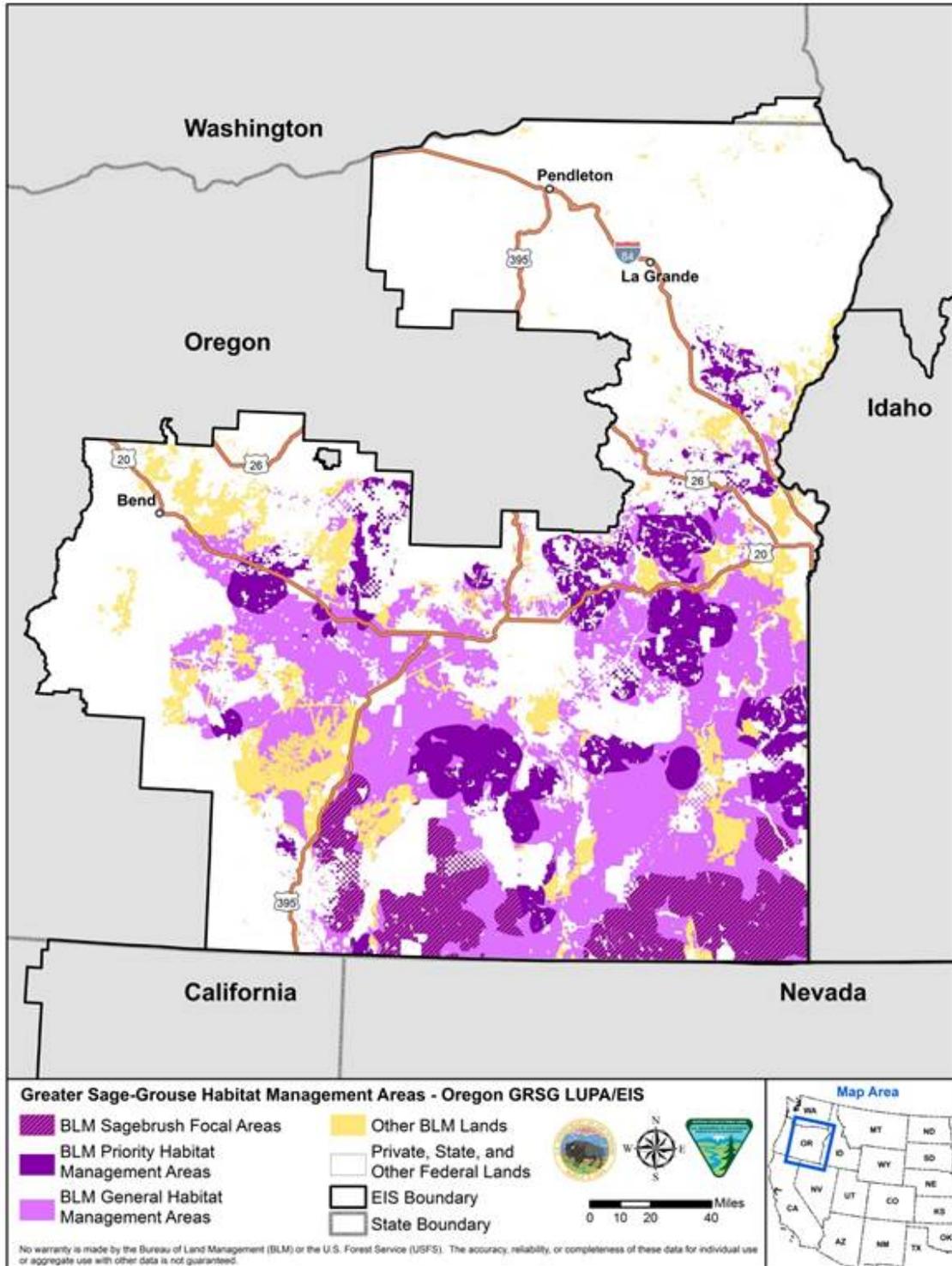
### ES.1.2 Description of the Planning Area and Habitat Management Areas

The planning area is the geographic area within which the BLM will make decisions during this planning effort. The planning area boundary includes all lands regardless of jurisdiction. The Oregon sub-regional GRSG planning area covers all or portions of 17 counties in Oregon and one county in Washington. While the planning area consists of all lands regardless of ownership, decisions resulting from this resource management plan amendment (RMPA) would apply only to BLM-administered lands in GRSG habitats (the decision area), including surface and split-estate lands with BLM-administered mineral rights. **Chapter 3, Affected Environment**, describes the current resource and resource use conditions in the planning area.

GRSG habitat on BLM-administered lands in the decision area consists of lands allocated as PHMA and GHMA (see **Figure ES-2, Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Areas—Oregon GRGS LUPA/EIS**, and **Table ES-1, Habitat Management Areas in the Proposed Plan in the Oregon Planning Area**).

representatives from USFWS, BLM, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Forest Service, United States Geological Survey, and Department of the Interior.

**Figure ES-2  
Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Areas – Oregon GRGS LUPA/EIS**



**Table ES-1**  
**Habitat Management Areas in the Proposed Plan in the Oregon Planning Area**

<b>Habitat Management Area</b>	<b>Acres of BLM-Administered Lands</b>	<b>Percent of BLM-Administered Lands in the Planning Area</b>
PHMA	4,547,000	36
GHMA	5,628,600	45
Other BLM-administered lands	2,408,700	19

PHMA and GHMA are defined as follows:

- PHMA (over 4.5 million acres)—BLM-administered lands identified as having the highest value to maintaining sustainable GRSG populations. The boundaries and management strategies for PHMA are derived from and generally follow the Preliminary Priority Habitat boundaries (see **Chapter 3**) identified in the Draft RMPA/EIS. Areas of PHMA largely coincide with areas identified as Priority Areas for Conservation in the COT report.
- GHMA (over 5.6 million acres)—BLM-administered lands that require some special management to sustain GRSG populations. The boundaries and management strategies for GHMA are derived from and generally follow the Preliminary General Habitat boundaries (see **Chapter 3**) identified in the Draft RMPA/EIS.

The planning area includes other BLM-administered lands that are not allocated as habitat management areas for GRSG. The Oregon RMPA/EIS does not establish any additional management for these lands; these lands will be managed according to the existing, underlying land use plan for the area.

The Proposed Plan also identifies specific sagebrush focal areas (SFA). The SFA were derived from GRSG stronghold areas, described in a USFWS memorandum to the BLM and Forest Service titled *Greater Sage-Grouse: Additional Recommendations to Refine Land Use Allocations in Highly Important Landscapes* (USFWS 2014).<sup>4</sup> The memorandum and associated maps provided by the USFWS identify areas that represent recognized strongholds for GRSG that have been noted and referenced as having the highest densities of GRSG and other criteria important for the persistence of the species.

## **ES.2 PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose for this RMPA is to identify and incorporate appropriate conservation measures to conserve, enhance, and restore GRSG habitat by

<sup>4</sup> USFWS (US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service). 2014. Memorandum: Greater Sage-Grouse: Additional Recommendations to Refine Land Use Allocations in Highly Important Landscapes. October 27, 2014.

reducing, minimizing, or eliminating threats to that habitat. The BLM will consider such measures in the context of the multiple-use and sustained yield mandates of FLPMA. The major threats identified by the USFWS in the March 2010 listing decision that apply to the Oregon Sub-region include:

- Wildfire—Loss of large areas of GRS habitat due to wildfire
- Invasive species—Conversion of GRS habitat to invasive annual grass (e.g., cheatgrass, medusahead) dominated plant communities
- Conifer invasion—Encroachment of juniper into GRS habitat
- Infrastructure—Fragmentation of GRS habitat due to human development activities such as right-of-way (Row) and renewable energy development
- Climate change—Fragmentation of GRS habitat due to climate stress
- Grazing—Loss of habitat components due to improper livestock, wild horse and burro, and large wildlife use
- Human uses—Fragmentation of GRS habitat or modification of GRS behavior

This RMPA with associated EIS is needed to respond to the USFWS's March 2010 "warranted, but precluded" ESA listing petition decision (75 *Federal Register* 13910, March 23, 2010). The USFWS identified inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms as a significant factor in its finding on the petition to list the GRS. In its listing decision, the USFWS noted that changes in management of GRS habitats are necessary to avoid the continued decline of GRS populations. Changes in land use allocations and conservation measures in the BLM RMPs provide a means to implement regulatory mechanisms to address the inadequacy identified by the USFWS.

### ES.3 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed federal action is the Proposed Plan which identifies resource management actions in accordance with the multiple-use and sustained yield mandates of FLPMA. The proposed action is intended to provide a consistent framework for managing GRS and its habitat on BLM-administered. The alternatives, including the Proposed Plan, are the desired future outcomes; they are a range of management actions, allowable uses, and land use allocations that guide management on BLM-administered lands to conserve, restore, and enhance GRS habitat. The Proposed Plan (see **Section ES.6**, Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Proposed Plan and Environmental, and **Section 2.6**, Proposed Plan Amendment) represents the agency's approach for addressing the purpose and need.

## ES.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RMPA/EIS

### ES.4.1 Scoping

The BLM initiated the RMPA/EIS process on December 9, 2011, with the publication in the *Federal Register* of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to begin a planning effort. A public scoping process began in January 2012 and included a series of five public meetings in various locations throughout the planning area. Scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope, or range, of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues to consider in the planning process. The scoping process included soliciting input from interested state and local governments, tribal governments, other federal agencies and organizations, and individuals to identify the scope of issues to be addressed in the plan amendment, and to assist in the formulation of a reasonable range of alternatives (see **Section 6.5.1**, Scoping Process).

The final Scoping Summary Report, available online at <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse.html>, was prepared in conjunction with all the GRSG RMPAs. It summarizes the scoping and issue-identification process and describes 13 broad issue categories identified during the scoping process (see also **Section 1.6.2**, Issues Identified for Consideration in the Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse RMP Amendments).

### ES.4.2 Cooperating Agency Collaboration

Throughout this planning effort, the BLM has engaged with multiple federal, state, and local government agencies as well as Native American tribes. Consistent with the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) and FLPMA, cooperating agencies share knowledge and resources to achieve desired outcomes for public lands and communities within statutory and regulatory frameworks. A total of 12 agencies and tribes signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to formalize their cooperating agency relationship. The BLM met with and provided relevant information to cooperating agencies throughout the planning process. For more information, see **Chapter 6**, Consultation and Coordination.

### ES.4.3 Development of the Draft RMPA/EIS

#### ***Development of Management Alternatives***

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality implementing regulations (40 CFR, Part 1500), the Oregon GRSG RMPA/EIS planning team considered public input and developed a reasonable range of alternatives for the Draft RMPA/EIS.

The planning team developed six unique alternatives—one No Action Alternative and five action alternatives—which were subsequently analyzed in

the Draft RMPA/EIS. Each of the preliminary action alternatives was designed to accomplish the following:

- Respond to USFWS-identified issues and threats to GRSG and its habitat, including specific threats identified in the COT report
- Address the range-wide 13 planning issues
- Fulfill the purpose and need for the RMPA
- Meet the mandates of the FLPMA

Collectively, the five action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F) analyzed in the Draft RMPA/EIS offer a range of possible management approaches for responding to the purpose and need, as well as the planning issues and concerns identified through public scoping. While the overarching goal of the long-term conservation of GRSG and its habitat is the same across alternatives, each alternative contains a discrete set of objectives and management actions, which if selected as the final plan, would constitute a unique RMPA.

### ***Publication of Draft RMPA/EIS***

#### *Public Comment Period*

A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft RMPA/EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on November 26, 2013. The NOA initiated a 90-day public comment period. The BLM also held seven public comment open houses for the Draft RMPA/EIS in January 2014.

#### *Comment Analysis*

During the Draft RMPA/EIS 90-day public comment period, the BLM received thousands of written comments by mail, e-mail, and submissions at the public meetings. Comments covered a wide spectrum of thoughts, opinions, ideas, and concerns. Upon receipt, the BLM reviewed the comments, grouped similar substantive comments under an appropriate topic heading, and evaluated and wrote summary responses addressing the comment topics. The response indicated whether the commenters' points would result in new information or changes being included in the Proposed RMPA/FEIS. **Section 6.5.2**, Public Comment on the Draft RMPA/EIS, provides a detailed description of the comment analysis methodology and an overview of the public comments received on the Draft RMPA/EIS. Complete comment summaries and responses, including rationale and any associated changes made in the Proposed RMPA/FEIS, can be found in **Appendix V**, Public Comment Report.

## **ES.5 RMPA/EIS ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

### **ES.5.1 Alternative A: No Action**

Under Alternative A, the BLM would not develop new management actions to protect GRSG habitat. Management of existing threats to GRSG populations and

habitat, such as infrastructure, invasive species, grazing, mineral development, and wildfire, would continue in accordance with existing land use planning documents.

### **ES.5.2 Alternative B**

Alternative B is based on the conservation measures developed by the BLM National Technical Team (NTT) planning effort described in Instruction Memorandum No. WO-2012-044. As directed in the memorandum, the conservation measures developed by the NTT must be considered and analyzed, as appropriate, through the land use planning and NEPA processes by all BLM state and field offices that contain occupied GRSG habitat. Alternative B would apply management actions to PHMA and GHMA, including actions that would exclude ROW development in PHMA and avoid development in GHMA, close PHMA to fluid mineral leasing, mineral material sales, and nonenergy leasable minerals, and recommend proposed withdrawal from locatable mineral entry in PHMA. These management actions would reduce surface disturbance in PHMA and would minimize disturbance in GHMA, thereby maintaining GRSG habitat.

Management actions for wildfire would focus on suppression in PHMA and GHMA, while limiting certain types of fuels treatments. Vegetation management would emphasize sagebrush restoration. Collectively, vegetation and wildfire management would conserve GRSG habitat. Grazing would continue with similar impacts under Alternative B as Alternative A.

### **ES.5.3 Alternative C**

Alternative C is the most restrictive approach to GRSG conservation. Alternative C would eliminate all future ROWs, fluid mineral leasing, nonenergy leasable mineral development, and mineral material sales on GRSG habitat. Alternative C would also recommend proposed withdrawal from locatable mineral entry for all GRSG habitat. Alternative C would manage all GRSG habitat as PHMA. This alternative would substantially reduce surface disturbance in all GRSG habitat.

Under Alternative C, the BLM would take a passive management approach to vegetation management and fuels treatments. Additionally, all GRSG habitat would be unavailable for livestock grazing.

### **ES.5.4 Alternative D**

Alternative D, the agencies' preferred alternative from the Draft RMPA/EIS, presents a balanced approach to maintaining and enhancing GRSG populations and habitat.

Alternative D would limit disturbance in GRSG habitat by excluding wind and solar energy development, avoiding all other ROW development, applying no surface occupancy stipulations to fluid mineral development in PHMA, and closing PHMA and GHMA to nonenergy leasable mineral development and

mineral material sales. These management actions would protect GRSG habitat while allowing other activities, subject to conditions.

Under Alternative D, the BLM management would support sagebrush/perennial grass ecosystems enhancements, would increase fire suppression in PHMA and GHMA, and would manage livestock grazing to maintain or enhance sagebrush and perennial grass ecosystems.

#### **ES.5.5 Alternative E**

Alternative E contains GRSG conservation guidelines from Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A Plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitat (the state plan; Hagen 2011)<sup>5</sup>. The state plan describes the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's proposed management of GRSG. It also provides guidance for public land management agencies and land managers for GRSG conservation. GRSG conservation guidelines in the state plan are designed to maintain (at a minimum) or enhance the quality (the optimum) of current habitats. The guidelines would also assist resource managers in achieving the population and habitat objectives of the state plan.

#### **ES.5.6 Alternative F**

Alternative F would restrict development in ways similar to those proposed under Alternative C. Alternative F would limit surface disturbance in PHMA and GHMA.

The BLM, under Alternative F, would prioritize wildfire suppression in PHMA, while limiting certain types of fuels treatments necessary to protect GRSG habitat. Concurrent vegetation management would emphasize sagebrush restoration and enhancement. Alternative F would reduce livestock utilization by 25 percent within PHMA and GHMA.

### **ES.6 GREATER SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT MANAGEMENT PROPOSED PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

In consideration of public comments, best available science, cooperating agency coordination, and internal review of the Draft RMPA/EIS, the BLM developed this Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Proposed Plan. The Proposed Plan represents the BLM's proposed approach for meeting the purpose and need consistent with the agency's legal and policy mandates.

The BLM Proposed Plan addresses threats to GRSG and its habitat identified by the USFWS in the March 2010 listing decision that apply to the Oregon planning area as well as threats described in the COT report. The Proposed Plans seek to provide greater regulatory certainty for management actions intended to

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<sup>5</sup> Hagen, C. A. 2011. Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A Plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitats. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bend, Oregon. April 22, 2011. 221pp.

conserve the GRSG (**Table ES-2**, Key Components of the Oregon Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats). In making its determination of whether the GRSG is warranted to be listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA, the USFWS will evaluate the degree to which the land use planning decisions proposed in this RMPA/EIS address threats to GRSG and its habitat.

The Proposed Plan would maintain and enhance GRSG populations and habitat. The Proposed Plan would apply management actions, subject to valid existing rights, to other uses and resources, such as the following:

- Providing a framework for prioritizing areas in PHMA and GHMA for wildfire, invasive annual grass, and conifer treatments
- Managing areas as ROW avoidance or exclusion for certain types of lands and realty uses, requiring specific design features, and limiting new development where a disturbance cap has been reached
- Adjust grazing practices as necessary, based on GRSG habitat objectives, Land Health Standards, and ecological site potential
- Applying no surface occupancy stipulations, with limited exceptions, to fluid mineral development in PHMA and closing PHMA to nonenergy leasable development and mineral material sales

The Proposed Plan would also establish screening criteria and conditions for new human activities in PHMA and GHMA to ensure a net conservation gain to GRSG. The Proposed Plan would reduce habitat disturbance and fragmentation through limitations on surface-disturbing activities, while addressing changes in resource condition and use through monitoring and adaptive management.

The Proposed Plan adopts key elements of the Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A Plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitat (Hagen 2011)<sup>6</sup> by establishing conservation measures and focusing restoration efforts in the same key areas most valuable to the GRSG.

For a full description of the BLM Proposed Plan Amendment, see **Section 2.6**, Proposed Plan Amendment.

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<sup>6</sup> Hagen, C. A. 2011. Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A Plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitats. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bend, Oregon. April 22, 2011. 221pp.

**Table ES-2**  
**Key Components of the Oregon Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats**

<b>Threats to GRSG and its Habitat (from COT Report)</b>	<b>Key Component of the Oregon Proposed Plan</b>
All Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Adaptive Management Plan, which allows for more restrictive land use allocations and management actions to be implemented if habitat or population hard triggers are met.</li> <li>• Require and ensure mitigation that provides a net conservation gain to GRSG.</li> <li>• Monitor implementation and effectiveness of conservation measures in GRSG habitats according to the Habitat Assessment Framework.</li> <li>• Apply buffers necessary based on project type and location to address impacts on leks when authorizing actions in GRSG habitat.</li> <li>• Apply Required Design Features (RDF) when authorizing actions in GRSG habitat.</li> <li>• Prioritize the leasing and development of fluid mineral resources outside of GRSG habitat.</li> </ul>
All development threats, including mining, infrastructure, and energy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMA: Implement an anthropogenic disturbance cap of 3% within the Biologically Significant Unit (BSU; also known as Priority Areas of Conservation [PACs]) and proposed project analysis areas, as allowed under current law.</li> <li>• PHMA: As allowed under current law, implement a density cap of an average of 1 energy and mining facility per 640 acres.</li> </ul>
Energy Development—Fluid Minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMA: Open to fluid mineral leasing subject to No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulation without waiver or modification, and with limited exception. In SFA, NSO without waiver, modification, or exception.</li> <li>• GHMA: Open to fluid mineral leasing subject to Controlled Surface Use (CSU) and Timing Limitation (TL) stipulations.</li> </ul>
Energy Development—Wind Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMA: Exclusion area (not available for wind energy development under any conditions), except avoidance area in Harney, Lake and Malheur counties outside of SFA.</li> <li>• GHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for wind energy development with special stipulations)</li> </ul>
Energy Development—Solar Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMA: Exclusion area (not available for solar energy development under any conditions), except avoidance area in Harney, Lake and Malheur counties outside of SFA.</li> <li>• GHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for solar energy development with special conditions)</li> </ul>
Infrastructure – major Rights-of-Way (ROW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for major ROWs with special stipulations)</li> <li>• GHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for major ROWs with special stipulations)</li> </ul>
Infrastructure – minor ROWs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for minor ROWs with special stipulations)</li> </ul>

**Table ES-2**  
**Key Components of the Oregon Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats**

<b>Threats to GRSG and its Habitat (from COT Report)</b>	<b>Key Component of the Oregon Proposed Plan</b>
Mining—locatable minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFA: Recommend withdrawal from the Mining Law of 1872, as amended.</li> </ul>
Mining—nonenergy leasable minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMA: Closed area (not available for nonenergy leasable minerals)</li> </ul>
Mining—saleable minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMA: Closed area (not available for saleable minerals) with a limited exception (may remain open to free use permits and expansion of existing active pits if criteria are met)</li> </ul>
Mining—coal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable in the Oregon planning area.</li> </ul>
Livestock Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize the review and processing of grazing permits/leases in SFA followed by PHMA.</li> <li>• The NEPA analysis for renewals and modifications of grazing permits/leases will include specific management thresholds, based on the GRSG Habitat Objectives Table, Land Health Standards and ecological site potential, to allow adjustments to grazing that have already been subjected to NEPA analysis.</li> <li>• Prioritize field checks in SFA followed by PHMA to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of grazing permits.</li> </ul>
Free-Roaming Equid Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage Herd Management Areas (HMAs) in GRSG habitat within established Appropriate Management Level (AML) ranges to achieve and maintain GRSG habitat objectives.</li> <li>• Prioritize rangeland health assessment, gathers and population growth suppression techniques, monitoring, and review and adjustment of AMLs and preparation of Herd Management Area Plans in GRSG habitat.</li> </ul>
Range Management Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow range improvements which do not impact GRSG, or which provide a conservation benefit to GRSG such as fences for protecting important seasonal habitats.</li> <li>• Remove livestock ponds built in perennial channels that are negatively impacting riparian habitats. Do not permit new ones to be built in these areas subject to valid existing rights.</li> </ul>
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMA: Do not construct new recreation facilities.</li> </ul>
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and prioritize areas that are vulnerable to wildfires and prescribe actions important for GRSG protection.</li> <li>• Prioritize post-fire treatments in PHMA and GHMA.</li> </ul>
Nonnative, Invasive Plants Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve GRSG habitat by treating annual grasses.</li> <li>• Treat sites in PHMA and GHMA that contain invasive species infestations through an integrated pest management approach.</li> </ul>

**Table ES-2**  
**Key Components of the Oregon Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats**

Threats to GRSG and its Habitat (from COT Report)	Key Component of the Oregon Proposed Plan
Sagebrush Removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMA: Maintain a minimum of 70 percent of lands capable of producing sagebrush with 10 to 30 percent sagebrush canopy cover.</li> <li>• All BLM use authorizations will contain terms and conditions regarding the actions needed to meet or progress toward meeting the habitat objectives for GRSG.</li> </ul>
Pinyon and/or Juniper Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove conifers encroaching into sagebrush habitats, prioritizing occupied GRSG habitat.</li> </ul>
Agricultural Conversion and Ex-Urban Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GRSG habitat will be retained in federal management.</li> </ul>

## ES.7 SUMMARY

Since the release of the Draft RMPA/EIS, the BLM has continued to work closely with a broad range of governmental partners, including the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, the USFWS and USGS in DOI, Indian tribes, governors, state agencies and county commissioners. Through this cooperation, the BLM has developed the Proposed Plan that, in accordance with applicable law, achieves the long-term conservation of GRSG and its habitat.

Conservation of the GRSG is a large scale challenge that requires a landscape-scale solution spanning 11 western states. The Oregon GRSG RMPA/EIS achieves consistent, range-wide conservation objectives, as outlined below. Additionally, the Oregon GRSG RMPA/EIS aligns with the State of Oregon's priorities and land management approaches consistent with conservation of GRSG.

**Minimize additional surface disturbance.** The most effective way to conserve the GRSG is to protect existing intact habitat. The BLM aims to reduce habitat fragmentation and protect key habitat areas. The Oregon GRSG RMPA/EIS minimizes surface disturbance on over 10 million acres of BLM-administered lands by allocating lands as SFA, PHMA, and GHMA with use decisions that aim to conserve GRSG habitat.

Management actions would minimize surface disturbance through the establishment of a disturbance cap and application of buffers and seasonal restrictions for all occupied or pending leks in PHMA and GHMA to avoid direct disturbance to GRSG. All disturbance would be subject to net conservation gain to GRSG and its habitat in PHMA and GHMA. To the extent

feasible, development would occur only in nonhabitat areas; if not possible, then development must occur in the least suitable habitat for GRSG.

**Improve habitat condition.** While restoring sagebrush habitat can be very difficult in the short term, particularly in the most arid areas, it is often possible to enhance habitat quality through purposeful management. The Oregon GRSG RMPA/EIS commits to management actions necessary to achieve science-based vegetation and GRSG habitat management objectives established in the Proposed Plan.

Management actions would improve habitat condition through the establishment of priority areas for GRSG habitat restoration and maintenance projects. These actions would emphasize sites with a higher probability of success, seasonal habitats thought to be limiting to GRSG, and connectivity corridors between GRSG populations and subpopulations. Management actions would also apply vegetation treatments to remove juniper and control invasive annual grasses and manage livestock grazing to meet habitat indicators. In priority treatment areas for invasive annual grasses, early detection-rapid response principles would be applied.

**Reduce threat of rangeland fire to GRSG and sagebrush habitat.** Rangeland fire can destroy sagebrush habitat and lead to the conversion of previously healthy habitat into nonnative cheatgrass-dominated landscapes. Experts have identified fire as one of the greatest threats to sagebrush habitat, particularly in the Great Basin.

The Oregon GRSG RMPA/EIS incorporates Secretarial Order 3336 and adopts the specific provisions related to rangeland fire prevention, suppression, and restoration applicable to the planning area contained in *An Integrated Strategy for Rangeland Fire Management: Final Report to the Secretary* to improve the BLM's ability to protect GRSG habitat from damaging wildlife. The BLM would also develop a system of fuel breaks to protect larger intact blocks of GRSG habitat, while working with interagency partners and across jurisdictional boundaries to develop annual treatment and fire management programs.

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