Chapter 1
Introduction
## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.1 Changes Between the Draft EIS and Final EIS</td>
<td>1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.2 Introduction</td>
<td>1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.2.1 National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.2.2 Great Basin Region</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.2.3 Oregon Sub-Region</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.3 Purpose and Need</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.4 Description of the Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Area</td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.4.1 Overview</td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.4.2 Land Uses</td>
<td>1-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.5 Planning Processes</td>
<td>1-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.5.1 BLM Planning Process</td>
<td>1-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.5.2 Eco-regional Context and Landscape Planning Approach</td>
<td>1-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.6 Scoping and Identification of Issues For Development of the Proposed Plan and Draft Alternatives</td>
<td>1-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.6.1 The Scoping Process</td>
<td>1-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.6.2 Issues Identified for Consideration in the Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse RMP Amendments</td>
<td>1-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.6.3 Issues to be Addressed Through Policy or Administrative Action and Not Addressed in the LUP Amendments</td>
<td>1-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.6.4 Issues Not Addressed in the LUP Amendments</td>
<td>1-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.7 Development of Planning Criteria</td>
<td>1-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.8 Development of the Proposed RMPA/ Final EIS</td>
<td>1-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9 Relationship to Other Policies, Plans, Programs, and Guidance</td>
<td>1-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.1 Programmatic National-Level EIS Documents</td>
<td>1-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.2 State Plans</td>
<td>1-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.3 County Land Use Plans</td>
<td>1-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.4 Memorandums of Understanding</td>
<td>1-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.5 Activity Plans and Amendments</td>
<td>1-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.6 Habitat Management Plans (HMP)</td>
<td>1-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.7 Vegetation Management Policies</td>
<td>1-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.8 BLM Direction</td>
<td>1-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.9 Conservation Objectives Team Report</td>
<td>1-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.10 Summary of Science, Activities, Programs, and Policies That Influence the Rangewide Conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus)</td>
<td>1-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.9.11 Secretarial Order 3336</td>
<td>1-31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>Surface Land Management Acres by PPH and PGH in the Planning Area</td>
<td>1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>BLM RMPs Acres in the Planning Area</td>
<td>1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>RMP Acres by Surface Ownership in PPH and PGH</td>
<td>1-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>BLM-Administered Mineral Estate Acres by RMP in the Planning Area</td>
<td>1-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>Mineral Split-Estate Acres by Surface Land Management</td>
<td>1-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Range-Wide Planning Issue Categories and Statements</td>
<td>1-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>BLM and Forest Service GRSG Planning Strategy Sub-Region/EIS Boundaries</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Oregon Sub-Region Greater-Sage Grouse Planning Area</td>
<td>1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Nine-Step BLM RMP Planning Process</td>
<td>1-14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Changes Between the Draft EIS and Final EIS
Changes between the Draft EIS and Final EIS are as follows:

- Naming conventions have changed from preliminary priority management area (PPMA) and preliminary general management area (PGMA) to priority habitat management area (PHMA) and general habitat management area (GHMA). PHMAs, PPH, and core area habitat cover the same areas. GHMAs and PGH cover the same areas and are made up of both low-density habitat and occupied habitat.
- Revised acreages based on updated data;
- Added references, such as the USGS Open File Report 2014-1239 “Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage Grouse-A Review” (Manier et al. 2014);
- Introduced the concept of sagebrush focal areas (SFAs);
- Finalized the planning criteria;
- Updated the title of Baseline Environmental Report to Summary of Science, Activities, Programs, and Policies That Influence the Rangewide Conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*; Manier et al. 2013); and
- Updated, as appropriate, based on public comments received on the DEIS.

1.2 Introduction
The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directs the United States (US) Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop and periodically revise or amend its Resource Management Plans (RMPs), which guide management of BLM-administered lands. For the
1. Introduction

Purpose of this document, the term RMP applies to all BLM Land Use Plans (LUPs), including the BLM’s older Management Framework Plans.

The BLM is undertaking a large-scale effort to amend or revise RMPs with associated environmental impact statements (EISs) in response to the 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 12-month finding, the USFWS concluded that Greater Sage-Grouse (also referred to as sage-grouse or GRSG) was “warranted, but precluded” for listing as a threatened or endangered species. 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 Endangered Species Act (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 Greater Sage-Grouse,” and Factor D, “the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms” posed “a significant threat to the Greater Sage-Grouse now and in the foreseeable future” (USFWS 2010a). The USFWS identified conservation measures in RMPs as the BLM’s principal regulatory mechanisms.

1.2.1 National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy

On December 9, 2011, a Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register to initiate the BLM/US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service (Forest Service) GRSG Planning Strategy across nine western states, including Northeast California, Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, Utah, and Southwest Montana in the Great Basin Region and Northwest Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, and North Dakota in the Rocky Mountain Region (Figure 1-1, BLM and Forest Service GRSG Planning Strategy Sub-Region/EIS Boundaries). The BLM is the lead agency for this planning effort and the Forest Service is participating as a cooperating agency. On February 10, 2012, the BLM published a Notice of Correction that changed the names of the regions that are coordinating the EISs, extended the scoping period, and added 11 Forest Service Land Management Plans to this process. This Final RMP amendment (RMPA) and Final EIS is one of 15 separate EISs that are currently being conducted to analyze and incorporate specific conservation measures across the range of the GRSG, consistent with national BLM and Forest Service policy.

On December 27, 2011, the BLM Washington Office released Instruction Memorandum (IM) 2012-044 (BLM 2011c), which directed all of the planning efforts across the GRSG range to consider all applicable conservation measures when revising or amending its RMPs in GRSG habitat, including the measures developed by the National Technical Team (NTT) that were presented in their December 2011 document, A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures (NTT 2011). The BLM’s IM 2012-044 directs all
planning efforts associated with the national strategy to consider and analyze, as appropriate, the conservation measures presented in the NTT Report.

The conservation measures identified for consideration were developed by the NTT, a group of resource specialists, land use planners, and scientists from the BLM, state fish and wildlife agencies, USFWS, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the US Geological Survey (USGS). The report provides the latest science and best biological judgment to assist in making management decisions relating to the GRSG.

Along with the applicable measures outlined in the NTT Report, planning efforts associated with this National GRSG Planning Strategy will also analyze applicable conservation measures submitted to the BLM and Forest Service from various state governments and from citizens during the public scoping process and Draft RMPA/EIS public comment period. It is the goal of the BLM and Forest Service to make a final decision on these plans in 2015 in order to offer sufficient evidence for USFWS to consider that a potential listing for GRSG as a
threatened or endangered species under the ESA in 2015 will be unnecessary. Additional information on the NTT Report is provided on the BLM website at http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/co/programs/wildlife.Par.73607.File.dat/GrSG%20Tech%20Team%20Report.pdf.

The BLM issued interim management guidance addressing proposed actions until a decision is made regarding the proposed RMPA. The intent of the interim guidance is to promote conservation of sustainable GRSG populations and their habitats while not limiting future options before the amendment process can be completed. BLM IM 2012-043, Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures, released December 27, 2011, provides interim conservation policies and procedures to the BLM field officials to be applied to ongoing and proposed authorizations and activities that affect the GRSG and its habitat (BLM 2011d). It ensures that interim conservation policies and procedures are implemented when field offices authorize or carry out activities on BLM-administered land while the BLM develops and decides how to best incorporate long-term conservation measures for GRSG into applicable RMPs. It promotes sustainable GRSG populations and conservation of its habitat while not closing any future options before the planning process can be completed. Additional information about BLM IM 2012-043 is provided on the BLM website, http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/regulations/Instruction_Memos_and_Bulletins/national_instruction/2012/IM_2012-043.html.

On October 27, 2014, the USFWS provided the BLM and Forest Service a memorandum titled “Greater Sage-Grouse: Additional Recommendations to Refine Land Use Allocations in Highly Important Landscapes”. 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. The FWS did recognize areas within the Oregon Sub-region planning area as “strongholds” for GRSG. Within these areas, the BLM and Forest Service identified Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFAs) which are PHMAs with additional management.

On November 21, 2014 the USGS published “Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage-Grouse—A Review” (Manier et al. 2014). The USGS review provided a compilation and summary of published scientific studies that evaluate the influence of anthropogenic activities and infrastructure on GRSG populations. The BLM has reviewed this information and examined how lek buffer-distances were addressed through land use allocations and other management actions in the Draft Oregon Sub-Region RMPA/EIS. Based on this review, in undertaking BLM management actions, and consistent with valid and existing rights and applicable law in authorizing third party actions, the BLM will apply the lek buffer-distances in the USGS Report “Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage Grouse—A Review (Open File Report 2014-
1. Introduction

In response to the USFWS finding, the BLM and Forest Service are preparing LUP amendments with associated EISs to incorporate specific conservation measures across the range of the GRSG. The planning strategy will evaluate the adequacy of BLM RMPs and address, as necessary, amendments throughout the range of the GRSG (with the exception of the bi-state Distinct Population Segment in California and Nevada and the Columbia Basin Distinct Population Segment in Washington State, both of which will be addressed through other planning efforts). These EISs have been coordinated under two administrative planning regions: the Rocky Mountain Region and the Great Basin Region. These regions contain the threats identified by the USFWS in the 2010 listing decision and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Management Zones (MZs) framework (Stiver et al. 2006).

Wildfire has been identified as one of the primary factors linked to loss of sagebrush-steppe habitat and corresponding population declines of greater sage-grouse (Connelly and Braun 1997; Miller and Eddleman 2001). While fire is a naturally occurring disturbance in the sagebrush steppe, the incursion of non-native annual grasses has facilitated an increase in mean fire frequency which can preclude the opportunity for sagebrush to become re-established. As such, the RMP includes requirements (referred to as Greater Sage-grouse Wildfire and Invasive Species Habitat Assessment in appendices in Draft documents) - that landscape scale Fire and Invasives Assessments be completed and updated regularly to more accurately define specific areas to be treated to address threats to sagebrush steppe habitat from wildfire. Within the Great Basin, the first five priority areas of conservation (PACs) were singled out for the initial round of assessments because fire was identified as a primary threat to greater sage-grouse habitat and the first phase of these assessments were completed in March of 2015.

The Rocky Mountain Region includes RMPs in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, and portions of Utah. This region comprises the WAFWA MZs I (Great Plains), II (Wyoming Basin), and a portion of VII (Colorado Plateau). The USFWS has identified a number of threats in this region, the major ones being habitat loss and fragmentation caused by development (e.g., oil and gas development, energy transmission, and wind energy development).

The Great Basin Region includes RMPs in California, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, and Montana. This region comprises the WAFWA MZs III (Southern Great Basin), IV (Snake River Plain), and V (Northern Great Basin). The USFWS has identified a number of threats in this region, the major ones being wildfire,
loss of native habitat to invasive species, and habitat fragmentation caused by roads, transmission lines, and agricultural conversion.

The Rocky Mountain and Great Basin regions are further divided into sub-regions, which generally correspond with state boundaries. Each of the seven sub-regions is undertaking a coordinated effort, including developing individual EISs, to incorporate GRSG conservation measures into RMPs that address GRSG habitat. A goal of all such RMPAs is to ensure management consistency across the sub-region, as well as across the range of the GRSG by establishing GRSG conservation measures.

1.2.3 Oregon Sub-Region
The BLM Oregon/Washington State Office is undertaking this Oregon Sub-Region EIS, which analyzes the effects of amending eight RMPs in order to provide consistent management of all GRSG habitat on BLM-administered lands in Oregon. While the Forest Service is a cooperating agency at the national level of GRSG planning, the Forest Service is conducting a separate concurrent planning effort of plan revisions in Oregon, incorporating GRSG management guidelines from the NTT report as appropriate.

The proposed RMPAs will identify and incorporate appropriate regulatory mechanisms to conserve, enhance, and restore GRSG habitat and to eliminate, reduce, or minimize threats to this habitat on BLM-administered lands in Oregon. The proposed RMPAs address both Listing Factors A and D (described above) and COT report (USFWS 2013a) and are intended to provide consistency in the management of GRSG habitats across Oregon BLM districts.

The BLM intends to issue one record of decision (ROD) for the Great Basin Region, to be finalized by August 2015. The agency expects that, in conjunction with the ROD from the Rocky Mountain Region, the ROD will offer sufficient evidence for the USFWS to consider listing the GRSG as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. The following RMPs are proposed to be amended through this effort to incorporate appropriate conservation measures:

- Andrews RMP (BLM 2005a)
- Baker RMP (BLM 1989a)
- Brothers/La Pine RMP (BLM 1989b)
- Lakeview RMP (BLM 2003a)
- Southeastern Oregon RMP (BLM 2002)
- Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area RMP (BLM 2005b)
- Three Rivers RMP (BLM 1992a)
- Upper Deschutes RMP (BLM 2005c)
The BLM intends to incorporate the conservation measures approved in the ROD into the Baker RMP through the ongoing plan revision effort that was initiated in 2008. The John Day RMP and Two Rivers RMP were listed in the December 9, 2011 Notice of Availability that was published in the Federal Register. These RMPs have been removed from the Oregon Sub-region planning effort because there are no occupied sage-grouse habitats on BLM-administered lands in these planning areas.

This Final RMPA and Final EIS is one of seven LUP amendments that are ongoing within the western states that have GRSG occupied habitat. One goal of all such RMPAs is to ensure consistent management actions across each sub-region, as well as across the range of the GRSG.

The BLM has identified and mapped GRSG habitat in coordination with respective state wildlife agencies. WAFWA also coordinated among states so that habitat along state boundaries matched up where biologically appropriate. This habitat falls into one of the two following categories:

- Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH): Areas that have been identified as having the highest conservation value to maintaining sustainable GRSG populations. These areas include breeding, late brood-rearing, and known winter concentration areas.
- Preliminary General Habitat (PGH): Areas of occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of preliminary priority habitat.

Through this RMPA/EIS process, the BLM will identify and analyze management actions within GRSG habitat. These management actions will be designed to conserve and, where appropriate, improve GRSG habitat functionality. This will provide for major life history requirements and movements (e.g., breeding, migration, and winter survival) to maintain genetic diversity needed for sustainable GRSG populations.

1.3 Purpose and Need

The BLM is preparing LUP amendments with associated EISs for LUPs containing GRSG habitat. This effort responds to the USFWS’s March 2010 “warranted, but precluded” ESA listing petition decision. In this decision, the USFWS identified the inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms as a significant threat to GRSG. RMP conservation measures were identified as the BLM’s principal regulatory mechanism. Changes in management of GRSG habitats are necessary to avoid the anticipated continued decline of populations across the species’ range. These RMPAs will focus on areas affected by threats to GRSG habitat identified by the USFWS in the March 2010 listing decision. Additionally the plan amendments will consider information from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (ODFW) revised and updated Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A Plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitat (hereafter “The State Plan”), which provides guidance to public land
management agencies and land managers for GRSG conservation (Hagen 2011). The state has responsibility and authority to manage wildlife populations.

The purpose for the RMPAs is to identify and incorporate appropriate conservation measures in RMPs to conserve, enhance and/or restore GRSG habitat by reducing, eliminating, or minimizing threats to that habitat. The BLM will consider such measures in the context of its multiple-use sustained yield mandate under the FLPMA and incorporate measures that will help conserve, enhance and/or restore GRSG habitat by reducing, eliminating, or minimizing threats to that habitat.

Because the BLM administers a large portion of GRSG habitat within the affected states, incorporating additional conservation measures into relevant BLM RMPs is anticipated to have a considerable beneficial impact on present and future GRSG populations and could reduce the need to list the species under the ESA.

1.4 Description of the Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Area

1.4.1 Overview
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. For this RMPA/EIS, the planning area is the entire Oregon Sub-region. The entire planning area is 31,756,507 acres, which is east of the Cascade Mountains, and contains BLM-administered lands and other lands. The planning area, including mapped PPH and PGH, is shown in Figure I-2, Oregon Sub-Region Greater-Sage Grouse Planning Area.

The planning area covers all or a portions of 17 counties in Oregon and one county in Washington. However, PPH and PGH are only found in Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Grant, Harney, Lake, Malheur, and Union counties in Oregon. Lands within the planning area include a mix of private, federal, and state lands (Table I-1, Surface Land Management Acres by PPH and PGH in the Planning Area).

The Burns, Lakeview, Prineville, and Vale BLM Districts administer the eight RMPs being amended by this RMPA/EIS (Table I-2, BLM RMPs Acres in the Planning Area). The acres of PPH and PGH on BLM-administered lands and on lands that do not administer in the planning area are shown in Table I-3, RMP Acres by Surface Ownership in PPH and PGH.

The entire planning area includes various land management entities; however, the management directions and actions outlined in this RMPA/EIS apply only to BLM-administered surface lands in the planning area (Table I-4, BLM-Administered Mineral Estate Acres by RMP in the Planning Area) and BLM-administered federal mineral estate that may be under other surface ownership.
Figure 1-2: Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Area
### Table 1-1
Surface Land Management Acres by PPH and PGH in the Planning Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface Land Management</th>
<th>PPH</th>
<th>PGH</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLM</td>
<td>4,547,005</td>
<td>5,660,150</td>
<td>10,207,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Service</td>
<td>63,844</td>
<td>117,670</td>
<td>181,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Energy</td>
<td>8,752</td>
<td>16,382</td>
<td>25,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park Service</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USFWS</td>
<td>247,431</td>
<td>51,073</td>
<td>298,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Indian Affairs</td>
<td>18,177</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>18,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Reclamation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17,082</td>
<td>17,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Aviation Administration</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Services Administration</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA (other than Forest Service)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14,064</td>
<td>14,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>1,513,995</td>
<td>1,954,458</td>
<td>3,468,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State, County, and City Lands</td>
<td>156,222</td>
<td>384,059</td>
<td>540,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acreage of Water</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>1,318</td>
<td>1,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,279</td>
<td>3,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6,556,025</td>
<td>8,220,422</td>
<td>14,776,447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oregon/Washington BLM 2014

### Table 1-2
BLM RMPs Acres in the Planning Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLM RMP</th>
<th>Total Surface Area</th>
<th>BLM-Administered Surface Lands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrews</td>
<td>1,682,144</td>
<td>1,216,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>8,665,943</td>
<td>431,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers/La Pine</td>
<td>1,937,370</td>
<td>709,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakeview</td>
<td>5,996,450</td>
<td>3,203,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern Oregon</td>
<td>6,456,803</td>
<td>4,681,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steens</td>
<td>496,299</td>
<td>428,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Rivers</td>
<td>3,592,979</td>
<td>1,623,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Deschutes</td>
<td>2,828,154</td>
<td>412,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>31,656,142</td>
<td>12,707,771</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oregon/Washington BLM 2014
Table 1-3
RMP Acres by Surface Ownership in PPH and PGH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RMP</th>
<th>PPH BLM</th>
<th>Non-BLM</th>
<th>PGH BLM</th>
<th>Non-BLM</th>
<th>Total Habitat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrews</td>
<td>398,421</td>
<td>126,195</td>
<td>745,439</td>
<td>254,742</td>
<td>1,524,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>139,221</td>
<td>265,584</td>
<td>66,298</td>
<td>239,229</td>
<td>710,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers/La Pine</td>
<td>329,522</td>
<td>367,760</td>
<td>210,268</td>
<td>170,084</td>
<td>1,077,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakeview</td>
<td>975,156</td>
<td>408,784</td>
<td>1,358,961</td>
<td>401,884</td>
<td>3,144,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern Oregon</td>
<td>2,126,944</td>
<td>620,476</td>
<td>1,943,092</td>
<td>720,832</td>
<td>5,411,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steens</td>
<td>208,081</td>
<td>18,867</td>
<td>198,528</td>
<td>45,357</td>
<td>470,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Rivers</td>
<td>369,456</td>
<td>188,269</td>
<td>1,047,907</td>
<td>656,714</td>
<td>2,262,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Deschutes</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>13,085</td>
<td>89,657</td>
<td>71,431</td>
<td>174,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All RMPs</strong></td>
<td>4,547,004</td>
<td>2,009,021</td>
<td>5,660,150</td>
<td>2,560,272</td>
<td>14,776,447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oregon/Washington BLM 2014

Table 1-4
BLM-Administered Mineral Estate Acres by RMP in the Planning Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLM RMP</th>
<th>Full-Estate</th>
<th>Split-Estate</th>
<th>BLM-Administered Federal Mineral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrews</td>
<td>1,154,944</td>
<td>137,467</td>
<td>1,292,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>409,263</td>
<td>417,174</td>
<td>826,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers/La Pine</td>
<td>675,319</td>
<td>161,403</td>
<td>836,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakeview</td>
<td>3,091,755</td>
<td>413,275</td>
<td>3,505,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Oregon</td>
<td>4,359,872</td>
<td>583,926</td>
<td>4,943,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steens</td>
<td>419,204</td>
<td>38,543</td>
<td>457,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Rivers</td>
<td>1,547,413</td>
<td>270,925</td>
<td>1,818,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Deschutes</td>
<td>388,288</td>
<td>79,365</td>
<td>467,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>12,046,059</td>
<td>2,102,079</td>
<td>14,148,138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oregon/Washington BLM 2015

This is often referred to as split-estate lands. Table 1-5, Mineral Split-Estate Acres by Surface Land Management shows BLM-administered mineral split-estate with private, state, and other federally administered surface lands in the planning area. The decisions resulting from this planning process will apply to only BLM-administered lands. The acreage of BLM-administered surface lands in the planning area and the acreage of BLM-administered federal mineral split-estate in the planning area are collectively referred to as the decision area. The decisions analyzed in this RMPA/EIS are limited to making land use planning decisions specific to the conservation of GRSG and their habitat.

The planning area is covered by two larger WAFWA GRSG Management Zones: Snake River Plain (MZ IV) and Northern Great Basin (MZ V; Stiver et al. 2006).
Figure 1.3 in Stiver et al. (2006) shows all GRSG management zones. There are approximately 13.7 and 5.1 million acres of PPH in MZ IV and V, and 4.9 and 4.2 million acres of PGH in MZ IV and V, respectively.

Garton et al. (2011) identified five GRSG populations in Oregon, and two of these are managed by at least three states.

Oregon’s two largest GRSG populations are in the southeast. The Northern Great Basin population has a minimum population estimate of 9,114 males (Garton et al. 2011), occupies portions of Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, and Utah, and is separated from adjacent populations by 12 to 37 miles and rugged terrain. The Western Great Basin population has a minimum population estimate of 5,904 males (Garton et al. 2011) in southeast Oregon, northwest Nevada, and northeast California and is separated from adjacent populations by approximately 16 miles and unsuitable habitat.

The Klamath Falls population in southern Oregon had few birds at leks into the early 1990s, and no sightings have been confirmed since 1993 despite periodic survey efforts.

The Baker population in northeast Oregon had a minimum population estimate of 872 to 1,650 birds in 2010 (Hagen 2011) and appears to be separated by topography and unsuitable habitat from the nearest population in Weiser, Idaho.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface Land Management</th>
<th>Split-Estate</th>
<th>Total Split-Estate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PGH</td>
<td>PPH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Service</td>
<td>83,934</td>
<td>61,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Energy</td>
<td>16,368</td>
<td>8,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park Service</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USFWS</td>
<td>32,865</td>
<td>224,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Indian Affairs</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>17,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Reclamation</td>
<td>15,678</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Aviation Admin.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Services Admin.</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA (other than Forest Service)</td>
<td>14,064</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>413,177</td>
<td>409,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State, County, and City Lands</td>
<td>289,868</td>
<td>95,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acreage of Water</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>867,272</strong></td>
<td><strong>817,173</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oregon/Washington BLM 2014

and is separated from adjacent populations by 12 to 37 miles and rugged terrain.
approximately 20 miles east. However, movements of radio-equipped GRSG from Oregon into Idaho in 2009 and 2010 appear to indicate some connection. Additional leks have been found in the Baker area in the last few years as result of surveys for the proposed Boardman-Hemingway 500-kV Transmission Line Project.

Finally, the Central Oregon population has a minimum population estimate of 835 males (Garton et al. 2011) and is separated by rugged terrain and approximately 19 miles from adjacent populations (i.e., Western Great Basin and Northern Great Basin populations) (USFWS 2013a).

1.4.2 Land Uses
Land uses occurring within GRSG habitat include energy and mineral development; recreation; livestock grazing; and rights-of-way (ROWs) (including but not limited to roads, pipelines, power lines, and communication sites). BLM-administered lands within the habitat are generally open to mineral uses including leasable, locatable, and mineral material with a few exceptions, but not all available lands are currently under a lease.

1.5 Planning Processes

1.5.1 BLM Planning Process
The FLPMA requires the BLM to use RMPs as tools by which "present and future use is projected" (43 United States Code [USC] 1701[a][2]). The FLPMA’s implementing regulations for planning (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 1600), state that RMPs are a preliminary step in the overall process of managing BLM-administered lands and are "designed to guide and control future management actions and the development of subsequent, more detailed and limited scope plans for resources and uses" (43 CFR Part 1601.0-2). Public participation and input are important components of land-use planning.

Under BLM regulations, approval of an EIS-level RMP revision or amendment is considered a major federal action that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment and therefore requires disclosure and documentation of environmental effects as described in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Thus, this EIS accompanies the amendment of the existing RMPs. This EIS analyzes the impacts of six alternatives for the Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse RMPA/EIS, including the No Action Alternative.

The BLM uses a nine-step planning process (Figure 1-3, Nine-Step BLM RMP Planning Process) to develop or revise RMPs (43 CFR Part 1600 and planning program guidance in BLM Handbook H-1601-1, Land Use Planning Handbook [BLM 2005d]). The planning process is designed to help the BLM identify the uses of BLM-administered lands desired by the public and to consider these uses to the extent they are consistent with the laws established by Congress and the policies of the executive branch of the federal government.
Once an RMP is approved, it may be changed through amendment. An amendment can be initiated in response to monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, a change in circumstances, or a proposed action that may result in a change in the scope of resource uses or a change in the terms, conditions, and decisions of the approved plan. If the BLM decides to prepare an EIS, the amending process shall follow the same procedure required for preparation and approval of the plan, but the focus shall be limited to that portion of the plan being amended (43 CFR 1610.5-5).

As depicted in Figure 1-3, the planning process is issue-driven (Step 1). The planning process is undertaken to resolve management issues and problems as well as to take advantage of management opportunities. The BLM utilizes the public scoping process to identify planning issues to direct (drive) a revision or amendment of an existing plan. The scoping process also is used to introduce the public to preliminary planning criteria, which set the parameters or “sideboards” for conducting the planning process (Step 2).
The BLM uses existing data from files and other sources and collects new data to address planning issues and to fill data gaps identified during public scoping (Step 3). Using these data, information concerning the resource management programs, and the planning criteria, the BLM completes an Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) (Step 4) to describe current management and develop or inform the affected environment portion of the RMP. Typically, the AMS is conducted at the outset of planning for an entire RMP or RMP revision and is incorporated by reference into development of a single focus plan amendment. In this case, direction for the plan amendment is provided through new national policy (BLM 2011c). The affected environment is also incorporated by reference into the amendment and updated with new information to the degree necessary to set the context for the analysis in the accompanying EIS.

Results of the first four steps of the planning process clarify the purpose and need and identify key planning issues that need to be addressed by the amendment. Key planning issues reflect the focus of the RMPA and are described in more detail in Section 1.6.2, below.

Alternatives constitute a range of management actions that set forth different priorities and measures to emphasize certain uses or resource values over other uses or resource values (usually representing a continuum from extraction and development to preservation/conservation) pursuant to the multiple-use and sustained yield mandate, so as to achieve certain goals or objectives consistent with the purpose and need. During alternative formulation (Step 5), the BLM collaborates with cooperating agencies to identify goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resources and resource uses within the planning area. The alternatives represent a reasonable range of planning strategies for managing resources and resource uses. Chapter 2 of this document, Alternatives, describes and summarizes the Preferred Alternative and the other alternatives considered in detail.

The Draft RMPA/EIS included an analysis of the impacts of the Preferred Alternative and the other draft alternatives in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences (Step 6). With input from cooperating agencies and BLM specialists, and consideration of planning issues, planning criteria, and the impacts of alternatives, the BLM identified and recommended a Preferred Alternative from among the alternatives presented in the EIS (Step 7). This was documented in the Draft RMPA/EIS, which was then distributed for a 90-day public review and comment period.

Step 8 of the land-use planning process occurs following receipt and consideration of public comments on the Draft RMPA/EIS. In preparing the Proposed RMPA/Final EIS, the BLM considered all comments received during the public comment period. The Proposed RMPA was crafted from the draft alternatives.
Step 9 is the monitoring and evaluation process. Monitoring is the repeated measurement of activities and conditions over time. Evaluation is a process in which the plan and monitoring data are reviewed to see if management goals and objectives are being met and if management direction is sound. Monitoring data gathered over time are examined and used to draw conclusions on whether management actions are meeting stated objectives, and if not, why. Conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management or what changes need to be made in management practices to meet objectives.

LUP monitoring is the process of tracking the implementation of land use planning decisions and collecting and assessing data/information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of land use planning decisions. The two types of monitoring are described below.

- **Implementation Monitoring:** Implementation monitoring is the most basic type of monitoring and simply determines whether planned activities have been implemented as prescribed by the plan. Some agencies call this compliance monitoring. This monitoring documents the BLM’s progress toward full implementation of the RMP decision. There are no specific thresholds or indicators required for this type of monitoring.

- **Effectiveness Monitoring:** Effectiveness monitoring is aimed at determining if the implementation of activities has achieved the desired goals and objectives. Effectiveness monitoring asks the question: Was the specified activity successful in achieving the objective? This requires knowledge of the objectives established in the RMP as well as indicators that can be measured. Indicators are established by technical specialists in order to address specific questions, and thus to focus on collection of only necessary data. Success is measured against the benchmark of achieving desired future conditions established by the plan.

Regulations at 43 CFR, Part 1610.4-9, require that the Proposed Plan establish intervals and standards, as appropriate, for monitoring and evaluation of the plan, based on the sensitivity of the resource decisions involved. Progress in meeting the plan objectives and adherence to the management framework established by the plan is reviewed periodically. This periodic review will provide consistent tracking of accomplishments and information that can be used to develop annual budget requests to continue implementation.

LUP evaluations will be used by the BLM to determine if the decisions in the RMP, supported by the accompanying NEPA analysis, are still valid. Evaluation of the RMP will generally be conducted every five years per BLM policy, unless unexpected actions, new information, or significant changes in other plans, legislation, or litigation trigger an earlier evaluation. LUP evaluations determine if
the RMP decisions are being implemented, whether decisions are effective in achieving or making progress towards desired outcomes, whether there are significant changes in the related plans of other entities, whether there are new data of significance to the plan, and if decisions should be changed through amendment or revision. Evaluations will follow the protocols established by the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1 (BLM 2005d) in effect at the time the evaluation is initiated. Specific monitoring and evaluation needs are identified by resource/uses throughout Chapter 2.

### 1.5.2 Eco-regional Context and Landscape Planning Approach

Public lands are undergoing complex environmental challenges that go beyond traditional management boundaries. In response, the BLM is instituting a landscape-scale management approach which evaluates large areas to better understand the ecological values, human influences, and opportunities for resource conservation. This approach frequently allows identification of environmental changes that might not be apparent in smaller areas.

The BLM’s landscape approach includes Rapid Ecoregional Assessments (REAs) which provide a framework for integrating science and management. REAs evaluate landscape scale ecoregions, which are large areas with similar environmental characteristics. The BLM has initiated fourteen REAs since 2010. The Oregon Sub-region lies within the Northern Great Basin ecoregion.

REAs synthesize the best available information to examine ecological values, conditions, and trends within the ecoregion. Assessments of these larger areas provide land managers additional information and tools to use in subsequent resource planning and decision-making.

REAs describe and map conservation elements, which are areas of high ecological value. REAs look across all lands in an ecoregion to identify regionally important habitats for fish, wildlife, and species of concern. REAs then gauge the potential of these habitats to be affected by four overarching environmental change agents: climate change, wildfires, invasive species, and development (both energy development and urban growth). REAs also help identify areas that do not provide essential habitat; that are not ecologically intact or readily restorable; and where development activities may be directed to minimize impacts on important ecosystem values.

In the Oregon Sub-region, the Northern Great Basin ecoregion REA will be used to inform and enhance the quality of resource management and environmental analysis at the landscape level as the information becomes available. The REA information is considered in the development of management objectives that can be adapted to the changing environment. This REA will aid in identifying priority areas for conservation and development, including important areas for wildlife habitat and migration corridors. The landscape-level REAs allow the BLM to collaborate beyond the usual jurisdictional boundaries with
the goal of conserving the native ecological communities, traditional uses, and help maintain the rural culture that makes this area so unique.

Additional information about the Landscape Approach is provided on BLM website http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/Landscape_Approach.html.

As REAs are completed the information about each REA is posted on the REA website. The website includes published REA reports and the REA data portal. The data portal provides access to an interactive map and downloadable data. Additional information is provided on BLM Northern Great Basin REA website at http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/Landscape_Approach/reas/nbasin/range.html.

1.6 SCOPING AND IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED PLAN AND DRAFT ALTERNATIVES

1.6.1 The Scoping Process
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. Scoping identifies the affected public and agency concerns, defines the relevant issues and alternatives that will be examined in detail in the EIS, and eliminates those that are not relevant. A planning issue is defined as a controversy or dispute regarding management or uses on BLM-administered lands that can be addressed through a range of alternatives. The environmental impacts of these alternative management scenarios are analyzed and addressed in the Draft EIS.

Scoping is designed to be consistent with the public involvement requirements of FLPMA and NEPA. The cooperative 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 reasonable alternatives. As part of the scoping process, the BLM also requested that the public submit nominations for potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) for GRSG and their habitats.

The scoping period for the Oregon Sub-region GRSG RMPAs, along with the other sub-regional efforts, began on December 9, 2011. It was extended through a Notice of Correction published February 10, 2012, and ended on March 23, 2012. Scoping in January 2012 included open-house meetings in Baker City, Burns, Lakeview, Ontario, and Prineville. News releases were used to notify the public regarding the scoping period and the planning process and to invite the public to provide written comments from many sources including via email, fax, and regular mail. Comments obtained from the public during the scoping period were used to define the relevant issues to be addressed by a reasonable range of alternatives.
For the Oregon Sub-region planning process, scoping comments received from the public were placed in one of three categories:

1. Issues identified for consideration in the Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse RMPA/EIS
2. Issues to be addressed through policy or administrative action (and therefore not addressed in the RMPA/EIS)
3. Issues eliminated from detailed analysis because they are beyond the scope of the RMPA/EIS (and therefore not addressed in the RMP)

### 1.6.2 Issues Identified for Consideration in the Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse RMP Amendments

Some important issues to be addressed in this RMPA/EIS were identified by the public and the agencies during the scoping process for the range-wide planning effort. The Scoping Summary Report, prepared in conjunction with this RMPA/EIS, summarizes the scoping process (BLM and Forest Service 2012). The issues identified in the Scoping Report fall into one of 13 broad categories ((Table 1-6, Range-Wide Planning Issue Categories and Statements). Issue statements are listed based on the public comments received for each category. Other resource and use issues are identified in the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1; BLM 2005d). All of these issues were considered in developing the alternatives brought forward for analysis.

General planning issue statements stated above in Table 1-6 are also applicable for the Oregon Sub-region. In addition, key issues specifically discussed in the Oregon Sub-region comments included energy and mineral development, social issues, economic issues, fire management, livestock grazing, vegetation management, special management areas, wildlife, and recreation.

The following issue was identified for energy and mineral development: How will current and potential mineral extraction in the planning area be managed to minimize economic impacts and allow for GRSG conservation?

### 1.6.3 Issues to be Addressed Through Policy or Administrative Action and Not Addressed in the LUP Amendments

Policy or administrative actions are those that the BLM implements because they are standard operating procedure, federal law requires them, or they are BLM policy. They are, therefore, issues that are eliminated from detailed analysis in this planning effort. Administrative actions do not require a planning decision to implement.
Table 1-6
Range-Wide Planning Issue Categories and Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Issue Category</th>
<th>Planning Issue Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Sage-Grouse and Sage-Grouse habitat</td>
<td>How would the BLM use the best available science to designate PPH, PGH, and non-habitat categories and accurately monitor the impact of land uses on GRSG?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy and mineral development</td>
<td>How would energy and mineral development, including renewable energy development, be managed within GRSG habitat while recognizing valid existing rights?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock grazing</td>
<td>What measures would the BLM put in place to protect and improve GRSG habitat while maintaining grazing privileges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation management</td>
<td>How would the BLM conserve, enhance, or restore GRSG habitat such as sagebrush communities and minimize or prevent the introduction or spread of invasive plant species?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish and wildlife</td>
<td>What measures would be put in place to manage habitat for other wildlife species and reduce conflicts with GRSG?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lands and realty</td>
<td>What opportunities exist to adjust public land ownership that would increase management efficiency for GRSG and GRSG habitat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social, economic, and environmental justice</td>
<td>How could the BLM promote or maintain activities that provide social and economic benefit to local communities while providing protection for GRSG habitat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and travel management</td>
<td>How would motorized, non-motorized, and mechanized travel be managed to provide access to federal lands and a variety of recreation opportunities, while protecting GRSG and GRSG habitat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>What measures should be undertaken to manage fuels and wildland fires, while protecting GRSG habitat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special management areas</td>
<td>What special management areas would be designated by the BLM to benefit the conservation, enhancement, and restoration of GRSG and GRSG habitat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Soil</td>
<td>How would the BLM protect water and soil resources in order to benefit GRSG habitat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought/climate change</td>
<td>How would the BLM incorporate the impacts of a changing climate on GRSG habitat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild horse and burro</td>
<td>What measures would the BLM put in place to reduce the impacts of wild horses and burros on GRSG habitat?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6.4 Issues Not Addressed in the LUP Amendments
The following issues were determined to be outside the scope of the range-wide planning effort, including the Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse RMPA/EIS:

- **Hunting GRSG**—Commenters questioned why GRSG hunting is allowed if the bird is in need of protection. Hunting is an allowed use on BLM-administered lands and is regulated by state wildlife agencies. Comments regarding hunting relate to state-regulated actions and are outside the scope of the plan amendment.
1. Introduction

- **Predator removal**—Commenters stated that predator control was needed to protect GRSG. The effects on GRSG can be managed through predator removal or habitat management.

The ODFW has primary authority and responsibility for managing wildlife in the state, while the BLM is responsible for managing habitat. Consistent with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the BLM and the USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-Wildlife Services, the BLM would continue to work with the ODFW to meet state wildlife population objectives.

The ODFW regulates predator removal on BLM-administered lands; as a result, predator removal is outside the scope of the plan amendment. In addition, common ravens and golden eagles, which prey on GRSG, are migratory species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which is enforced by the USFWS. However, predator management, such as reducing avian predator perches and increasing GRSG nesting cover, is within the scope of the amendment.

The BLM will continue to work with agencies to address GRSG predation, including removing predators. The BLM-administered lands in the planning area will remain open to predator removal under state laws.

- **Listing is Not Warranted**—Commenters questioned population levels and the need to incorporate range-wide conservation measures. Others questioned the effectiveness of ESA listing as a method of species conservation. These comments relate to decisions under the purview of the USFWS and are not addressed in this plan amendment.

- **Elimination of livestock grazing on all BLM-administered lands**—Commenters asked that grazing be limited or completely stopped on all BLM-administered lands due to detrimental ecosystem effects. Others stated that national grazing policies should be reformed as the requirements are too limiting and impact ranchers’ livelihoods. In addition, some commenters state that grazing provides habitat enhancements for certain sensitive species. Decisions about livestock grazing national policies are outside the scope of this amendment and are not made in this planning effort.

However, this document is specific to PPH and PGH, and not all BLM-administered lands. The reduction of livestock (i.e., permitted grazing use) in GRSG habitat within the decision area is analyzed in Alternatives C, D, and F.

- **Renewable energy policies**—Commenters stated concerns about renewable energy development, including economic instability due to government subsidies and risk of wildlife deaths, specifically
bats and birds. General policy decisions about renewable energy management on BLM-administered lands will be determined by national policy and are not addressed in this plan amendment. While National Policy is not addressed in this Plan Amendment, Plan Alternatives may apply certain limitations and restrictions to the implementation of renewable energy development on the ground.

1.7 Development of Planning Criteria

Planning criteria are based on appropriate laws, regulations, BLM Manual and Handbook sections, and policy directives, as well as on public participation and coordination with cooperating agencies, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Native American tribes. Planning criteria are the standards, rules, and factors used as a framework to resolve issues and develop alternatives. Planning criteria are prepared to ensure decision making is tailored to the issues and to ensure that the BLM avoid unnecessary data collection and analysis. The preliminary planning criteria are:

- The BLM will utilize the WAFWA Conservation Assessment of Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Habitats (Connelly et al. 2004), and any other appropriate resources, to identify GRSG habitat requirements and best management practices.
- The approved RMPA will be consistent with BLM IM 2012-044, BLM National Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Planning Strategy (BLM 2011c).
- The approved RMPA will comply with FLPMA, NEPA, and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations at 40 CFR 1500 - 1508 and Department of the Interior regulations at 43 CFR 46 and 43 CFR 1600; the BLM H-1601-I Land Use Planning Handbook (BLM 2005d), “Appendix C: Program-Specific and Resource-Specific Decision Guidance Requirements” for affected resource programs; the 2008 BLM NEPA Handbook (H-1790-I; BLM 2008a), and all other BLM policies and guidance.
- The RMPA will be limited to making land use planning decisions specific to the conservation of GRSG habitats.
- The BLM will consider allocations, objectives, and management actions to restore, enhance, and improve GRSG habitat.
- The RMPA will recognize valid existing rights.
- Lands addressed in the RMPA will be BLM-administered lands (including surface-estate and split-estate lands) in GRSG habitats. Any decisions in the RMPA will apply only to federal lands administered by the BLM.
- The BLM will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where appropriate, to determine the desired future condition of
BLM-administered lands for the conservation of GRSG and their habitats. Predation effects on GRSG are addressed in this RMPA/EIS through habitat management and infrastructure siting and design rather than directly removing or reducing predators.

- As described by law and policy, the BLM will strive to ensure that conservation measures are as consistent as possible with other planning jurisdictions within the planning area boundaries.

- The BLM will consider a range of reasonable alternatives, including appropriate management prescriptions that focus on the relative values of resources while contributing to the conservation of GRSG and GRSG habitat.

- The BLM will address social and economic impacts of the alternatives. Social and economic analyses will use an accepted input-output quantitative model such as IMPLAN, RIMSII, or JEDI for renewable energy analysis.

- The BLM will endeavor to use current scientific information, research, technologies, and results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies that will enhance or restore GRSG habitats.

- Management of GRSG habitat that intersects with Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) on BLM-administered lands will be guided by BLM Manual 6330 (BLM 2012c). Land use allocations made for WSAs must be consistent with this manual and with other laws, regulations, and policies related to WSA management. Management of GRSG habitat will also be guided by the BLM manuals on Wilderness (Manual Section 6340); Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (National Monument/National Conservation Area Manual Section 6220); Wild and Scenic Rivers (Manual Section 6400); and National Historic Trails (Manual Section 6280).

- For BLM-administered lands, all activities and uses within GRSG habitats will follow existing land health standards. Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington (BLM 1997) and other programs that have developed standards and guidelines will be applicable to all alternatives for BLM-administered lands.

- The BLM will consult with Native American tribes to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage within GRSG habitats.

- The BLM will coordinate and communicate with state, local, and tribal governments to ensure that the BLM considers provisions of
1. Introduction

pertinent plans; seeks to resolve inconsistencies between state, local, and tribal plans; and provides ample opportunities for state, local, and tribal governments to comment on the development of amendments.

1.8 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED RMPA/FINAL EIS

With input from the public, other agencies, and tribes on the Draft EIS, the BLM made the final selection of the Proposed Plan. It includes elements of other alternatives to create a management strategy that meets resource values under the agencies' applicable land use planning policies.

• The BLM will develop vegetation management objectives, such as those for managing invasive plant species (including identifying desired future conditions for specific areas) in GRSG habitat.

• The RMPA will be based on the principles of adaptive management.

• The RMPA will be developed using an interdisciplinary approach to prepare reasonably foreseeable development scenarios, identify alternatives, and analyze resource impacts, including cumulative impacts on natural and cultural resources and the social and economic environment.

• Reasonably foreseeable development scenarios and planning for fluid minerals will follow the BLM Handbook H-1624-1 and current fluid minerals manual guidance for fluid mineral (oil and gas, coal-bed methane, oil shale) and geothermal resources (BLM 1990b).

• Reasonably foreseeable development scenarios were not completed for mineral potentials and developments in Oregon.

• The most current approved BLM corporate spatial data will be supported by current metadata and will be used to ascertain GRSG habitat extent and quality. Data will be consistent with the principles of the Information Quality Act of 2000.

• ODFW’s GRSG data and expertise will be utilized to the fullest extent practicable in making management determinations on BLM-administered lands.

• Where more restrictive land use allocations or decisions are made in existing RMPs, those more restrictive land use allocations or decisions will remain in effect and will not be amended by this RMPA.
BLM and the USFWS staff, and to fill out comment cards. Open houses were held in the following locations:

- Prineville—January 6, 2014
- Burns—January 7, 2014
- Ontario—January 8, 2014
- Baker City—January 9, 2014
- Lakeview—January 13, 2014
- Jordan Valley—January 22, 2014
- Durkee—January 23, 2014

Public Comment Analysis
The BLM received written comments by mail, e-mail, and submitted at the public meetings. Using a systematic approach of labeling, reviewing, and categorizing each comment, the BLM identified and formally responded to all substantive public comments. Substantive comments were categorized based on the content of the comment. Each retained the link to the commenter.

Subsequently, the BLM drafted statements summarizing the issues contained in each comment category. They then developed responses to each issue statement. As part of the response statement, the BLM indicated whether the comments resulted in a change to the RMPA/EIS. The Comment Report in Appendix V contains the issue statements and summary response for each comment category.

Development of Proposed Plan
In addition to warranted changes identified during the Draft RMPA/EIS public comment period, development of the proposed plan included extensive coordination among executive leadership teams from the BLM, Forest Service, USFWS, state wildlife agencies, and state governors’ offices. Executive-level coordination allowed the BLM and Forest Service to provide more consistent direction to each of the four Great Basin sub-regions so that a more consistent approach to GRSG conservation efforts is used across the landscape. The Oregon sub-region’s Proposed Plan carries forward many elements of the preferred alternative from the Draft RMPA/EIS but also includes elements of the other alternatives. Chapter 2 contains the Proposed Plan’s goals, objectives, and management actions.

Issuance of the Final RMPA/EIS
The completed RMP will fulfill the obligations set forth by the NEPA, FLPMA, and other federal regulations. In accordance with NEPA and the BLM’s planning regulations in 43 CFR, Part 1610, the Final RMPA/EIS will be made publicly available on the publication of a notice of availability in the Federal Register.
In accordance with the BLM’s planning regulations at 43 CFR, Part 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the planning process for this RMPA/EIS and has an interest that is or may be adversely affected by the planning decisions may protest approval of the planning decision. These persons have 30 days to file a protest, from the date the notice of availability of the ROD appears in the Federal Register.

At the same time as the protest period, the BLM will provide a governors’ consistency review (43 CFR, Part 1610.3-2[e]). Governors will have 60 days in which to identify inconsistencies with state or local plans, policies, or programs and to provide recommendations in writing to the BLM State Director.

**Record of Decision**
The ROD serves as the final decision for land use planning decisions described in the Final RMPA/EIS. The ROD also describes the rationale for selecting elements of the Proposed Plan.

### 1.9 Relationship to Other Policies, Plans, Programs, and Guidance
This planning process will recognize the many ongoing programs, plans, and policies that are being implemented in the planning area by other land managers and government agencies. The BLM will seek to be consistent with or complementary to other management actions whenever possible.

#### 1.9.1 Programmatic National-Level EIS Documents
Nation-wide plans that need to be considered during the GRSG planning effort include the following:

- Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States (BLM 1991; common to the Proposed Plan and alternatives)
- Final Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Associated Record of Decision. (FES 07-21; BLM 2007a)
- Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan Amendments for Geothermal Leasing in the Western United States (BLM 2008b)
- Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-administered Lands in the Western United States (FES 05-11; BLM 2005e)
- Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Solar Energy Development in Six Southwestern States (BLM 2012d)
1.9.2 State Plans

The BLM recognizes the importance of state plans, as well as plans developed by other federal agencies and tribal governments. State plans considered during the GRSG planning effort include the following:

- ODFW Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A Plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitat (Hagen 2011). Additional information on the State Plan is provided on the ODFW website http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/docs/20110422_GRSG_April_Final%2052511.pdf.

1.9.3 County Land Use Plans

The BLM recognizes the importance of local plans. Local LUPs considered during the GRSG planning effort include those for the following counties:

- Baker County, Oregon
- Crook County, Oregon
- Deschutes County, Oregon
- Harney County, Oregon
- Lake County, Oregon
- Malheur County, Oregon
- Union County, Oregon
- Wallowa County, Oregon

1.9.4 Memorandums of Understanding

The BLM entered into MOUs with the following cooperating agencies:

- Crook County
- Deschutes County
- Harney County
- Lake County
- Malheur County
- Harney Soil and Water Conservation District
- ODFW
- USFWS

The purpose of these MOU is to establish cooperating agency relationships for the purpose of cooperating in and conducting an environmental analysis and preparing the draft and final programmatic EIS for the Oregon GRSG amendments.
1.9.5 Activity Plans and Amendments
Numerous activity plans have been developed to implement the eight RMPs addressed by the Oregon Sub-region amendment effort. As soon as practicable after the signing of the ROD, activity plans that conflict with the GRSG amendments should be amended to come into compliance with the applicable RMP. New activity plans may also be developed in the future and would be consistent with the GRSG amendments.

1.9.6 Habitat Management Plans (HMP)
A Habitat Management Plan (HMP) provides guidance for the management of a defined habitat for a target wildlife species, protecting and improving habitat for that species and for other species utilizing the habitat. These plans are usually written in coordination with State Wildlife Agencies. The following HMPs are over 20 years old and involve areas covered by the 8 RMPs:

- Warner Wetlands HMP—Wetlands Management (BLM 1990a)
- Rosebud HMP—Wetlands Management (BLM 1993)
- North Warner HMP—Big Game Management (BLM 1984)
- South Warner HMP—Big Game Management (BLM 1986)

1.9.7 Vegetation Management Policies
BLM vegetation management involves all programs that rely on healthy plant species and communities to meet their objectives. The BLM’s overarching goal for vegetation management is, through an interdisciplinary collaborative process, to plan and implement a set of actions that improve biological diversity and ecosystem function and which promote and maintain native plant communities that are resilient to disturbance and invasive species. Federal laws and regulations guiding vegetation management include the following:

- Carlson-Foley Act, 1968
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 1976
- Section 15 of the Federal Noxious Weed Act, 1974
- National Environmental Policy Act, 1969
- Noxious Weed Control Act, 2004
- Plant Protection Act, 2000
- Public Rangelands Improvement Act, 1978
- Taylor Grazing Act, 1934

Vegetation treatment is fundamental to BLM vegetation management. Policies and plans related to vegetation treatment include:
1. Introduction

• BLM Integrated Vegetation Handbook (H-1740-2; BLM 2008e)
• BLM Manual 1740, Renewable Resource Improvements & Treatments (BLM 2008d)
• BLM Manual 9015, Integrated Weed Management (BLM 1992b)
• Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook (H-1742-1; BLM 2007b)
• Department Manual 620—Wildland Fire Management, Chapter 3, Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (DOI 2004)
• Interagency Ecological Site Handbook for Rangelands (H-1734-1); BLM, USDA Forest Service, USDA NRCS (2013f)
• National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy: Western Regional Assessment and Strategy (Forests and Rangelands 2011)
• National Fire Plan, 2001

1.9.8 BLM Direction

BLM direction includes:

• Aquatic Resources Management (BLM Manual 6720)
• Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (BLM Manual 1613)
• Migratory Bird Treaty Act – Interim Management Guidance (IM 2008-050)
• Oregon 1623 Manual Supplement on Research Natural Areas
• Special Status Species Management (BLM Manual 6840)
• Wildlife and Fisheries Management (BLM Manual 6500)

1.9.9 Conservation Objectives Team Report

Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Objectives: Priority Areas for Conservation and How They Correlate with Priority and General Habitat Management Areas

In 2012, the Director of the USFWS asked the Conservation Objectives Team (COT), consisting of state and USFWS representatives, to produce recommendations regarding the degree to which the threats need to be reduced or ameliorated to conserve GRSG so that it would no longer be in danger of extinction or likely to become in danger of extinction in the foreseeable future. The COT report (USFWS 2013a) provides objectives based upon the best scientific and commercial data available at the time of its release. The BLM/Forest Service planning decisions analyzed in the LUP/EISs are
intended to ameliorate threats identified in the COT report and to reverse the
trends in habitat condition. The COT report can be viewed online at the
following address:

http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/birds/sagegrouse/COT/COT-

The highest level objective in the COT report is identified as meeting the
objectives of WAFWA's 2006 GRSG Comprehensive Strategy of “reversing
negative population trends and achieving a neutral or positive population trend.”

The COT report provides a WAFWA Management Zone and Population Risk
Assessment. The report identifies localized threats from sagebrush elimination,
fire, conifer encroachment, weed and annual grass invasion, mining, free-roaming
wild horses and burros, urbanization, and widespread threats from energy
development, infrastructure, grazing, and recreation (USFWS 2013a, p. 18).

Key areas across the landscape that are considered “necessary to maintain
redundant, representative, and resilient populations” are identified within the
COT report. The USFWS in concert with the respective state wildlife
management agencies identified these key areas as Priority Areas for
Conservation (PACs).

Within the Oregon Sub-region, the PACs consist of 6,555,941 acres regardless
of ownership. Under the Proposed Plan, the PACs are comprised of 4,555,738
acres of PHMA managed by the BLM, 62 acres of GHMA managed by the BLM,
and one acre of non-habitat managed by the BLM.

A biologically significant unit (BSU) is a geographic unit of PHMA within Greater
Sage-Grouse habitat that contains relevant and important habitats. In Oregon,
BSUs are synonymous with Oregon PACs, which are used in the calculation of
the anthropogenic disturbance threshold and in the adaptive management
habitat trigger.

1.9.10 Summary of Science, Activities, Programs, and Policies That
Influence the Rangewide Conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse
(\textit{Centrocercus urophasianus})

To augment this planning document at a biologically meaningful scale for GRSG,
the USGS produced the Summary of Science, Activities, Programs, and Policies
That Influence the Rangewide Conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse
(\textit{Centrocercus urophasianus}; Manier et al. 2013). This is a science support
document that provides information to put planning units and issues into the
context of the larger WAFWA greater sage-grouse management zones.

In the document, the USGS examines each threat identified in the USFWS's
listing decision published on March 15, 2010. For each threat, the USGS
summarizes the current scientific understanding of various impacts on GRSG
1. Introduction

populations and habitats. When available, it also reports patterns, thresholds, indicators, metrics, and measured responses that quantify the impacts of each specific threat.

Chapter 3, Affected Environment, of this RMPA/Final EIS contains GRSG information from the USGS summary document. When available, this information is supplemented with more specific information. Additional information on the document is provided on the USGS website, http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2013/1098/.

1.9.11 Secretarial Order 3336
The Secretary of Interior issued Secretarial Order 3336 on January 5, 2015 which establishes the protection, conservation and restoration of “the health of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem and, in particular, greater sage-grouse habitat, while maintaining safe and efficient operations as a critical fire management priority for the Department”. The Secretarial Order will result in a final report of activities to be implemented prior to the 2016 Western fire season. This will include prioritization and allocation of fire resources and the integration of emerging science, enhancing existing tools to implement the Resource Management Plan and improve our ability to protect sagebrush-steppe from damaging wildfires.