



# BLM NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Department of the Interior • Bureau of Land Management • Washington, D.C., Office • 1849 C Street N.W. • Washington, D.C.

**Bureau of Land Management**  
**For immediate release**

**Contacts:** Megan Crandall, 202-912-7411  
**Date:** July 21, 2011

## **BLM Announces Strategy to Conserve Sage-Grouse and Protect Habitat**

WASHINGTON – In response to requests from state and local governments to facilitate ways to conserve greater sage-grouse and protect its habitat, Bureau of Land Management scientists and managers met with state wildlife management officials July 16 to brief them on the agency’s National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy. The meeting took place at the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies summer conference in Big Sky, Mont.

The BLM strategy emphasizes a cooperative approach and provides a framework to advance efforts to implement timely conservation measures for sage-grouse and its habitat.

“The greater sage-grouse and its habitat transcend traditional jurisdictional boundaries,” BLM Director Robert Abbey said. “This strategy reflects our commitment to working with all of our partners to improve sage-grouse habitat and increase sage-grouse numbers range-wide.”

As part of the strategy, the BLM will incorporate science-based conservation measures into Resource Management Plans across regions where the greater sage-grouse is found. It will address principal threats to the sage-grouse identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within different portions of the range and work closely with Western state fish and wildlife agencies.

“We will build consistent conservation measures into land-use planning efforts including those already underway where sage-grouse are located,” Abbey said. “Most importantly, we will then implement on-the-ground actions that will benefit the species.”

As the American West has become increasingly urban over the last century, greater sage-grouse populations have declined due to the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of the sagebrush habitats essential for their survival. Today, greater sage-grouse live in 11 Western states and occupy only 56 percent their historic habitat.

In April 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that the greater sage-grouse warrants the protection of the Endangered Species Act, but it did not list the species due to a need to address other, higher-priority species first. The BLM’s goal is to provide for long-term sage-grouse conservation, habitat protection and species improvement that would make federal Endangered Species Act protection unnecessary in the coming years.

Although the BLM manages more sage-grouse habitat than any other government agency — approximately 57 million acres — greater sage-grouse benefit from and make use of suitable habitat, regardless of land ownership boundaries. The BLM’s approach to sage-grouse conservation acknowledges the importance of engaging all stakeholders in implementing

appropriate conservation measures and will promote coordination and cooperation among agencies, states, and private land owners range-wide.

The BLM manages more land – over 245 million acres – than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

-BLM-