



Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement



January 2014

Project Overview

This initiative 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 12-Month Finding, the USFWS concluded that Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) was “warranted, but precluded” for listing as a threatened or endangered species. The USFWS reviewed the status and threats to the GRSG in relation to the five Listing Factors provided in Section 4(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (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**” (75 Federal Register 13910, March 23, 2010; emphasis added). The USFWS identified the principal regulatory mechanisms for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and National Forest Service (Forest Service) as conservation measures in land use plans (LUPs).

In response to the USFWS findings, the BLM and Forest Service are preparing LUP amendments (LUPAs) with associated environmental impact statements (EISs) to incorporate specific conservation measures across the range of the GRSG, consistent with national BLM and Forest Service policy. The planning strategy will evaluate the adequacy of BLM and Forest Service LUPs and address, as necessary, amendments throughout the range of the GRSG. These EISs have been coordinated under two administrative planning regions: the Rocky Mountain Region and the Great Basin Region. These regions are drawn roughly to correspond with the threats identified by the USFWS in the 2010 listing decision, along with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Management Zones framework.

The Great Basin Region comprises LUPs in California, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, and Montana. This region comprises the WAFWA Management Zones 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.

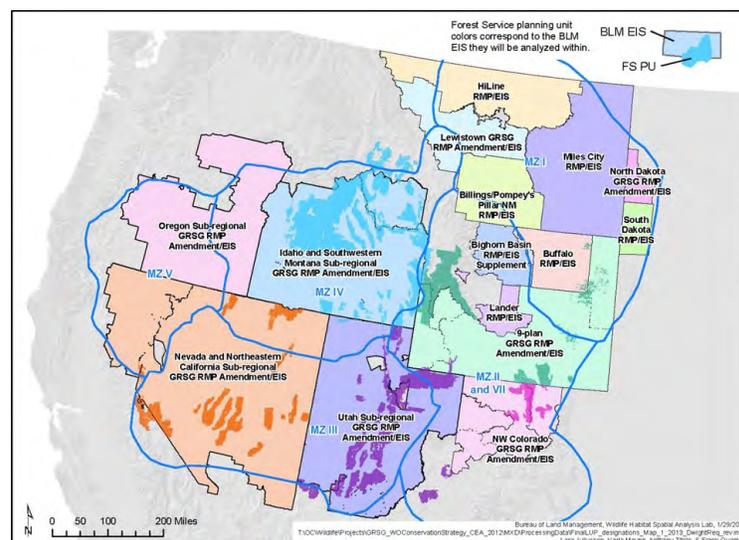


Image shows the BLM and Forest Service GRSG planning strategy sub-region/EIS boundaries

The BLM Oregon/Washington State Office is undertaking the Oregon Sub-Region EIS, which analyzes the effects of amending up to 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 in Oregon, incorporating GRSG management guidelines from the NTT report as appropriate. These proposed RMP amendments would identify and incorporate appropriate regulatory mechanisms to conserve, enhance, and/or restore GRSG habitat, and would be designed to eliminate, reduce, or minimize threats to GRSG priority and general habitats on BLM-administered lands in the Oregon Sub-region. The proposed RMPA addresses both Listing Factors A and D (above) and are intended to provide consistency in the management of GRSG habitats across the BLM offices. The BLM intends to issue one Record of Decision for the Oregon Sub-region in 2014. The Record of Decision is expected to offer sufficient evidence for the USFWS to consider preclusion of a potential listing for GRSG as a threatened or endangered species under the ESA.



Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement



January 2014

Planning Area Overview

The planning area is the geographic area within which the BLM would make decisions during this planning effort. A planning area boundary includes all lands regardless of jurisdiction; however, the BLM only makes decisions on lands that fall under its jurisdiction. Resource Management Plan amendments would be limited to providing land use planning direction specific to the conservation of GRSG and their habitat.

For this RMPA/EIS, the planning area is the entire Oregon Sub-region. The entire planning area is east of the Cascade Mountains and totals 31,756,507 acres. 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. The Burns, Lakeview, Prineville, and Vale Districts administer the eight RMPs being amended by this RMPA/EIS.

Although the entire planning area includes various land management entities, the management directions and actions outlined in this RMPA/EIS will apply only to BLM-administered surface lands in the planning area and BLM-administered federal mineral estate that may lie beneath other surface ownership, often referred to as split-estate lands. Because other federal and state surface land managers have management plans in place for their surface lands, the decisions resulting from this planning process will apply to only BLM-administered federal mineral split-estate beneath only private surface lands.

There are 12,618,026 acres of BLM-administered surface lands in the planning area. There are 2,639,000 acres of BLM-administered mineral split-estate beneath private surface lands that are also in the planning area. When combined together, these two areas total 15,257,026 acres (the decision area for the RMPA/EIS).

The acres of PPH and PGH occurring on BLM-administered lands and non-BLM-administered lands in the planning area are identified in the table below.

Surface Land Management of PPH and PGH by RMP in the Planning Area				
RMP	PPH (acres)		PGH (acres)	
	BLM	Non-BLM	BLM	Non-BLM
Andrews	398,421	126,195	745,746	254,843
Steens	208,064	18,884	198,560	45,404
Three Rivers	369,613	188,112	1,047,807	656,928
Lakeview	975,181	408,758	1,359,553	401,739
Brothers LaPine	329,424	367,857	210,632	170,394
Upper Deschutes	205	13,085	89,660	71,446
Baker	139,234	265,570	66,281	239,346
Southeastern Oregon	2,126,899	620,522	1,944,393	721,151
All RMPs	4,547,043	2,008,984	5,662,631	2,561,250

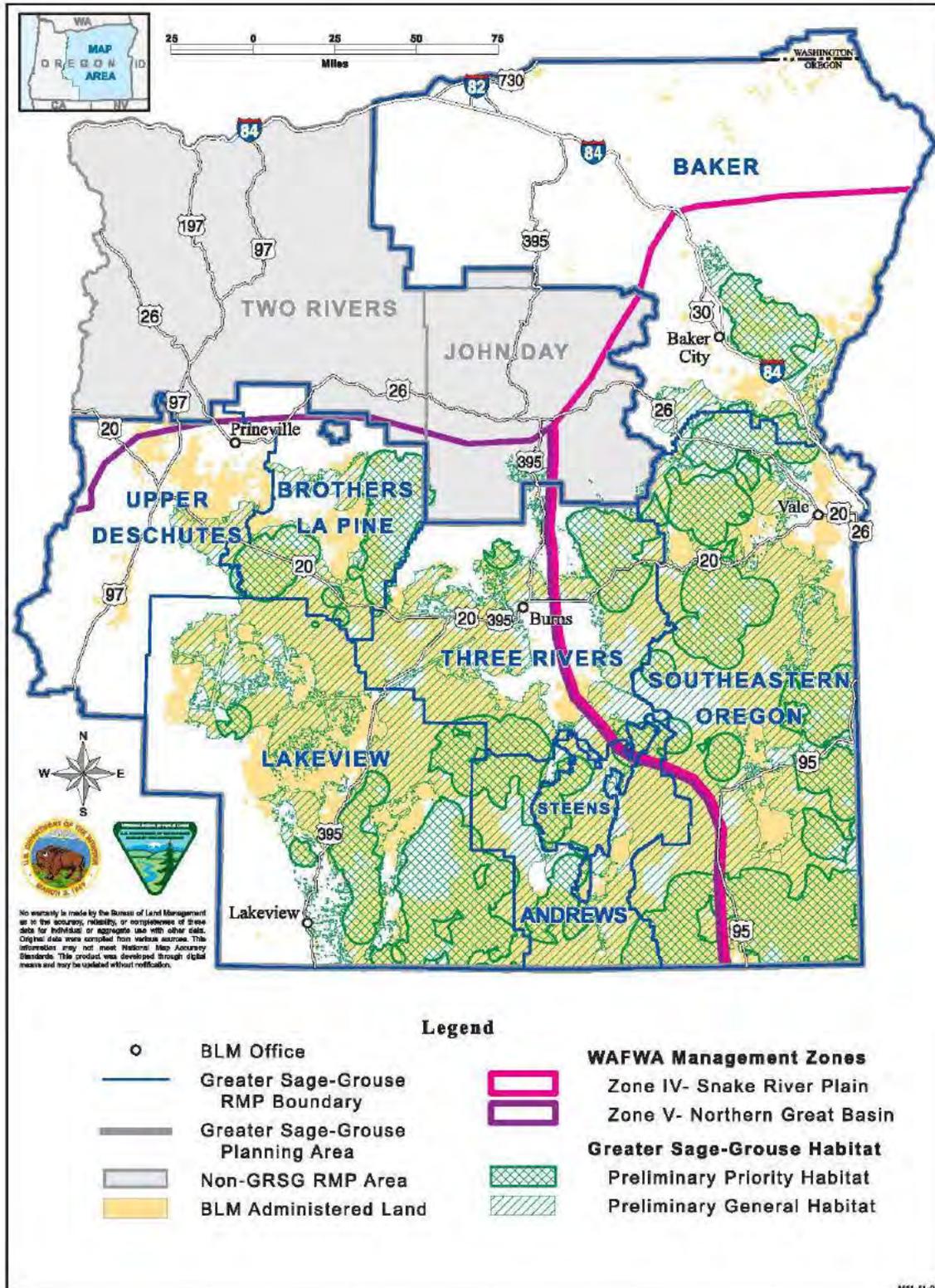


Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement



January 2014

Planning Area Map



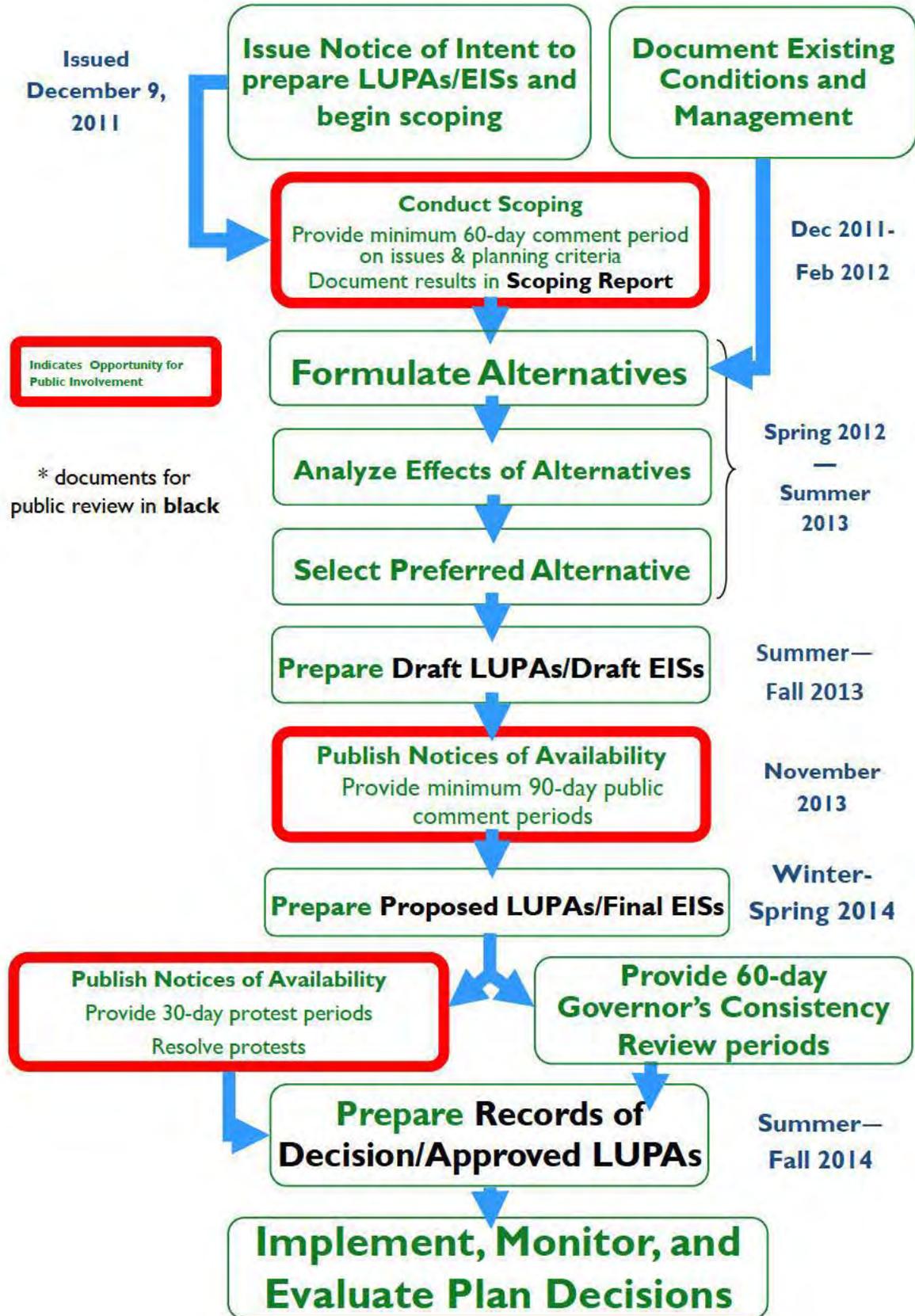


Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement



January 2014

Planning Process





Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement



January 2014

Guide to Commenting

Why Public Comments are Important

This is an opportunity for you to be involved in the decision-making process, to offer your thoughts on alternative ways for the BLM to accomplish what it is proposing, and to offer your comments on the agencies' analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed action and possible mitigation of potential harmful effects of such actions.

The National Environmental Policy Act "... is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on the understanding of environmental consequences..." (40 CFR 1501(c).) To achieve this, the EIS considers the effects of our actions on economic and natural resources within the planning area. Citizens such as yourself often have valuable information about places and resources they consider important and the potential effects proposed federal actions may have on those places and resources. This is your opportunity to work with us so we can take your information into account.

The BLM is responsible for managing public lands in the public interest. Comments that provide relevant and new information with sufficient detail are most useful and are referred to as substantive comments. The BLM reviews all comments and identifies the topics that are substantive for consideration in the final published document.

Viewing the Document

The BLM encourages the public to review the Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse Draft RMPA/EIS and provide comments. The public can view the document in the following ways:

Electronically:

<http://www.blm.gov/or/energy/opportunity/sagebrush.php>

In-Person:

BLM Oregon/Washington State Office
1220 SW 3rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

How to Submit Comments

Comments may be submitted in the following ways:

- Electronically by e-mail to:
blm_or_so_gsg_planning_comments@blm.gov
- By US mail to:
BLM - Greater Sage-Grouse DEIS
1220 SW 3rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

To facilitate analysis of comments and information submitted, we strongly encourage you to submit comments in an electronic format.

**Public comments will be
accepted until **February 20, 2014****

Protecting your Privacy

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Questions About Commenting or About the Document?

If you have questions about commenting or about the document, please contact:

Joan Suther, Project Manager Greater Sage Grouse
RMPA/EIS, Oregon Sub Region.

Telephone: 541 573 4445

Guide to Commenting (continued)

Substantive Comments

A substantive comment is one that does one or more of the following (BLM Handbook H-1790, *National Environmental Policy Act Handbook*):

- Questions, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the RMP and EIS
- Questions, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analysis
- Presents new information relevant to the analysis
- Presents reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the EIS
- Causes changes or revisions in one or more of the alternatives

Nonsubstantive Comments

A nonsubstantive comment is one that can be categorized as one or more of the following (BLM Handbook H-1790, *National Environmental Policy Act Handbook*):

- Comments in favor of or against the proposed action or alternatives without reasoning that meet the criteria for a substantive comment
- Comments that only agree or disagree with BLM policy or resource decisions without justification or supporting data that meet the criteria for a substantive comment
- Comments that don't pertain to the project area or the project
- Comments that take the form of vague, open-ended questions

Tips for Providing Helpful Comments

- Provide specific and detailed text changes. Include the section, management action, or page number to help us find the exact location of the subject of your comment. Clearly identify:
 - Where the issue or error is located
 - Why you believe there is an error
 - Alternative ideas to address the issue/errors
- Provide constructive solutions with documentation or resources to support your recommendations.
- Include any knowledge, experience, or evidence as it relates to your observations and comments.
- Provide GPS readings if possible when referring to specific locations.
- Avoid vague statements or concerns. These don't give the BLM something on which to act.
- Comments are not votes for or against a decision. The BLM must rely on supporting information, not the number of comments received. Multiple comments/topics with the same concern are considered one comment.
- Avoid using form letters to convey your opinion. Your unique way of writing a comment helps the BLM understand your point of view.

Examples of substantive and nonsubstantive comments can be found on the BLM NEPA Web Guide: http://www.blm.gov/wol/st/en/prog/planning/nepa/webguide/document_pages/6_9_2_1__examples.html.