

Greater Sage-Grouse

December 2014

CURRENT STATUS

The BLM is writing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze incorporating new Greater Sage-Grouse conservation measures into its resource management plans for the five field offices within the Northwest Colorado District: the Colorado River Valley Field Office in Silt, the Grand Junction Field Office, the Kremmling Field Office, the Little Snake Field Office in Craig and the White River Field Office in Meeker. The Routt National Forest is also included in this planning effort. The goal is to specifically provide adequate regulatory measures for the conservation of the species on BLM-administered lands.

The BLM worked with the State of Colorado, numerous counties and other cooperators to incorporate comments and develop a final proposed plan. The BLM is currently in the final stages of incorporating national guidance into the final proposed plan, which is expected to be released in 2015.

The BLM is responding to a range-wide data call for projects and management actions that benefit Greater Sage-Grouse. The data call is in response to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) status assessment to determine if Greater Sage-Grouse warrants protection under the Endangered Species Act. The information that BLM is providing to the USFWS includes: habitat restoration treatments, fuels treatments, removal or modification of fences and power lines, changes in grazing management, land use planning efforts and fire management plans/actions that benefit greater sage-grouse.

The BLM continues to manage Greater Sage-Grouse as a BLM sensitive species in Colorado and emphasize implementation of state and local sage-grouse conservation strategies, as well as coordination with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and other partners.

BACKGROUND

More than 1.7 million acres of Colorado's Greater Sage-Grouse habitat is found on BLM lands in the Northwest District, almost half of the entire Greater Sage-Grouse habitat in Colorado.

Greater Sage-Grouse were classified as a candidate species following the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Act determination of "warranted but precluded from listing due to higher listing priorities." As part of a 2011 court settlement, the USFWS agreed to make an initial determination on whether to propose the species for listing by September 30, 2015. In December 2011, the Department of the Interior announced new Greater Sage-Grouse conservation guidance aimed at conserving the bird and its sagebrush habitat in 11 western states.

