



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **BLM and USFS release draft Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse EIS**

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. – Today the Bureau of Land Management and Routt National Forest released the Draft Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Resource Management Plan Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a 90-day public comment period.

The draft considers four possible management alternatives for maintaining and increasing habitat for Greater Sage-Grouse on BLM and Routt National Forest lands in northwestern Colorado. The alternatives apply to federal lands and minerals only, not to private lands.

The preferred alternative reflects local adjustments to national management recommendations based on input from cooperating government agencies and the public.

“We are considering a wide-range of alternatives designed to preclude the need for listing of Greater Sage-Grouse as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act,” said Jim Cagney, BLM Northwest District Manager. “We have been working closely with our cooperating agencies to incorporate local expertise and information. Public involvement in reviewing this draft is the next important step.”

More than 1.7 million acres of Colorado’s Greater Sage-Grouse habitat are on BLM lands in the Northwest District. That’s almost half of the entire Greater Sage-Grouse habitat in Colorado. Habitat fragmentation poses the primary threat to sage grouse.

You may submit comments related to the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS by any of the following methods:

- Web site:  
[https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/lup/lup\\_register.do](https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/lup/lup_register.do)
- email: [blm\\_co\\_nw\\_sage\\_grouse@blm.gov](mailto:blm_co_nw_sage_grouse@blm.gov)
- fax: 970-244-3083
- mail: BLM – Greater Sage Grouse EIS, 2815 H Road, Grand Junction, CO, 81506

Comments need to be received by Nov. 14, 2013.

Copies of the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS are available at the Northwest Colorado District Office at the above address or on the website at: [http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM\\_Programs/wildlife/sage-grouse.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Programs/wildlife/sage-grouse.html).

The BLM and U.S. Forest Service will issue separate Records of Decision by Sept. 30, 2014.

In March 2010, the US Fish and Wildlife Service determined that listing the Greater Sage-Grouse as a threatened or endangered species was “warranted, but precluded.” The FWS determined that current and potential threats to Greater Sage-Grouse habitat and inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms pose “a significant threat to the Greater Sage-Grouse now and in the foreseeable future.”

The Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse EIS is one of 15 separate EISs that are being conducted as part of BLM’s west-wide National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Effort, to provide additional measures to maintain and increase Greater Sage-grouse habitat on public lands to preclude the need for listing by improving habitat.

Alternative D is the BLM’s preferred alternative, combining the best available data on sage grouse habitat with adjustments to reflect local conditions and the input of cooperating agencies. The final could combine elements of one or all of the alternatives.

- Alternative A continues current management direction under existing planning documents for all five field offices involved in the planning effort, plus the Routt National Forest.
- Alternative B analyzes management actions outlined in the National Technical Team’s (NTT) report. Conservation measures under Alternative B are focused primarily on priority habitat areas that have the highest conservation value to maintaining or increasing Greater Sage-Grouse populations. These conservation measures include such protections as right-of-way exclusions and a fluid mineral leasing closure.
- Alternative C analyzes management recommendations submitted by conservation groups for protection and conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse and its habitat at the range-wide level. Conservation measures under Alternative C include creating an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that would include all preliminary priority habitat and a grazing closure over all designated habitat in the planning area.
- Alternative D, the sub-regional alternative, incorporates local adjustments to the NTT report, which were developed with cooperating agencies. The purpose is to provide a balanced level of protection, restoration, enhancement and use of resources and services to meet ongoing programs and land uses. Conservation measures under Alternative D are focused on both preliminary priority habitat and all designated habitat.

Public meetings will be held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. in October at the following locations:

- Oct. 15 in Craig, at the Memorial Hospital at Craig, 750 Hospital Loop
- Oct. 17 in Silt, at the BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office, 2300 River Frontage Road
- Oct. 22 in Walden, at the Wattenburg Community Center, 682 County Road 42
- Oct. 23 in Lakewood, at the Lakewood Heritage Center, 801 S. Yarrow St.

More information about the public meetings will be announced in the coming weeks.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware 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 your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

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