



PROJECT UPDATE II:

Gunnison Sage-Grouse Rangewide Plan Amendment/EIS

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

On July 18, 2014, the BLM published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register to begin the process of formulating the Gunnison Sage-Grouse Rangewide Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement. On November 19, 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published their final determination to list the Gunnison Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*) as a threatened species and to designate critical habitat for the bird. The decision became effective on December 22, 2014.

SCHEDULE EXTENSION

The project interdisciplinary team has emphasized quality of the plan over strict adherence to deadlines, preferring to ensure that the resulting document is well reasoned and comprehensive. BLM management recently approved a formal project extension in

support of this approach, modifying the timeline as follows:

- **Fall 2015** – Issue Notice of Availability of the Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This will initiate a 90-day public review period, during which a series of public meetings will be held across the project planning area to

present the draft and answer questions.

- **Fall 2016** – Issue Notice of Availability of the Proposed RMPA and Final EIS. This will initiate a 30-day protest period and a concurrent 60-day Governor's Consistency Review in Colorado and Utah.
- **Winter 2017** – Issue Record of Decision.

STATUS OF DRAFT RMP/EIS

➤ **EIS Chapter 1 - Introduction**

The team prepared and distributed a draft of Chapter 1 for internal and cooperating agency review. Feedback received was considered and incorporated as appropriate.

➤ **EIS Chapter 2 - Alternatives**

The team is finalizing the range of alternatives. A preliminary draft of the alternatives was distributed for internal and cooperating agency review. The team conducted a series of meetings with cooperating agencies and BLM field offices across the planning area during the week of January 12–16, 2015, to discuss the draft alternatives, answer questions, and accept feedback. The extensive feedback received was considered and incorporated as appropriate.

➤ **EIS Chapter 3 - Affected Environment**

Team resource specialists developed resource and resource use descriptions—including indicators, existing conditions, and trends. A U.S. Forest Service Enterprise Team prepared a baseline socio-economic analysis. An initial draft was sent around for team review. The team is incorporating feedback received on the chapter prior to agency and cooperating agency review.

➤ **EIS Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences**

Team members are currently analyzing the direct and indirect impacts on the human and natural environment anticipated to occur from implementing each of the alternatives presented in Chapter 2. The analysis is intended to aid in the decision of which of the alternatives to adopt.

➤ **GIS Data & Mapping**

The GIS Specialist has been busy generating data and producing maps requested by team resource specialists.

COOPERATING AGENCIES

Jurisdictional Responsibility & Special Expertise

Two more counties have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to participate as cooperating agencies on the project. With the addition of Ouray County, Colorado, and Grand County, Utah, cooperating agencies now represent:

- Ten counties in Colorado and Utah.
- Three state agencies and representatives of both Governors' offices in Colorado and Utah.
- Six federal agencies.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Scoping Report & Website

The team released and posted the Final Scoping Report to the project website on November 24, 2014. A Project Update page was added to the website in early December.



The BLM intends to incorporate objectives, allowable uses, and management actions for conserving the Gunnison Sage-Grouse and its habitat into approved RMPs.

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Gunnison Sage-Grouse Range-Wide Plan Amendment

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