

Local Unit Fire Program Conservation Efforts Related to Sage-Grouse

Many local units with sage-grouse habitats have established protocols that address sage-grouse and fire suppression activities. Examples of these protocols are:

Preseason:

- Ensuring that resource management plans and fire management plans are current and include guidance for managing sage-grouse and sage-grouse habitat.
- Conducting informational meetings and workshops with federal, state, and local cooperators to share sage-grouse information such as the location of key habitat, standard operating procedures (SOPs) for suppression activities in habitat areas, rehabilitation guidelines in habitat areas, etc.
- Ensuring that suppression priorities include critical resources (i.e., sage-grouse, cultural resources), and use these priorities during periods of fire activity to prioritize incidents and assign resources.

Initial Attack:

- Ensuring that interagency fire managers update pre-planned responses within the dispatch zone to align the initial attack response with protection priorities and resource values.
- Encouraging dispatch center to utilize geographic information system (GIS) maps in Wildland Fire Computer Aided Dispatch (WildCAD) to determine if new starts are within sage-grouse habitat or in close proximity to other identified values or assets, and relay that information to responders.
- Briefing all local initial attack crews on the importance of identifying sage-grouse habitat during response and suppression, and the need to follow the sage-grouse suppression SOPs (include a form of text instruction and key habitat maps).
- Ensuring out-of-area resources (severity crews, overhead, etc.) receive a full briefing, which includes, among other things, the importance of identifying sage-grouse habitat during response and suppression, and the need to follow the sage-grouse suppression SOPs.

Extended Attack:

- Ensuring resource advisors (READ) are assigned to fires in the zone whenever fire suppression activities may affect resource values, including sage-grouse habitat.
- Ensuring READs are assigned to incidents as early as possible.
- Ensuring READs participate in annual READ workshops which address, among other things, sage-grouse concerns and SOPs.
- Ensuring READs have access to pre-built kits which include hard copy and electronic resource information, GIS sage-grouse habitat data, fire suppression SOPs for sage-grouse, and rehabilitation guidelines.
- Ensuring sage-grouse issues are addressed throughout the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) process (particularly in decision documents) and specified in delegations of authority to incident management teams (IMT) and incident commanders.
- Ensuring READs are assigned to large incidents managed by an IMT for the duration of the incident. Ensure that per delegations of authority, READs are included in planning meetings, firefighter briefings, and provide input to the incident action plan.

Post-Incident:

- Ensuring READs complete a READ report upon demobilization of an incident. This report should summarize suppression actions, suppression damage, and damage caused by the fire itself. The READ report should provide preliminary recommendations for stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration. This preliminary assessment and subsequent emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation plans should include impacts to sage-grouse habitat and recommendations for mitigation.