



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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EMS TRANSMISSION 08/10/2012
Instructional Memorandum No. NV-2012-058
Expires: 9/30/2013

To: BLM Employees, Nevada
From: State Director
Subject: Revised Direction for Proposed Activities within Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat

Program Areas: All Programs

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum replaces previous direction issued under NV-IM-2011-075 “*Directions for using the Sage-Grouse Form for Proposed Activities within 75% Greater Sage-Grouse Breeding Areas*”, NV-IM-2012-056 (rescinded August 2, 2012), and clarifies Nevada policy on activities in Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) habitat. The direction contained in this Instruction Memorandum applies to activities on BLM Nevada administered lands. California BLM will coordinate proposed activities in a similar manner through their organization.

On December 27, 2011, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued two Instructional Memoranda (IM) on Greater Sage-Grouse conservation. These are [IM 2012-043](#) “Interim Management Policies and Procedures (Interim Policy)” and [IM 2012-044](#) “Land Use Planning Strategy (Strategy)”. In accordance with these IMs, Nevada BLM has initially identified and mapped Preliminary Priority Sage-Grouse Habitat (PPH) and Preliminary General Sage-Grouse Habitat (PGH).

This Instruction Memorandum is being implemented to add clarity and certainty for BLM staff and public land users to formally bring policies up to date with current mapping and management protocols.

Through this IM, NV-IM-2011-075 is being revised to incorporate new mapping efforts by the Nevada BLM and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) for PPH and PGH delineations (referred to herein as the Greater Sage-Grouse Preliminary Habitat Map or Preliminary Habitat Map). This IM also provides further instruction on management of information required for annual reports to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

Policy/Action: The Interim Policy set forth in IM No. 2012-043 identifies policies and procedures to minimize habitat loss in Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH) and Preliminary General Habitat (PGH) areas and is to be applied pending completion of the land use planning process that is now underway as described in the Land Use Planning Strategy set forth in IM No. 2012-044. The Interim Policy also

requires the BLM to track and report use authorizations issued or deferred as well as other management actions within Sage-Grouse habitat.

The Governor's Greater Sage-Grouse Advisory Committee has recently submitted their *Strategic Plan for Conservation of Great Sage-Grouse in Nevada* to the Governor with the recommendation that it be submitted to the BLM to replace the current national Interim Policy set forth in IM 2012-043. Nevada BLM may adopt the Governor's strategy through a subsequent Instruction Memorandum and upon concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the strategy provides an appropriate regulatory mechanism for conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse.

The Greater Sage-Grouse Preliminary Habitat Map developed by the Nevada BLM and USFS replaces the 75% Breeding Bird Density Map (identified in NV-IM-2011-075) and provides the basis for application of the BLM's Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Policy in Nevada. The Preliminary Habitat GIS data relied on by the BLM and USFS in developing the Preliminary Habitat Map has been made available in the corporate database in EGIS.

Outside of the areas delineated in the Greater Sage-Grouse Preliminary Habitat Map as PPH or PGH, BLM Nevada Districts can identify other habitat that needs special consideration. For projects proposed in these other areas, appropriate conservation measures can be considered on a case by case basis to maintain options should the District propose these areas be included in the planning process. The Preliminary Habitat Map will be the starting point for habitat delineation and will be analyzed through the land use planning and associated NEPA processes set forth in IM No. 2012-044. The final map of Priority Habitat will be an outcome of the sub-regional land use planning process that is now underway.

The direction set forth in this IM requires that Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) be consulted on all discretionary and non-discretionary projects within Greater Sage-Grouse habitat in Nevada. Accordingly, Nevada BLM will seek NDOW's concurrence for proposed actions in PPH and will consider measures to maintain, enhance, and restore conditions for Greater Sage-Grouse and its habitat. For proposed actions in PGH, Nevada BLM will also seek NDOW's concurrence and will consider measures to reduce and mitigate adverse effects on Greater Sage-Grouse and its habitat to the extent practical. In the event of a disagreement between NDOW and Nevada BLM on a proposed action within PPH or PGH, the issue must be forwarded to the Nevada BLM State Director, State Wildlife Agency Director, and FWS representative for their review.

Non-discretionary activities will be tracked at the NV BLM State Office and do not require submission of the *Proposed Activities in Sage-Grouse Preliminary Habitat Areas Form* (referred to herein as the "form" and included as Attachment 1). The NV BLM State Office will review all proposed leasing areas, mining notices, and related work to identify whether the area/activities would occur within PPH or PGH. Any parcels that contain a quarter section intersected by a PPH or PGH area will be evaluated as to whether to include it on the preliminary sale list provided to the District Offices. The NV BLM State Office will consider on a case-by-case basis whether or not to include these parcels in a competitive oil and gas or geothermal sale. For non-discretionary projects, the BLM will consider current scientific information.

Nevada BLM State Office concurrence is required for discretionary, ground or population disturbing activities within PPH and PGH except for emergency activities, data collection and monitoring, permit transfers that do not contain changes in terms and conditions, and routine maintenance of existing facilities and authorizations. Woodcutting activities that are in areas that are currently not suitable as Sage-Grouse habitat generally have no effect. This activity does not need to be submitted as long as appropriate BMP's are applied although we will need to track locations and amount of wood material removed from PPH and PGH for reporting.

The Districts are to report the number of PPH and PGH acres burned by wildfire and provide the shape files on a monthly basis. This information will be posted to the Nevada BLM Resources and Planning Sage-Grouse SharePoint at: <https://partnerteamspace.blm.doi.net/sites-nv/nvrp/Sage/default.aspx> in a [district fire folder](#).

The Nevada BLM Districts/Field Offices will submit the revised *Proposed Activities in Sage-Grouse Preliminary Habitat Areas Form* (Attachment 1) for surface and population disturbing discretionary activities that require BLM authorization and occur within the PPH and PGH polygons. Submissions should be made at the time the project is proposed. The form is used for tracking the number and location of proposed projects that may have the potential to impact Greater Sage-Grouse and their habitat. The form will also be used to keep the State Director informed about proposed activities that have the potential to impact Greater Sage-Grouse.

The Nevada State Office will evaluate proposed activities submitted for compliance with the direction set forth in this IM. This evaluation will consist of reviewing whether appropriate coordination has occurred with NDOW and if the appropriate BMPs and/or conservation measures have been considered. Nevada BLM will consider the best current scientific information as well as site specific data in evaluating projects during the interim period.

The *Proposed Activities in Sage-Grouse Preliminary Habitat Areas Form* (Attachment 1) is also available on the Nevada Resources and Planning Sage-Grouse SharePoint at: <https://partnerteamspace.blm.doi.net/sites-nv/nvrp/Sage/default.aspx> in the Shared Documents “*Proposed Projects within GSG Habitat*” folder, and then “*Forms*” sub-folder.

When an activity is proposed, fill out the proposed activity form **completely**. The instructions for each section are written in blue. The location of the activity should be provided as latitude and longitude or UTM coordinates.

A project area map is also required to accompany the form. The purpose of the map is to track the location of all proposed projects. The map must show the location of the proposed project, the Preliminary Habitat data, and should include any other relevant supporting information. The finished map should be exported as a PDF and named consistently with the name of the project for cross referencing. The project location information must be entered into the EGIS NEPA Project Geodatabase (located at “*T:\NV\GIS_Reference\NV_state_data_user.sde\ilmnvedt.ILMNVDDBO.NEPA*”) as directed in [NV IM 2011-030 “NEPA Project Geodatabase”](#). The attributes must be completely filled out and the data must be continually maintained to assist with tracking the status of the project. This data will be included in the annual BLM report to the FWS as required by WO-IM-2012-044 “*BLM National Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Planning Strategy*”.

The completed proposed activities form and PDF map are to be posted on the Sage-Grouse SharePoint. Go to: <https://partnerteamspace.blm.doi.net/sites-nv/nvrp/Sage/default.aspx> and then go to “*Shared Documents*” on the left, and then to the “*Proposed Activities within GSG Habitat*” folder. Districts should create a new project folder in the appropriate District folder, and give it the name of the project in order to maintain consistency. A SharePoint alert will notify Joe Tague (Branch Chief, Renewable Resources) and Sandra Brewer (Wildlife Program Lead) that a project form is available for review once the required documents have been uploaded. Joe and Sandra, along with the appropriate program lead(s), will review the forms and if necessary elevate to the State or Deputy State Director level. The State Director or Deputy State Director will then notify the District/Field Office of the outcome via email or phone call no later than 10 business days after submission of the form. Following Nevada State Office review, the completed proposed activity form and PDF map will be placed in the project folder in EGIS.

Activities that are denied or deferred at the District and Field Office levels should also be posted to the Sage-Grouse SharePoint location for inclusion in the annual report to FWS regarding activities affecting Sage-Grouse. The State Office does not intend to review these projects but will record them on our tracking sheet and post them to the EGIS project folder.

All new NEPA documents for projects will be developed and managed in the ePlanning system in accordance with NV IM 2011-058 "Deployment of ePlanning in Nevada".

Timeframe: This policy is effective immediately.

Budget Impact: The effect on the budget should be minimal as the policy helps provide a consistent approach across District/Field offices to managing a candidate species already analyzed in the RMP process.

Background: The WO BLM Office announced its national strategy for management of Greater Sage-Grouse. Two Interim Guidance Instruction Memoranda were also issued to provide WO policy on Interim Management Policies and Procedures, and Land Use Planning Strategy. Additional information about the Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy can be found on the National Sage-Grouse website at <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse.html>

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: No manuals or handbooks are affected.

Coordination: This IM was coordinated with NV BLM District Offices.

Contact: For form or content issues, contact Sandra Brewer, Natural Resource Specialist 775-861-6626 or sbrewer@blm.gov; for GIS questions, contact Mark O'Brien, GIS Specialist, 775-861-6440 or mobrien@blm.gov.

Signed by:
Marci Todd
Acting State Director

Authenticated by:
Edison Garcia
Staff Assistant

Attachment

1- [Proposed Activities in Sage-Grouse Preliminary Habitat Areas Form \(2 pp\)](#)