
Chapter I

Introduction

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directs the United States (US) Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop and periodically revise or amend its resource management plans (RMPs), which guide management of BLM-administered lands (for the purpose of this document, the term RMP applies to all BLM land use plans (LUPs), including BLM's older Management Framework Plans).

The National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA) directs the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (Forest Service) to develop and periodically revise or amend its land and resource management plans (LRMPs), which guide management of National Forest System lands. These two agencies' plans, including BLM's older Management Framework Plans, will be generically referred to as LUPs throughout the remainder of this document.

This initiative is the result of the March 2010, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) *12-Month Finding for Petitions to List the Greater Sage-Grouse (Centrocercus*

urophasianus) as Threatened or Endangered (75 Federal Register 13910, March 23, 2010). In that 12-Month Finding, the USFWS concluded that Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) was "warranted, but precluded" for listing as a threatened or endangered species. The USFWS reviewed the status and threats to the GRSG in relation to the five Listing Factors provided in Section 4(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA). Of the five Listing Factors reviewed, the USFWS determined that Factor A, "the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the habitat or range of the Greater Sage-Grouse," and Factor D, "the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms" posed "a significant threat to the Greater Sage-Grouse now and in the foreseeable future" (75 Federal Register 13910, March 23, 2010; emphasis added). The USFWS identified the principal regulatory mechanisms for the BLM and Forest Service as conservation measures in LUPs.

In response to the USFWS findings, the BLM and Forest Service are preparing LUP amendments (LUPAs) with associated environmental impact statements (EISs) to incorporate specific conservation measures across the range of the GRSG, consistent with national BLM and Forest Service policy. The planning strategy will evaluate the adequacy of BLM and Forest Service LUPs and address, as necessary, amendments throughout the range of the GRSG (with the exception of the bi-state population in California and Nevada and the Washington State distinct population segment, which will be addressed through other planning efforts). The BLM is the lead agency and the Forest Service is a cooperating agency in developing these EISs. These EISs have been coordinated under two administrative planning regions: the Rocky Mountain Region and the Great Basin Region. These regions are drawn roughly to correspond with the threats identified by the USFWS in the 2010 listing decision, along with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Management Zones (MZs) framework (National Sage-grouse Conservation Planning Framework Team, December 2006).

The Rocky Mountain Region comprises LUPs in the states of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, and portions of Utah. This region comprises the WAFWA MZs I (Great Plains), II (Wyoming Basin), and a portion of VII (Colorado Plateau). The USFWS has identified a number of threats in this region,

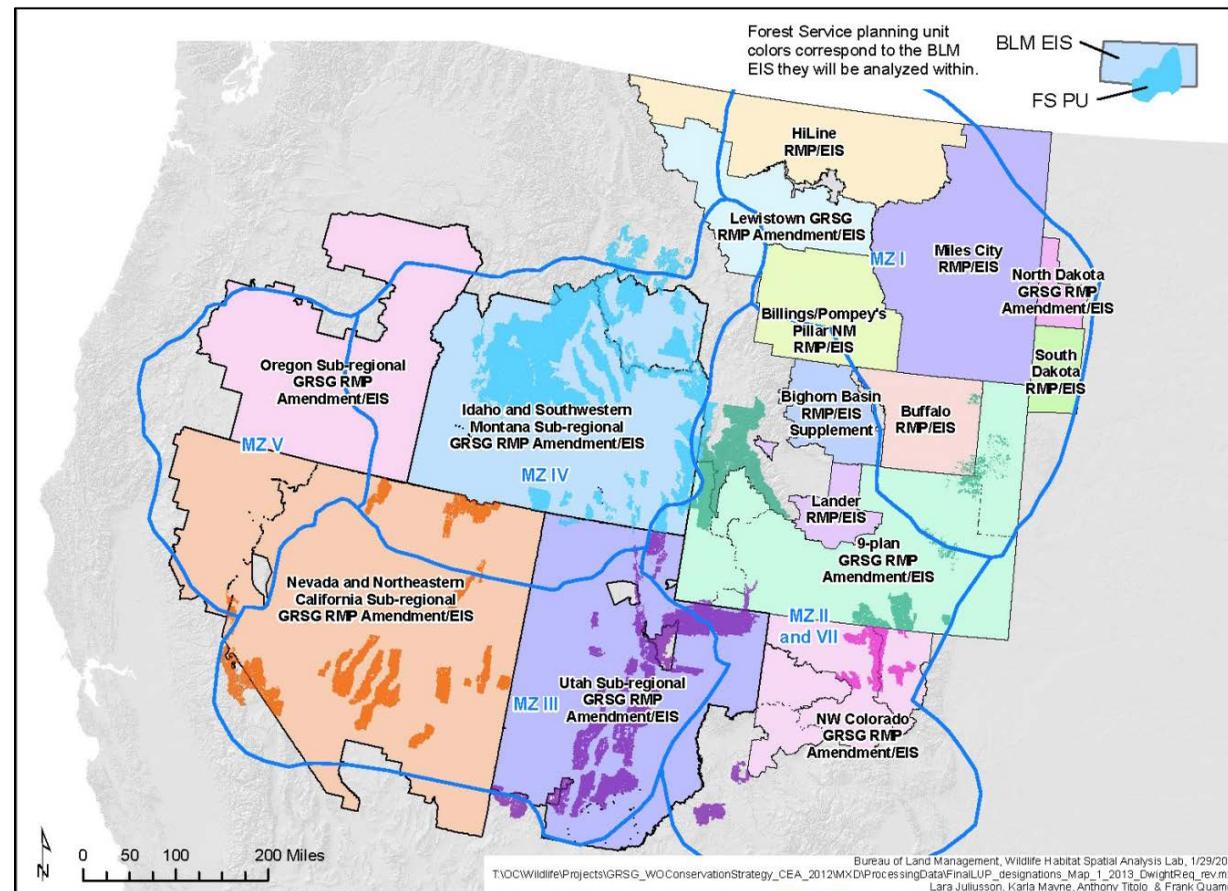
the major ones being habitat loss and fragmentation caused by development (e.g., oil and gas development, energy transmission, and wind energy development).

The Great Basin Region comprises LUPs in California, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, and portions of Utah and Montana. This region comprises the WAFWA MZs III (Southern Great Basin), IV (Snake River Plain), and V (Northern Great Basin). The USFWS has identified a number of threats in this region, the major ones being wildfire, loss of native habitat to invasive species, and habitat fragmentation.

Both the Rocky Mountain and Great Basin regions are further divided into sub-regions. This National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) analysis covers the Utah Sub-region. These sub-regions are generally based on the identified threats to the GRSG and the WAFWA MZs (see **Figure I.1** showing the sub-regional boundaries and WAFWA MZs).

On a sub-regional level, the BLM Utah State Office and Forest Service Intermountain Region (Region 4) are proposing to complete this Utah Sub-region LUPA/EIS to analyze the effects of amending up to 15 BLM RMPs and 6 Forest Service LRMPs in order to provide sub-region wide consistent management of GRSG habitat for all included BLM-administered and National Forest System lands. This Proposed LUPA would identify and incorporate appropriate regulatory mechanisms to conserve, enhance, and/or restore GRSG habitat, and would be designed to eliminate, reduce, or minimize threats to GRSG priority and general habitats on BLM-administered and National Forest System lands in the Utah Sub-region. This Proposed LUPA addresses both Listing Factors A and D (above) and are intended to provide consistency in the management of GRSG habitats across the Utah Sub-region on BLM-administered and National Forest System lands. The BLM and Forest Service intend to issue separate records of decision (RODs). The RODs, which will be issued in late 2015, are expected to offer sufficient evidence for the USFWS to consider preclusion of a potential listing for GRSG as a threatened or endangered species under the ESA.

Figure I.1
BLM and Forest Service GRSG Planning Strategy Sub-region/EIS Boundaries



The following BLM and Forest Service LUPs are proposed to be amended during this effort to incorporate appropriate conservation measures:

- Vernal Resource Management Plan (2008)
- Price Resource Management Plan (2008)
- Richfield Resource Management Plan (2008)
- Kanab Resource Management Plan (2008)
- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Management Plan (2000)
- Cedar/Beaver/Garfield/Antimony Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Pinyon Management Framework Plan (1978)
- Warm Springs Resource Management Plan (1987)
- House Range Resource Management Plan (1987)
- Pony Express Resource Management Plan (1990)
- Box Elder Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Randolph Management Framework Plan (1980)
- Park City Management Framework Plan (1975)
- Salt Lake District Isolated Tracts Planning Analysis (1985)
- Dixie National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Uinta National Forest Revised Forest Plan (2003)
- Wasatch-Cache National Forest Revised Forest Plan (2003)
- Ashley National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986)

This LUPA/EIS undertaking is one of fifteen planning efforts that are ongoing within the 11 western states that have GRSG occupied habitat. A goal of all such LUPAs is to ensure consistency across the sub-region, as well as across the range of the GRSG.

BLM Instruction Memorandum (IM) 2012-044 provides direction for considering GRSG conservation measures in the land use planning process. The IM requires that BLM consider conservation measures when revising or amending RMPs in GRSG habitat. The conservation measures that should be considered were developed by the Greater Sage-Grouse National Technical Team (NTT), a group of resource specialists, land use planners, and scientists from the BLM, state fish and wildlife agencies, the USFWS, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the US Geological Survey (USGS). The report drafted by the NTT, titled *A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures* (NTT 2011), provides the latest science and best biological judgment to assist in making management decisions relating to the GRSG. The IM requires that BLM consider all applicable conservation measures developed by the NTT when revising or amending its RMPs in GRSG habitat.

In many states or sub-regions, including portions of Wyoming that fall within the Utah Sub-region, prior to beginning or shortly after initiating the planning process, the BLM identified GRSG habitats as either preliminary priority habitat or preliminary general habitat. Preliminary priority habitat includes areas that have been identified as having the highest conservation value for maintaining sustainable GRSG populations. Preliminary general habitat includes areas of occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of preliminary priority habitat. Within Utah, the planning process was initiated using all Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)-mapped occupied habitat rather than preliminary priority habitat or preliminary general habitat. At that time, the BLM, Forest Service, USFWS, and the State of Utah did not reach agreement on which lands had the highest conservation value, or which lands were necessary to maintain or increase GRSG populations in the Utah Sub-region. While there is still debate on which lands are necessary to maintain or increase GRSG habitat, it should be recognized that not all mapped habitat is of

equal value. Habitat conditions, GRSG populations, and existing threats are discussed in detail in **Section 3.3**, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse.

On October 27, 2014, the USFWS provided the BLM and Forest Service a memorandum titled [Greater Sage-Grouse: Additional Recommendations to Refine Land Use Allocations in Highly Important Landscapes](#). This memorandum and associated maps identifies areas that represent recognized “strongholds” for GRSG that have been noted and referenced as having the highest densities of GRSG and other criteria important for the persistence of the species. The USFWS did recognize areas within the Utah Sub-region as “strongholds” for GRSG.

On November 21, 2014 the USGS published *Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage-Grouse—A Review* (Open File Report 2014-1239; Manier et al. 2014). The USGS review provided a compilation and summary of published scientific studies that evaluate the influence of anthropogenic activities and infrastructure on GRSG populations. The BLM has reviewed this information and examined how lek buffer-distances were addressed through land use allocations and other management actions in the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Draft LUPA/EIS. Based on this review, in undertaking agency management actions, and consistent with valid and existing rights and applicable law in authorizing third party actions, the BLM and Forest Service would apply the lek buffer-distances in the USGS Report *Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage Grouse—A Review* (Open File Report 2014-1239; Manier et al. 2014) in both PHMA and general habitat management areas (GHMA) as detailed in **Appendix F**, Applying Lek Buffer Distances.

I.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The BLM and Forest Service are preparing LUPAs with associated EISs for LUPs containing GRSG habitat. This effort responds to the USFWS’s March 2010 “warranted, but precluded” ESA listing petition decision. Inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms was identified as a significant threat in the USFWS finding on the petition to list the GRSG. Specifically, the USFWS found that current application of BLM and Forest Service regulatory authorities falls short of meeting the conservation needs of the species. The USFWS identified the principal regulatory

mechanisms for the BLM and the Forest Service as conservation measures embedded in LUPs. Changes in management of GRSG habitats are necessary to avoid the continued decline of populations that are anticipated across the species’ range. These plan amendments will focus on areas affected by threats to GRSG habitat, as identified by the USFWS in the March 2010 listing decision, the COT report (USFWS 2013a), and other documents.

The purpose for the LUPAs is to identify and incorporate appropriate conservation measures in LUPs to conserve, enhance and/or restore GRSG habitat by reducing, eliminating, or minimizing threats to that habitat. The BLM and Forest Service will consider such measures in the context of their multiple-use and sustained yield mandates under the FLPMA, the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act, and the NFMA.

Because the BLM and Forest Service administer a large portion of GRSG habitat within the affected states, changes in BLM and Forest Service management of GRSG habitats are anticipated to have a considerable impact on present and future GRSG populations and could reduce the need to list the species as threatened or endangered under the ESA.

I.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE UTAH SUB-REGION GREATER SAGE-GROUSE PLANNING AREA

I.3.1 Planning Area Overview

The planning area is the geographic area within which the BLM and Forest Service will make decisions during a planning effort. A planning area boundary includes all lands regardless of jurisdiction; however, the BLM and Forest Service only make decisions on lands that fall under their respective jurisdiction.

For the Utah Sub-region, the planning area includes all lands in Utah, minus Washington and San Juan counties and portions of the Sawtooth National Forest located in Box Elder County. Public lands in Washington and San Juan Counties are administered by the BLM St. George and Monticello Field Offices. These offices do not manage any public lands with GRSG habitat. Therefore, no plan amendments are

required. Although the Sawtooth National Forest includes GRSG habitat, the majority of the Sawtooth National Forest is located in Idaho. Therefore, amendments to the Sawtooth National Forest Plan are being considered in the Idaho/Montana Sub-region planning process. In addition to lands in Utah, the Utah Sub-region planning area also includes portions of the Ashley and Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests that extend into the State of Wyoming. In total, there are 48,209,900 acres in the planning area.

The Utah Sub-region planning area is nearly equally divided between the Rocky Mountain Region and the Great Basin Region. As discussed above, the major USFWS threats in this the Rocky Mountain Region is habitat loss and fragmentation caused by development (e.g., oil and gas development, energy transmission, and wind energy development). Within the Great Basin Region major threats include wildfire, loss of native habitat to invasive species, and habitat fragmentation. GRSG habitat in the Utah Sub-region overlaps four WAFWA MZs including: MZ II – Wyoming Basins, MZ III – Southern Great Basin, MZ IV – Snake River Plain, and MZ VII – Colorado Plateau (see **Map 3.3-2**).

The decision area includes all GRSG mapped occupied habitat lands within the planning area for which the BLM and Forest Service have authority to make management decisions. The BLM and Forest Service have jurisdiction over all BLM-administered and National Forest System lands, respectively. In addition the BLM has jurisdiction over federal minerals on National Forest System lands and in some areas where the surface is owned by a non-federal entity. For the purpose of this planning process lands with federal mineral interests refers to areas with state, private, or tribal surface estate with federal mineral estate. In total, there are 4,008,600 acres in the decision area. Tribal surface estate with Tribal mineral estate is not considered part of the decision area.

1.3.2 Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Classifications

Within the planning area, there are numerous areas with GRSG habitat. These areas are non-contiguous, meaning they are often separated by natural geographic features/barriers or human development (**Map 1.1**).

The State of Utah developed a *Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-grouse* (Utah Greater Sage-grouse Working Group 2013), which included provisions necessary to address threats to the species and the need for a listing under the ESA. The Conservation Plan focuses on eleven mapped Sage-Grouse Management Areas (SGMAs; see **Maps 2.4** and **2.7**). The Conservation Plan classified these as the best opportunity for high-value, focused conservation efforts for the species in Utah and they encompass the highest GRSG breeding density areas, which support greater than 90 percent of the Utah aggregate population of GRSG.

The USFWS also identify, in their *Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Objectives: Final Report* (COT report) (USFWS 2013a), the areas needed for maintaining GRSG representation, redundancy, and resilience across the landscape. These areas are hereafter referred to as priority areas for conservation (PACs) and are modeled after and identical to the UDWR SGMAs. SGMAs/PACs do not represent individual populations, but rather key areas that states have identified as crucial to ensure adequate representation, redundancy, and resilience for conservation of its associated population or populations. The COT report also noted that some areas were not included as PACs and may still have great potential for providing important habitat if active habitat management is implemented. The COT report acknowledges boundary concerns of PACs identified in that report and provides for the amendment of PAC boundaries as discrepancies are resolved. Successful habitat management efforts could increase connectivity between PACs, and will enhance management flexibility in conserving the species.

Because of the disconnected nature of the habitat, for the purposes of this planning process, the BLM and Forest Service have placed all mapped occupied GRSG habitat into 1 of 15 GRSG population areas (13 located in Utah, 2 located in Wyoming). The population areas are shown on **Map 1.2**. The concept of population areas was developed to improve the organization and structure of this document. Using the population area concept, the BLM and Forest Service are able to discuss differences in habitat, threats, and impacts in different sections of the planning area by simply referencing a population area.

The population area boundaries were drawn to include all UDWR mapped occupied GRSG habitat in Utah plus areas within 5 miles of occupied leks. The boundaries are also large enough to include areas that are not considered GRSG habitat but have been identified as lands that could provide important connectivity or facilitate the movement of GRSG between habitats.

In total, there are approximately 11,536,000 acres (all ownership) within GRSG population areas. Although the boundaries of population areas were drawn using some biological considerations it is important to note that they are not intended to reflect distinct populations. The names of the population areas are as follows:

- Uintah
- Carbon
- Emery
- Parker Mountain
- Panguitch
- Bald Hills
- Hamlin Valley
- Sheeprocks
- Ibapah
- Box Elder
- Rich
- Strawberry
- Lucerne
- Wyoming - Uinta
- Wyoming - Blacks Fork

Table 1.1 shows the amount of mapped occupied GRSG habitat located in each population area. Within this table, mapped occupied habitat is divided by land ownership. This table also shows the amount of non-federal land with federal mineral interests in each population area. **Table 1.2** shows the amount of mapped occupied habitat in each county. In addition, this table shows the administrative unit responsible for management of federal lands in each population area.

Through this land use planning process, the BLM and Forest Service will identify PHMA and GHMA. This process proposes and analyzes allocations and actions within PHMA to conserve GRSG habitat functionality, and, where appropriate,

proposes actions within GHMA that provide for major life history function (e.g., breeding, migration, or winter survival) to maintain genetic diversity.

PHMA is BLM-administered and National Forest System land identified to be managed as having the highest conservation value for maintaining sustainable GRSG populations. GHMA is BLM-administered and National Forest System land identified requiring special management to sustain GRSG populations, but that are not as important as PHMA. Given the naturally fragmented nature of GRSG habitat and populations throughout the planning area, the BLM and Forest Service strategy, when defining PHMA, was to follow the lead of the State of Utah and focus on the identification of areas that encapsulated entire GRSG populations rather than delineating PHMA using strict habitat mapping that would encourage further fragmentation. With this approach, the BLM and Forest Service sought to manage landscapes for GRSG. PHMA and GHMA are within and extend beyond the PAC boundaries identified by the USFWS.

PHMA and GHMA provide a range of habitat quality and types (including non-habitat), and provide the opportunity for BLM and Forest Service to improve and increase habitat where available. The boundaries of these management areas are modified in extent based on the objectives of each alternative. Likewise, management strategies applied to PHMA and GHMA vary by alternative.

Throughout the GRSG conservation effort, many terms and acronyms related to GRSG habitat have been used. The following list identifies some of the common habitat terminology and its relationship to this BLM and Forest Service planning process:

- **Mapped Occupied Habitat:** Areas mapped by the UDWR within known populations of GRSG. This information provides the baseline for comparison for much of this EIS. This information does not consider managerial considerations or prioritizations related to relative habitat value or conservation potential.

Table I.1
Acres of Greater Sage-Grouse Mapped Occupied Habitat by Land Ownership

Population Area Name	Total Mapped Occupied Habitat	BLM Surface	Forest Service Surface	Private Land		Tribal Land		SITLA Land		Other State Lands ²		Other Federal Lands ³		Total Decision Area ⁴
				Total	Federal Mineral Interest ¹	Total	Federal Mineral Interest	Total	Federal Mineral Interest	Total	Federal Mineral Interest	Total	Federal Mineral Interest	
Bald Hills	347,900	267,500	0	49,700	6,400	0	0	30,600	150	130	0	0	0	274,050
Box Elder	1,020,900	413,100	0	552,400	96,300	0	0	55,400	5,400	0	0	0	0	514,800
Carbon	497,800	125,100	49,700	257,300	108,800	6,900	0	31,200	14,500	27,600	9,770	0	0	307,870
Emery	96,200	100	87,600	8,000	5,300	0	0	500	0	0	0	0	0	93,000
Hamlin Valley	143,200	101,000	0	24,000	6,200	0	0	13,300	330	4,900	0	0	0	107,530
Ibapah	85,200	57,100	0	8,400	540	15,400	130	4,300	0	0	0	0	0	57,770
Lucerne	37,600	0	2,300	23,000	8,700	0	0	12,300	500	0	0	0	0	11,500
Panguitch	343,900	163,000	58,600	91,100	18,900	0	0	30,200	12,400	990	0	0	0	252,900
Parker Mountain	792,500	226,200	305,600	88,800	12,800	770	0	169,500	68,700	740	0	910	0	613,300
Rich	1,226,000	166,200	15,200	954,100	134,000	0	0	44,600	550	45,500	7,300	410	0	323,250
Sheeprocks	836,300	423,500	92,400	206,900	36,000	0	0	74,100	4,200	680	0	38,700	1,900	556,100
Strawberry	181,300	0	40,200	79,800	480	1,200	0	14,500	0	45,600	0	0	0	40,680
Uintah	1,557,300	556,600	86,000	375,000	72,800	368,800	43,200	142,700	17,300	15,900	3,130	12,300	870	779,030
Wyoming-Blacks Fork	54,800	0	54,800	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	54,800
Wyoming-Uinta	22,000	0	22,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22,000
TOTAL	7,242,900	2,499,400	814,400	2,700,300	507,220	393,070	43,330	623,200	124,030	142,040	20,200	52,320	2,770	4,008,580

¹The acres of federal minerals presented in this table are a subset of the acres included in the total column.

²Other State lands include Division of Wildlife Resources, State Parks, and Forestry, Fire and State Lands.

³Other federal lands include National Park, USFWS, Bureau of Reclamation, and Department of Defense lands. These lands are not included in the decision area.

⁴Decision area includes BLM and Forest Service surface and split-estate lands.

**Table 1.2
Mapped Occupied Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat by County**

Population Area Name	County	Acres of Mapped Occupied Habitat	Administrative Unit	Population Area Name	County	Acres of Mapped Occupied Habitat	Administrative Unit
Bald Hills	Beaver	107,100	Cedar City Field Office	Parker Mountain	Sevier	152,800	Richfield Field Office, Kanab Field Office, Fishlake National Forest, Dixie National Forest
	Iron	240,830			Piute	128,200	
Box Elder	Box Elder	1,020,900	Salt Lake Field Office		Wayne	235,100	
Carbon	Duchesne	86,500	Vernal Field Office, Price Field Office, Ashley National Forest		Garfield	276,400	
	Carbon	282,700		Cache	54,700		
	Sanpete	73,100		Wasatch	60,800		
	Emery	900		Morgan	166,400		
	Wasatch	1,900		Rich	576,400		
Emery	Utah	52,700	Manti-La Sal National Forest, Fishlake National Forest	Weber	21,700	Salt Lake Field Office, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest	
	Carbon	700		Summit	346,000		
	Sevier	16,600		Sheeprocks	Juab		330,800
	Emery	67,500			Tooele		502,100
Hamlin Valley	Sanpete	11,400	Cedar City Field Office	Utah	3,380	Salt Lake Field Office, Fillmore Field Office, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest	
	Beaver	85,900		Wasatch	83,400		
Ibapah	Iron	57,300	Salt Lake Field Office, Fillmore Field Office	Duchesne	97,900	Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest	
	Tooele	71,100		Uintah	Uintah		1,028,000
Lucerne	Juab	14,100	Ashley National Forest		Duchesne	292,500	
	Daggett	24,200			Daggett	111,500	
Panguitch	Summit	13,400	Cedar City Field Office, Kanab Field Office, Dixie National Forest, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument		Grand	125,300	Vernal Field Office, Ashley National Forest
	Garfield	217,000		Wyoming-Blacks Fork	Sweetwater (Wyoming)	54,800	
	Beaver	10,690		Wyoming-Uinta	Uinta (Wyoming)	22,000	
	Kane	51,900			Forest		
Iron	64,300	Forest					

- PPH/PGH (Preliminary Priority Habitat/Preliminary General Habitat): These terms were initially instituted for BLM IM 2012-043 to be applied for interim GRSG management while the planning efforts were conducted. These were used at the beginning of the current planning effort, but were abandoned due to concerns with confusion between terminologies used for interim management compared to planning decisions.
- PPMA/PGMA (Preliminary Priority Management Areas/Preliminary General Management Areas): These terms were used in the Draft EIS to describe the relative prioritization of areas for GRSG conservation. These are BLM and Forest Service terms used to differentiate the degree of managerial emphasis a given area would have relative to GRSG.
- PHMA/GHMA (Priority Habitat Management Areas/General Habitat Management Areas): Similar to PPMA/PGMA used in the DEIS, these terms are used in this Final EIS to describe the relative prioritization of areas for GRSG conservation and the associated degree of managerial emphasis relative to GRSG. As the BLM and Forest Service move from a Draft EIS to a Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, such prioritizations would necessarily no longer be “preliminary” in nature.
- SGMA (Sage-Grouse Management Area): Areas designated by the State of Utah in the Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-Grouse in Utah. In their plan, the State notes that “the SGMAs represent the best opportunity for high-value, focused conservation efforts for [GRSG] in Utah.” Within these areas, the State identified areas of habitat, non-habitat, and opportunity areas, though management was focused on areas of habitat. The BLM and Forest Service incorporated the SGMAs into Alternative EI in this EIS.
- PAC (priority area for conservation): USFWS designation, defined in their COT report as the “most important areas needed for maintaining sage-grouse representation, redundancy, and resilience across the

landscape.” For Utah, these areas are based entirely on the State’s SGMAs. Because they are the same as the State’s SGMAs, they are considered in the EIS under Alternative EI.

- SFA (sagebrush focal areas): As described above, these are based on October 2014 memorandum from the USFWS to the BLM and Forest Service that identified additional “highly important landscapes” for GRSG. These areas have been incorporated into the Proposed Plans as a sub-set of PHMA.

1.3.3 Regional Context

Public lands are undergoing complex environmental challenges that go beyond traditional management boundaries. In response, the BLM is instituting a landscape-scale management approach which evaluates large areas to better understand the ecological values, human influences, and opportunities for resource conservation. This approach frequently allows identification of environmental changes that might not be apparent in smaller areas.

The BLM’s landscape approach includes rapid ecoregional assessments which provide a framework for integrating science and management. Rapid ecoregional assessments evaluate landscape scale ecoregions, which are large areas with similar environmental characteristics. The BLM has initiated fourteen rapid ecoregional assessments since 2010.

Rapid ecoregional assessments synthesize the best available information to examine ecological values, conditions, and trends within an ecoregion. Assessments of these larger areas provide land managers additional information and tools to use in subsequent resource planning and decision-making. Rapid ecoregional assessments describe and map conservation elements, which are areas of high ecological value, identify areas that have integrity or are ecologically intact, then gauge the potential for overarching environmental change from variables such as climate, wildfires, invasive species, and development (both energy development and urban growth).

The Utah Sub-region planning area falls within four different rapid ecoregional assessments (**Map 1.3**). The majority of the mapped occupied GRSG habitat in the planning area is located in the Central Basin and Range and the Colorado Plateau ecoregions. A small portion of the Uintah Population Area as well as all of the Lucerne, Wyoming-Uinta, and Wyoming-Blacks Fork population areas are located within the Wyoming Basin ecoregion. Finally, a diminutive portion of the Box Elder Population Area falls within the Northern Great Basin ecoregion.

Some GRSG mapped occupied habitat located in the planning area, including some of the mapped occupied habitat located in the Rich, Carbon, Emery, Strawberry, Parker, and Panguitch population areas does fall within one of the aforementioned rapid ecoregional assessments. Mapped occupied GRSG habitat within these population areas generally extends from north to south and is aligned to a certain extent in the center of Utah. Mapped occupied GRSG habitat in abovementioned population areas that does not fall within one of the aforementioned ecoregions falls within either the Middle Rocky Mountains physiographic province on one of Utah's high plateaus located in the Central Basin and Colorado Plateau transitional zone.

Where completed rapid ecoregional assessments cover GRSG habitat in the planning area, they will be used to inform and enhance the quality of resource management and environmental analysis.

I.4 LAND USES

Land uses occurring within GRSG habitat in the Utah Sub-region include: energy (non-renewable renewable) and mineral development (e.g., hardrock mining); travel management and recreation, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use; livestock grazing; and rights-of-way (ROWs) authorizations for roads, pipelines, power lines, and communication sites. Public lands within GRSG habitat are generally open, with a few exceptions, to all the above-mentioned uses.

These uses occur throughout the planning area to varying degrees. For example, oil and gas development primarily occurs in the Uintah, Carbon, and Emery population areas. Livestock grazing occurs throughout the sub-region as do recreation, OHV use and various ROW authorizations.

I.5 PLANNING PROCESSES

I.5.1 BLM Planning Process

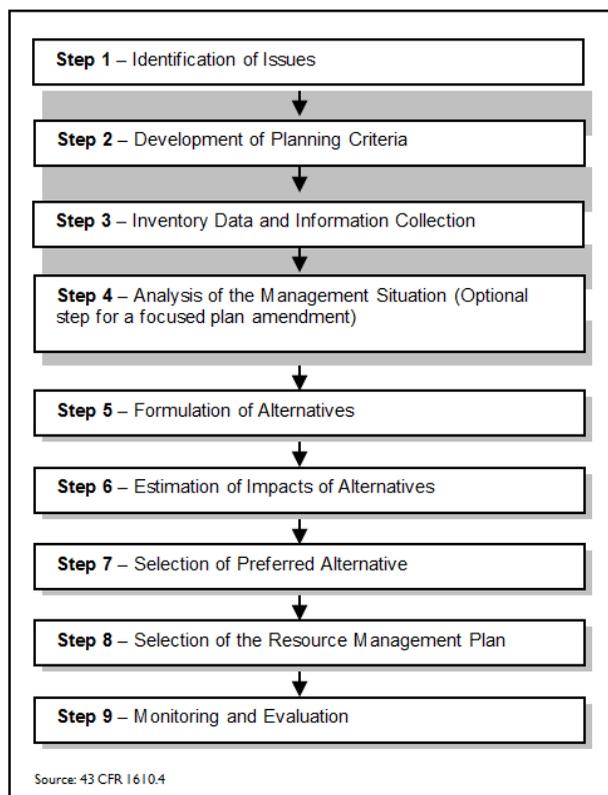
FLPMA requires the BLM to use RMPs as tools by which "present and future use is projected" (43 US Code (USC) 1701(a)(2)). FLPMA's implementing regulations for planning (43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1600), state that LUPs are a preliminary step in the overall process of managing public lands, "designed to guide and control future management actions and the development of subsequent, more detailed and limited scope plans for resources and uses" (43 CFR Part 1601.0-2). Public participation and input are important components of land-use planning.

Under BLM regulations, an RMP revision or major amendment of an existing plan is a major federal action requiring disclosure and documentation of environmental effects as described in the NEPA. Thus, this EIS accompanies the amendment of the existing RMPs. This EIS analyzes the impacts of five alternatives, including the No Action Alternative.

The BLM uses a nine-step planning process (**Figure 1.2**) to develop or revise RMPs (43 CFR Part 1600 and planning program guidance in the BLM Handbook H-1601-1, *Land Use Planning Handbook*). The planning process is designed to help the BLM identify the uses of BLM-administered lands desired by the public and to consider these uses to the extent they are consistent with the laws established by Congress and the policies of the executive branch of the federal government.

Once an RMP is approved, it may be changed through amendment. An amendment can be initiated in response to monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, a change in circumstances or a proposed action that may result in a change in the scope of resource uses or a change in the terms, conditions, and decisions of the approved plan. If the BLM decides to prepare an EIS, the amending process shall follow the same procedure required for preparation and approval of the plan, but the focus shall be limited to that portion of the plan being amended (43 CFR Part 1610.5-5).

Figure 1.2
Nine-step Planning Process



As depicted in **Figure 1.2** the planning process is issue-driven (Step 1). The planning process is undertaken to resolve management issues and problems as well as to take advantage of management opportunities. The BLM utilizes the public scoping process to identify planning issues to direct a revision or amendment of an existing plan. The scoping process also is used to introduce the public to preliminary planning criteria, which set the parameters or “sideboards” for conducting the planning process (Step 2). The BLM uses existing data from files and other sources and collects new data to address planning issues and to fill data gaps identified during

public scoping (Step 3). Using these data, information concerning the resource management programs, and the planning criteria, the BLM completes an analysis of the management situation (Step 4) to describe current management and develop or inform the affected environment portion of the RMP. Typically, the analysis of the management situation is conducted at the outset of planning for an entire RMP or RMP revision and is incorporated by reference into development of a single focus plan amendment. In this case, direction for the plan amendment is provided through new national policy (BLM IM 2012-044). The affected environment is also incorporated by reference into the amendment and updated with new information to the degree necessary to set the context for the analysis in the accompanying EIS.

Results of the first four steps of the planning process clarify the purpose and need and identify key planning issues that need to be addressed by the amendment. Key planning issues reflect the focus of the RMP amendment and are described in more detail in **Section 1.6.2**, Issues Identified for Consideration in the Utah Sub-region Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Plan Amendments. Alternatives constitute a range of management actions that set forth different priorities and measures to emphasize certain uses or resource values over other uses or resource values (usually representing a continuum from extraction and development to preservation/conservation) pursuant to the multiple-use and sustained yield mandate, so as to achieve certain goals or objectives consistent with the purpose and need. During alternative formulation (Step 5), the BLM collaborates with cooperating agencies to identify goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resources and resource uses within the planning area. The alternatives represent a range of reasonable planning strategies for managing resources and resource uses. **Chapter 2** of this document, Alternatives, describes and summarizes the Proposed Plans, the Preferred Alternative, and the other draft alternatives considered in detail.

This LUPA/EIS also includes an analysis of the impacts of the draft alternatives in **Chapter 4**, Environmental Consequences (Step 6). With input from cooperating agencies and BLM specialists, and consideration of planning issues, planning criteria, and the impacts of alternatives, the BLM identified and recommended a Preferred

Alternative from among the alternatives presented in the EIS (Step 7). This was documented in the Draft LUPA/EIS, which was then distributed for a 90-day public review and comment period.

Step 8 of the land use planning process occurs following receipt and consideration of public comments on the Draft LUPA/EIS. In preparing the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, the BLM considered all comments received during the public comment period. The Proposed Plans were crafted from the draft alternatives.

Step 9 is the monitoring and evaluation process. Monitoring is the repeated measurement of activities and conditions over time. Evaluation is a process in which the plan and monitoring data are reviewed to see if management goals and objectives are being met and if management direction is sound. Monitoring data gathered over time are examined and used to draw conclusions on whether management actions are meeting stated objectives, and if not, why. Conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management or what changes need to be made in management practices to meet objectives.

The two types of monitoring that are tied to the planning process include implementation and effectiveness monitoring. Land use plan monitoring is the process of tracking the implementation of land use planning decisions and collecting and assessing information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of land use planning decisions. The two types of monitoring are described below.

Implementation Monitoring: Implementation monitoring is the most basic type of monitoring and simply determines whether planned activities have been implemented in the manner prescribed by the plan. Some agencies call this compliance monitoring. This monitoring documents the BLM's progress toward full implementation of the LUP decision. There are no specific thresholds or indicators required for this type of monitoring.

Effectiveness Monitoring: Effectiveness monitoring is aimed at determining if the implementation of activities has achieved the desired goals and objectives. Effectiveness monitoring asks the question: Was the specified activity successful in

achieving the objective? This requires knowledge of the objectives established in the LUP as well as indicators that can be measured. Indicators are established by technical specialists in order to address specific questions, and thus to focus on collection of only necessary data. Success is measured against the benchmark of achieving desired future conditions established by the plan.

Regulations at 43 CFR Part 1610.4-9 require that the proposed plan establish intervals and standards, as appropriate, for monitoring and evaluation of the plan, based on the sensitivity of the resource decisions involved. Progress in meeting the plan objectives and adherence to the management framework established by the plan is reviewed periodically. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA state that agencies may provide for monitoring to assure that their decisions are carried out and should do so in important cases (40 CFR Part 1505.2(c)). To meet these requirements, the BLM will review the plan on a regular schedule in order to provide consistent tracking of accomplishments and provide information that can be used to develop annual budget requests to continue implementation.

Land use plan evaluations will be used by BLM to determine if the decisions in the LUP, supported by the accompanying NEPA analysis, are still valid. Evaluation of the LUP will generally be conducted every five years per BLM policy, unless unexpected actions, new information, or significant changes in other plans, legislation, or litigation triggers an evaluation. Land use plan evaluations determine if decisions are being implemented, whether mitigation measures are satisfactory, whether there are significant changes in the related plans of other entities, whether there are new data of significance to the plan, and if decisions should be changed through amendment or revision. Evaluations will follow the protocols established by the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1 in effect at the time the evaluation is initiated. Specific monitoring and evaluation needs are identified by resource/uses throughout **Chapter 2**.

1.5.2 Forest Service Planning Process

The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 as amended by the NFMA requires the Forest Service to develop, maintain and, as appropriate, revise LRMPs for units of the National Forest System using a systematic interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences. Consistent with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (16 USC 528-531) the overall goal of managing the National Forest System is to sustain the multiple uses of its renewable resources in perpetuity while maintaining the long term productivity of the land. LRMPs provide broad guidance and information for project and activity decision-making. In particular, LRMPs coordinate outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish, and wilderness. Public participation and input are important components of land-use planning.

The process of amending a LRMP is outlined in 36 CFR 219. The current version of this regulation states that plan amendments that were initiated before May 9, 2015, may be developed in conformance with the provisions of the prior planning regulation. Therefore, the LRMP amendments in this document were developed according to direction in the 1982 version of the CFR 25 219. An LRMP includes plan components, proposed and possible actions, the monitoring program, and maps. The objectives of LRMPs are:

1. Establishment of Forest-wide or Grassland-wide Multiple Use Goals and Objectives, including Desired Conditions.
2. Establishment of Forest-wide or Grassland-wide Management Requirements, including standards and guidelines.
3. Establishment of Management Area direction, including prescriptions and associated standards and guidelines.
4. Identification of lands suitable or unsuitable for various uses.
5. Recommendations for any Wilderness, Wild-Scenic, or other designated areas.

6. Establishment of requirements for monitoring and evaluation.

LRMPs are never “completed,” or “final,” as the NFMA requires plans to be maintained, amended and revised. Adaptive management requires ongoing adjustment of goals, objectives, management area prescriptions standards, and guidelines constraining land uses. An amendment can be started in response to monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, a change in circumstances or because approval of a project or activity is dependent on a change in the forest plan such that the approved project or activity is consistent with the forest plan. Plan revisions and amendments are part of the collaborative and adaptive cycle of planning, which includes plan development; plan implementation; plan monitoring, inventory and assessment; and plan review and evaluation.

The Responsible Official may amend a plan in response to the need for change. For this amendment the process involves eight steps:

- Public notice for initiating plan amendment
- Consideration of need for change
- Documentation of affected environment and environmental consequences in an EIS
- Development of the proposed plan amendment
- Public notice for proposed plan amendment, draft EIS, and 90-day comment period
- Response to comments
- Public notice of the beginning of the 60-day objection period before approval and availability of the plan amendment, EIS, and draft plan decision document
- Upon resolution of the objection (36 CFR 219 subpart B), approval of the plan by the responsible official

Because the Forest Service is a cooperating agency and thus a participant in the multi-federal agency effort, the responsible officials for the Forest Service have waived the objection procedures of 36 CFR 219 Subpart B and adopt the administrative review procedure of the BLM, as provided for by 36 CFR 219.59(a). This is in agreement with the responsible officials of the BLM. A joint agency response will be provided to those who file for administrative review of this effort.

Under Forest Service regulations, a forest plan revision or amendment of an existing plan is a federal action requiring appropriate NEPA documentation. Thus, this EIS accompanies the amendments of the Uinta National Forest Revised Forest Plan (2003), the Dixie National Forest LRMP (1986), the Fishlake National Forest LRMP (1986), the Ashley National Forest Plan (1986), the Manti La-Sal National Forest (1986) and the Wasatch-Cache National Forest Plan (2003). This EIS analyzes the impacts of various alternatives for the plan amendment, including the no action alternative.

On National Forest System lands, activity-level decisions regarding the leasing of minerals resources such as oil and gas and geothermal may be made outside of, and subsequent to, the LUP process. Regulations at 36 CFR Part 228.102 require the Forest Service to decide which National Forest System lands are administratively available for oil and gas leasing. The Forest Service decision also includes necessary lease stipulations to protect surface resources. The Forest Service does not have regulations that address geothermal leasing, but the agency follows a process similar to oil and gas in that it conducts an analysis of leasing National Forest System lands and makes a decision that is consistent with, but independent of the LUP. An example of how Forest Service planning decisions crosswalk with BLM planning decisions is included in Appendix B of the Draft LUPA/EIS (Draft Forest Service Standards and Guidelines for the GRSG Amendments to the LRMPs in Utah for the Preferred Alternative – Alternative D).

I.6 SCOPING AND IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRAFT ALTERNATIVES

I.6.1 The Scoping Process

Scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope, or range, of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues to consider in the planning process. Scoping identifies the interested public and agency concerns, defines the relevant issues and alternatives that will be examined in detail in the EIS, and eliminates those that are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review (Sec. 1506.3). A planning issue is defined by the BLM as a major controversy or dispute regarding management or uses on public lands that can be addressed through a range of alternatives. The environmental impacts of these alternative management scenarios are analyzed and addressed in the Draft EIS.

A public scoping period was initiated on December 9, 2011 with the publication of a notice of intent (NOI) to begin a planning effort in the Federal Register. Scoping is designed to be consistent with the public involvement requirements of FLPMA, NFMA, and NEPA. The collaborative process included soliciting input from interested and affected state and local governments, tribal governments, other federal agencies and organizations, and individuals, to identify the scope of issues to be addressed in the plan amendment, and to assist in the formulation of reasonable alternatives. The scoping process is an excellent method for opening dialogue between the BLM, Forest Service, and the general public about management of GRSG and their habitats on public lands and for identifying the concerns of those who have an interest in and in GRSG habitats. As part of the scoping process, the BLM also requested that the public submit nominations for potential areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) for GRSG and their habitats.

The scoping period for the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS began on December 9, 2011. It was extended through a Notice of Correction published February 10, 2012, and ended on March 23, 2012. Scoping included open-house meetings in Price, Vernal, Salt Lake City, Randolph, Snowville, Richfield, Kanab, and Cedar City, Utah. In addition, news releases were used to notify the public

regarding the scoping period and the planning process and to invite the public to provide written comments from many sources including via email, fax, and regular mail. Comments obtained from the public during the scoping period were used to define the relevant issues that would be addressed by a range of reasonable alternatives.

For the Utah Sub-region LUPA/EIS, scoping comments received from the public were placed in one of three categories:

1. Issues identified for consideration in the Utah Sub-region LUPA/EIS;
2. Issues to be addressed through policy or administrative action (and therefore not addressed in the LUPA/EIS);
3. Issues considered but not analyzed further because they are beyond the scope of the LUPA/EIS (and therefore not addressed in the LUPA/EIS).

Some important issues to be addressed in the Draft LUPA/EIS were identified by the public and the agencies during the scoping process for the statewide planning effort. The Final Scoping Summary, prepared in conjunction with these LUPAs, summarizes the scoping process. This report is available at: http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse/documents_and_resources.html.

1.6.2 Issues Identified for Consideration in the Utah Sub-region Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Plan Amendments

During the scoping process, the BLM and Forest Service received comments from members of the public and various public, governmental and non-governmental groups. This feedback along with internal assessment and concerns described in the 2010 Finding have been compiled to describe issues and analysis concerns that are discussed in this document. During and following the scoping period, individual comments received were evaluated to determine whether they constituted issues relevant to this planning process. Planning issues are defined as concerns regarding the effects the proposed action has on resources or other values. Planning issues can drive the development of an alternative, may involve resources that are adversely affected by the proposed action, or involve unresolved conflicts regarding

alternative uses of available resources. Planning issues provide focus for the analysis and are used to compare and contrast the environmental effects of the alternatives. Relevant planning issues discussed in this LUPA/EIS are included below.

Greater Sage-Grouse

- How will the BLM and Forest Service use the best available science to designate priority, general, or other habitat designations?
- How will the BLM and Forest Service accurately monitor the impact of land uses on GRSG?
- What level of protection will be given to priority, general, or other habitat designations?
- What existing conservation measures will be incorporated into the planning process?
- How will regional differences in GRSG habitat requirements and conditions be addressed in the planning process?
- What limitation, if any, will be put in place for GRSG habitat cumulative disturbance?

Air Quality

- What will be the impact of GRSG management on air quality?

Climate Change

- How will the BLM and Forest Service address the impacts of changing climate on GRSG habitat?

Soil Resources

- How will soils be managed to maintain or improve GRSG habitat?

Water Resources

- How will water resources be managed to maintain or improve GRSG habitat while limiting impacts on other resources or resource uses?

Vegetation (Including Noxious Weeds; Riparian and Wetland Ecosystems)

- How will the BLM and Forest Service conserve, enhance, or restore GRSG habitat such as sagebrush communities and minimize or prevent the introduction or spread of noxious weeds and invasive species?
- How will noxious weeds and invasive species be managed to limit impacts on GRSG habitat?
- How will sage-scrub habitat be restored and managed to provide necessary habitat components for the GRSG?
- How will riparian areas and wet meadows be managed to maintain or improve GRSG habitat while limiting impacts on other resources or resource uses?

Other Special Status Species

- What will be the impact of GRSG management decisions on other special status species?

Fish and Wildlife

- What measures will be put in place to manage habitat for other wildlife species and reduce conflicts with GRSG?
- How will the BLM and Forest Service work with wildlife management agencies in order to manage and mitigate impacts of other wildlife (e.g., predators and competitors for habitat and food) on GRSG?
- How will the BLM and Forest Service manage GRSG habitat for the protection of other sagebrush obligate species?

Wild Horse and Burro Management

- What measures would the BLM and Forest Service put in place to reduce the impacts of wild horses and burros on GRSG habitat?

Cultural Resources

- What will be the impact of GRSG management on cultural resources?

Visual Resources

- What will be the impact of GRSG management on visual resources?

Wildland Fire Ecology and Management

- What measures should be undertaken to manage fuels and wildland fires, while protecting GRSG habitat?
- How will wildland fire be managed to maintain adequate GRSG habitat?
- What restrictions will be put in place on prescribed fire or fuels treatments in GRSG habitats?

Wilderness Characteristics

- What will be the impact of GRSG management on wilderness characteristics?

Range Management

- What measures will the BLM and Forest Service put in place to protect and improve GRSG habitat while maintaining grazing privileges?
- How will livestock grazing be managed in GRSG and GRSG habitat?
- How will infrastructure associated with grazing, including fences, range improvements, and water developments, be managed?
- How will the BLM and Forest Service manage livestock grazing on public lands to protect GRSG while allowing ranchers to maintain their livelihoods and contribution to the local economy?
- How would livestock grazing be impacted by GRSG management?

Recreation

- How will motorized, non-motorized, and mechanized recreation be managed in GRSG and GRSG habitat?
- What measures can be undertaken to minimize the impacts of recreation, including motorized recreation on GRSG and GRSG habitat?

Travel Management

- How will motorized, non-motorized, and mechanized travel be managed to provide access to federal lands and a variety of recreation opportunities while protecting GRSG and GRSG habitat?

Lands and Realty

- What opportunities exist to adjust public land ownership to improve management efficiency for GRSG and GRSG habitat?
- What measures can be undertaken to encourage protection of GRSG and GRSG habitat on adjacent non-federal lands while protecting land owners rights?
- How can federal lands be transferred, exchanged, or otherwise consolidated to conserve GRSG habitat?

Renewable Energy

- How should renewable energy development be managed to minimize conflict with GRSG, and what guidelines should be developed or implemented to guide siting of renewable energy resources?
- How will planning efforts protect against habitat fragmentation from renewable energy sources at the ecosystem level?
- To what extent will mitigation of impacts be allowed as an alternative to restrictions or closures applied to certain activities or in certain areas?
- What features will be incorporated to aid in conservation of GRSG and GRSG habitat?
- What restoration requirements will be required?
- How will transmission and utility corridors be managed and leased?

Minerals

- How would energy and mineral development be managed within GRSG habitat while recognizing valid existing rights?

- How will planning efforts protect against habitat fragmentation from minerals development at the ecosystem level?
- To what extent will mitigation of impacts be allowed as an alternative to restrictions or closures applied to certain activities or in certain areas?
- What features will be incorporated to aid in conservation of GRSG and GRSG habitat?
- What restoration requirements will be required?
- How will transmission and utility corridors be managed and leased?

Special Designations

- What areas will be designated by the BLM or Forest Service to benefit the conservation, enhancement, and restoration of GRSG and GRSG habitat?

Social and Economic Conditions

- How could the BLM and Forest Service promote or maintain activities that provide social and economic benefit to local communities while providing protection for GRSG habitat?
- How will mineral and energy development be managed to protect GRSG and limit economic impacts on local communities?
- How will livestock grazing be managed to protect GRSG and limit social and economic impacts on local communities?

Tribal Interests

- What will be the impact of GRSG management on areas that are of tribal interest?

1.6.3 Issues Considered but Not Further Analyzed

During the scoping process, the public identified a number of issues that will not be addressed in this LUPA/EIS. The following issues were determined to be outside the

scope of the range-wide planning effort, including the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS:

Hunting Greater Sage-Grouse. Commenters questioned why GRSg hunting is allowed if the bird is in need of protection. The USFWS did not identify hunting as a significant threat to GRSg populations in their 2010 decision “warranted for protection under the ESA, but precluded due to higher listing priorities”. GRSg are legally sport-hunted in 10 of 11 states where they occur, including Utah (Connelly et al. 2004). Recreational hunting of GRSg, including hunting seasons, is directed by the relevant state conservation plans for GRSg and criteria therein. Neither the BLM nor Forest Service regulates hunting activities on federal lands; this authority resides with the state wildlife agency while the BLM and Forest Service manage wildlife habitat. While harvesting of GRSg is not currently regarded as a threat to GRSg, harvest rates were high in the past and are attributed for the GRSg declines in the 1920s and 1930s. In Utah, the early harvest numbers ranged between 14,000 and 28,000 birds per year from 1969 – 1981 (UDWR 2009a), sometimes exceeding Utah’s current total estimated Utah GRSg population. In Utah, hunting is only allowed in GRSg populations that are estimated to have more than 500 breeding adults and defined as being stable or increasing. At this time, the populations that meet this criterion are the Rich, Box Elder, Uintah (Diamond Mountain), and Parker Mountain populations. Bag limits and permit numbers are determined by population estimates. According to Utah’s Division of Wildlife Resources latest Upland Game Report, the average number of GRSg harvested annually from 2002-2012 was 829 birds. The state wildlife agencies determine sustainable hunting levels based on the concept of compensatory versus additive mortality. Compensatory mortality from hunting is mortality that would otherwise have occurred from another source, e.g., disease. Additive mortality represents additional mortality that exceeds natural levels which could contribute to population decline (Connelly et al. 2005). In recent years, state wildlife agencies have reduced harvest limits to approximately 5 to 10 percent of the population, below rates of 25 to 30 percent suggested to be sustainable in the literature. USFWS (2010a) concluded that recreational hunting was not likely contributing to population declines and, at this time, no new research has been conducted to support or refute USFWS’ conclusion.

While hunting is an allowed use on public lands, it is administered and regulated by state wildlife agencies. As such, comments regarding hunting relate to state-regulated actions that are outside the scope of this LUPA/EIS.

Predator control. Commenters stated that predator control was needed to protect GRSg from predation. Predator control is managed cooperatively by Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA) Wildlife Service, UDWR, and the USFWS. Federal laws, such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, limit options for managing avian predators. While predator control is allowed on BLM-administered and National Forest System lands, it is regulated by these other agencies. Comments that relate specifically to predator control activities are outside the scope of this plan amendment. Federal lands in the planning area will remain open to predator control under state laws. However, the BLM and Forest Service may work with these agencies and may also consider measures to various land management activities to address the potential to affect GRSg predation rates.

Warranted but precluded decision and management under ESA listing. Commenters questioned population levels and the need to incorporate range-wide conservation measures. Others questioned the effectiveness of ESA listing as a method of species conservation. These comments relate to decisions under the purview of USFWS and are not addressed in this plan amendment. The listing of GRSg by USFWS may include conservation measures identified by USFWS, however, those conservation measures are not known at this time. Therefore, the BLM and Forest Service cannot address those speculative measures as part of its land use planning effort.

Forest Service Inventoried Roadless Areas and Recommended Wilderness. Forest Service Inventoried Roadless Areas and potential or recommended wilderness were issues eliminated from detailed analysis as it was determined that management for GRSg would not have measurable impacts on these areas. As part of this planning process the Forest Service is not considering any actions that would encourage or promote construction of roads thereby

impacting roadless areas. In addition, the Forest Service is not considering any management actions or allocations that would prevent the Forest Service from managing recommended wilderness in a manner that would preserve and protect wilderness characteristic values or preclude Congress from designating these areas as wilderness in the future.

Wild and Scenic Rivers. There are no congressionally designated nor suitable wild and scenic rivers that overlap mapped GRSG habitat in the decision area. Mapped GRSG habitat is adjacent to one suitable segment in the Vernal Field Office (Uintah Population Area) but does not overlap. Therefore, wild and scenic rivers are not included as an issue for discussion in this LUPA/EIS.

Solar development. Within this LUPA/EIS there are no decisions regarding the management of solar development. This is because there is no existing solar development on BLM-administered or National Forest System lands in the planning area. In addition, the Approved Resource Management Plan Amendments/ROD for Solar Energy Development in Six Southwestern States (October 2012), excluded all UDWR mapped occupied habitat with solar energy potential to new utility-scale solar development. Because neither existing nor proposed development poses a threat to GRSG in the planning area, solar development is not an issue that needs analyzed in this EIS.

Military Overflights of PHMA/GHMA: Military aircraft operations are outside the scope of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. These proposed plan amendments do not apply to aircraft activities that are under the jurisdiction of the Federal Aviation Administration or the Department of Defense. Military over flights, such as those conducted above or near the Utah Test and Training Range frequently result in short periods of noise, lasting from just a few seconds or a couple of minutes. Many GRSG populations have thrived in this testing and training environment for many years.

I.7 DEVELOPMENT OF PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria are based on appropriate laws, regulations, BLM and Forest Service Manual and Handbook sections, and policy directives, as well as on public

participation and coordination with cooperating agencies, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and American Indian tribes. Planning criteria are the standards, rules, and factors used as a framework to resolve issues and develop alternatives. Planning criteria are prepared to ensure decision making is tailored to the issues and to ensure that the BLM and Forest Service avoid unnecessary data collection and analysis. Preliminary planning criteria were included in the Draft LUPA/EIS and have been further refined for the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

I.7.1 Planning Criteria

- The BLM will be consistent with the objectives and direction in BLM Manual 6840, which includes initiating proactive conservation measures that reduce or eliminate threats to BLM sensitive species and minimize the likelihood of and need for listing of species under the ESA. This includes providing sufficiently detailed LUPs to identify and resolve significant land use conflicts with BLM sensitive species without deferring conflict resolution to implementation-level planning (BLM Manual 6840.2B).
- The BLM and Forest Service will utilize the WAFWA *Conservation Assessment of Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Habitats* (Connelly et al. 2004), and any other appropriate resources, to identify GRSG habitat requirements and required design features (RDFs).
- The approved LUPAs will be consistent with the BLM's 2004 National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy.
- The approved RMP amendments will comply with FLPMA, NEPA, and CEQ regulations at 40 CFR Parts 1500 - 1508 and DOI regulations at 43 CFR 46 and 43 CFR Part 1600; the BLM H-1601-1, *Land Use Planning Handbook*, "Appendix C: Program-Specific and Resource-Specific Decision Guidance Requirements" for affected resource programs; the 2008 BLM NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1), and all other applicable BLM policies and guidance.

- The approved LRMP amendments will comply with NFMA, NEPA, CEQ regulations at 40 CFR Parts 1500 – 1508, Regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture at 36 CFR Part 219 and Forest Service Manual 1920 and Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, Forest Service NEPA regulations found at 36 CFR Part 220, and Forest Service Handbook 1909.15
- The implementation of the decisions in the alternatives would be contingent on the availability of needed budget and staffing resources.
- The LUPAs will be limited to providing land use planning level direction specific to the conservation of GRSg habitats.
- The BLM and Forest Service will consider standards to conserve GRSg habitat as well as objectives and management actions to restore, enhance, and improve GRSg habitat.
- The LUPAs will recognize valid existing rights.
- Lands addressed in the LUPA will be BLM-administered and National Forest System land in GRSg habitats, including surface and split-estate lands with federal subsurface mineral rights. Any decisions in the LUPA will apply only to BLM-administered and National Forest System lands.
- The BLM and Forest Service will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where appropriate, to determine the desired future condition of public lands and National Forest System lands for the conservation of GRSg and their habitats.
- As described by law and policy, the BLM and Forest Service will strive to ensure that conservation measures are as consistent as possible with other planning jurisdictions within the planning area boundaries.
- The BLM and Forest Service will consider a range of reasonable alternatives, including appropriate management prescriptions that focus on the relative values of resources while contributing to the conservation of the GRSg and GRSg habitat.
- The BLM and Forest Service will consider a range of reasonable alternatives that are consistent with the conservation objectives and measures included in the COT report (USFWS 2013a).
- The BLM and Forest Service will address socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives. Socio-economic analysis will use an accepted input-output quantitative model such as IMPLAN or RIMSII, and JEDI for analysis.
- The BLM and Forest Service will use the best available scientific information, research, technologies, and results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to inform appropriate local and regional management strategies that will enhance or restore GRSg habitats.
- Management of GRSg habitat in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument will comply with Presidential Proclamation 6920 and other legislation applicable to Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.
- The plan will comply with the Trust Lands Management Act (Utah Code 53C) for lands administered by the State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA).
- The BLM and Forest Service do not have regulatory authority to directly affect activities conducted on state or private lands. However, when determining whether to permit/authorize an activity on federal lands, the BLM and Forest Service are required by the NEPA to analyze the cumulative effects of activities on private and state lands, including activities that result in disturbance to GRSg habitat.
- Management of GRSg habitat that intersects with wilderness study areas (WSAs) on Public lands administered by the BLM will be guided by the Manual 6330, *Management of Wilderness Study Areas*. Land use allocations made for WSAs must be consistent with the Manual 6330 and with other laws, regulations, and policies related to WSA management.
- For BLM-administered lands, all activities and uses within GRSg habitats will follow existing land health standards. Standards and guidelines for

livestock grazing and other programs that have developed standards and guidelines will be applicable to all alternatives for BLM-administered lands.

- The BLM and Forest Service will consult with American Indian tribes to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage within GRSG habitats.
- The BLM and Forest Service will coordinate and communicate with state, local, and tribal governments to ensure that the BLM and Forest Service consider provisions of pertinent plans, seek to resolve inconsistencies between state, local, and tribal plans, and provide ample opportunities for state, local, and tribal governments to comment on the development of amendments.
- The LUPAs will be based on the principles of adaptive management.
- Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenarios and planning for Fluid Minerals will follow the BLM Handbook H-1624-1, Planning for Fluid Mineral Resources, and current fluid minerals manual guidance for fluid mineral (oil and gas, coal-bed methane, oil shale) and geothermal resources. For mineral resources on National Forest System lands, the Forest Service will apply guidance provided in Forest Manual 2800 – Minerals and Geology as applicable.
- The LUPAs will be developed using an interdisciplinary approach to prepare reasonable foreseeable development scenarios, identify alternatives, and analyze resource impacts, including cumulative impacts to natural and cultural resources and the social and economic environment.
- The most current approved BLM and Forest Service corporate spatial data will be supported by current metadata and will be used to ascertain GRSG habitat extent and quality. Data will be consistent with the principles of the Information Quality Act of 2000.

- State game and fish agencies' GRSG data and expertise will be utilized to the fullest extent practicable in making management determinations on federal lands.
- Where more restrictive land use allocations or decisions are in effect for other resources (e.g., WSAs, ACECs, cultural resources, riparian areas) under existing LUPs, those more restrictive land use allocations or decisions will not be amended by this LUPA.

I.8 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

This planning process will recognize the many ongoing programs, plans, and policies that are being implemented in the planning area by other land managers and government agencies. The BLM and Forest Service will seek to be consistent with or complementary to other management actions whenever possible. While the agencies are not obligated to reach consistency, the agencies are required to describe the inconsistencies between the proposed action and the other plans, policies, and/or controls within the EIS. Plans that need to be considered during the GRSG planning effort include the following:

I.8.1 Programmatic Documents

- Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in 13 Western States (1991, common to the Proposed Plans and draft alternatives)
- Final Vegetation Treatments on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Associated ROD (2007)
- Final Vegetation Treatments on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report (2007)
- Approved RMP Amendments/ROD for Designation of Energy Corridors on BLM-Administered Lands in the 11 Western States (2009)
- USDA Forest Service Designation of Section 368 Energy Corridors on National Forest System Land in 10 Western States Decision by

Secretary of Agriculture To Amend Land Management Plans Described as the Environmentally Preferred Alternative (2009)

- ROD and RMP Amendments for Geothermal Leasing in the Western United States (2008)
- Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-administered Lands in the Western United States (2005)
- Approved RMP Amendments/ROD for Solar Energy Development in Six Southwestern States (2012)
- Approved LUPAs/ROD for Allocation of Oil Shale and Tar Sands Resources on Lands Administered by the BLM in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming and Final Environmental Impact Statement (2013)
- Nationwide Aerial Application of Fire Retardant on National Forest System Land ROD (2011)

1.8.2 Tribal Plans

Ute Indian Tribe Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Ordinance—The ordinance provides rules that specify the requirements that oil and gas developers and operators must follow for the conservation and preservation of GRSG within the boundaries of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation.

1.8.3 State Plans

Governor's 10-year Strategic Energy Plan—The Utah Governor's 10-year Strategic Energy Plan, completed in March 2011, was developed to help Utah meet the projected energy growth demands over the next decade by making balanced use of fossil fuels and alternatives and renewable resources.

Uintah Basin Energy Zone—The Uintah Basin Energy Zone includes lands within Daggett, Uintah, and Duchesne counties. The Zone was established by law (63J-8-

105.5) for the purpose of maximizing efficient and responsible development of energy and mineral resources. The Uintah Basin Energy Zone contains abundant energy and mineral resources, including oil, natural gas, oil shale, oil sands, gilsonite, coal, phosphate, gold, uranium, and copper, as well as areas with high wind and solar energy potential. The State of Utah supports efficient and responsible full development of all existing energy and mineral resources located within this area.

Green River Energy Zone—The Green River Energy Zone includes lands within Carbon and Emery Counties. The Zone was established for the purpose of maximizing efficient and responsible development of energy and mineral resources. Similar to the Uintah Basin Energy Zone, the Green River Energy Zone contains abundant energy and mineral resources. The State of Utah supports efficient and responsible full development of all existing energy and mineral resources located within this area.

Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-Grouse in Utah—The Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-Grouse in Utah, completed February 14, 2013, is designed to protect high-quality habitat, enhance impaired habitat and restore converted habitat to support, in Utah, a portion of the range-wide population of GRSG necessary to eliminate threats to the species and negate the need for the listing of the species under the provisions of the ESA. This plan is the basis of Alternative E1 considered in this LUPA/EIS.

Greater Sage-Grouse Core Protection Area (State Of Wyoming Executive Department Executive Order 2013-3)—The Executive Order 2013-3 identifies GRSG core population areas, which are located across the state. The Executive Order also identifies the management actions and allowable uses within GRSG core habitat and non-core habitat areas in the State of Wyoming. This strategy is the basis of Alternative E2 being considered in this LUPA/EIS.

Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan—The Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation plan is a statewide plan that largely relies on implementation by local working groups. The plan identifies steps that should be

taken to minimize impacts on GRSG, with the goal of halting GRSG declines in Wyoming and increasing the abundance and distribution of GRSG in Wyoming.

1.8.4 Local Plans

Counties in the planning unit have developed plans to guide administration of the county. Some of these plans include language related to federal lands, including recommendations for how federal lands should be administered and managed. The level of detail regarding these recommendations varies greatly.

County Land Use Plans

- Uintah County Land Use Plan (2011)
- Duchesne County General Plan (1997, as amended)
- Daggett County General Plan (2009)
- Grand County General Plan (2012)
- Carbon County Master Plan (1997)
- Emery County General Plan, as amended, Emery County, Utah
- Beaver County General Plan (1994)
- Iron County General Plan (2009), as amended by the Iron County Greater Sage-Grouse Resource Management Plan (November 12, 2013)
- General Plan for Piute County (1994)
- Sanpete County General Plan (2010 and amended 2012)
- Sevier County General Plan (1998)
- General Plan for Wayne County (1994)
- Wayne County Resource Management Plan (2011)
- Kane County, Utah, General Plan (1998 and amended 2013)
- Garfield County, Utah, General Plan (1995 and amended 1998 and 2007)

- Garfield County, Utah, Visual Resource Management Plan
- Juab County General Plan
- Millard County General Plan (2010)
- Utah County General Plan (2006)
- Box Elder County Land Use Management and Development Code (2007)
- Tooele County General Plan (1995)
- Rich County Comprehensive Plan (1996)
- Morgan County General Plan (2010)
- Eastern Summit County General Plan (2010)
- Snyderville Basin General Plan (2002)
- Wasatch County General Plan (2010)
- Cache County General Plan
- Sweetwater County General Plan
- Sweetwater County Conservation District Land and Resource Use Plan
- Uinta County Comprehensive Plan (2011)
- Uinta County Conservation District Plan

Local Sage-Grouse Working Group Plans

- Castle Country Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2006)
- West Box Elder Greater Sage-Grouse Local Working Group Conservation Plan (2007)
- Color Country Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2008)
- Morgan-Summit Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2006)
- Parker Mountain-Emery Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2014)

- Rich County Coordinated Resource Management Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan (2006)
- Southwest Desert Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2007)
- Strawberry Valley Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2006)
- Uinta Basin Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2007)
- West Desert Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2007)
- Southwest Wyoming Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Plan (2007)

1.8.5 Endangered Species Recovery Plans and Habitat Conservation Plans

Within the planning area there are many threatened and endangered species. Not all species for which there is a recovery or habitat conservation plan are included in this section. This section is focused on those species and lands that have the most potential to be affected by GRSG management decisions being considered in this planning process. This is consistent with NEPA regulations, which require agencies to concentrate on the issues that are truly relevant to the action in question. The BLM and Forest Service are consulting with the USFWS under the requirements of Section 7 of the ESA. Additional detail on consultation efforts and results are identified in **Section 6.3.3**.

Utah Prairie Dog Final Revised Recovery Plan (USFWS 2012)—The goal of this plan is to recover the Utah prairie dog such that it no longer meets the ESA’s definition of threatened and can be removed from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife (i.e., delisted). The recovery objectives for the Utah prairie dog are to protect suitable habitat that is of sufficient size to support a viable Utah prairie dog population and is spatially distributed to provide connectivity within each Recovery Unit, and to establish and maintain viable Utah prairie dog populations in each Recovery Unit.

Habitat Conservation Plan for Utah Prairie Dogs in Iron County, Utah (amended 2006)—The goal of this plan is to allow continued development and economic growth in Iron County, while conserving and recovering the Utah prairie dog on public lands. Iron County and the UDWR developed the Habitat Conservation Plan to obtain a Section 10(a)(1)(B) Incidental Take Permit from the USFWS. Conservation measures in the Habitat Conservation Plan were envisioned to occur primarily on BLM-administered lands in the West Desert.

Black-footed Ferret Recovery Plan (USFWS 1988)—The goal for black-footed ferret recovery is to: increase the number of captive ferrets to a facility capacity of 200 breeders by 1991, and establish populations, which before breeding, numbered 1,500 black-footed ferrets in 10 or more populations in the wild.

Final Recovery Plan Southwest Willow Flycatcher (2002)—The southwest willow flycatcher was listed as an endangered in 1995. The recovery plan, completed in 2002 outlines actions need to provide the flycatcher protection from threats and create/secure sufficient habitat to assure maintenance of existing populations and/or habitats over time.

1.8.6 Activity Plans and Amendments

Both the BLM and Forest Service have a number of existing activity-level plans that implement their respective RMP direction. Similar to the broad scale plans, these activity-level plans may also be modified in the future to reflect new information or changed circumstances from this LUPA/EIS.

- Utah Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire and Fuels Management (2005)
- Salt Lake Fire Management Plan (2005)
- Salt Lake District Proposed Fire Management Plan Amendment (1998)
- Moab Fire District Fire Management Plan (2006)
- Vernal Fire Management Plan (2005)
- Southern Utah Support Area Fire Management Plan (2006)

- Richfield Fire Management Plan (2006)
- Wyoming Wildlife Management and Implementation Plan (2011)
- Range Creek Herd Management Area Plan (1994)
- Bible Springs Wild Horse Management Plan (1975)
- Bible Springs, Blawn Wash, Four Mile, and Tilly Creek Wild Horse Appropriate Management Level Assessment (2005)
- Sulphur Wild Horse Herd Management Plan (1987)
- Onaqui Mountain Herd Management Area Plan signed in 2002
- Stockton Hills Travel Management Plan (2012)
- Richfield Travel Management Plan (2008)
- Vernal Travel Management Plan (2008)
- Price Travel Management Plan (2008)
- Kanab Travel Management Plan (2008)
- Oil and Gas Leasing on Lands Administered by the Dixie National Forest (2011)
- Western Uinta Basin Oil and Gas Leasing EIS and ROD (1997) (Ashley National Forest)
- Oil and Gas Leasing Analysis in Revised Forest Plan, Wasatch-Cache National Forest (2003)
- Oil and Gas Leasing Analysis and ROD Uinta National Forest (2011)
- Oil and Gas Leasing Analysis and ROD, Manti-La Sal National Forest (1994)
- ROD and Final Environmental Impact Statement; Oil and Gas Leasing Analysis – Fishlake National Forest

I.9 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

I.9.1 Conservation Objectives Team Report

In 2012, the Director of the USFWS asked the Conservation Objectives Team, consisting of state and USFWS representatives, to produce recommendations regarding the degree to which the threats need to be reduced or ameliorated to conserve GRSG so that it would no longer be in danger of extinction or likely to become in danger of extinction in the foreseeable future. The COT report (USFWS 2013a) provides objectives based upon the best scientific and commercial data available at the time of its release. The planning decisions analyzed in the LUP/EISs are intended to ameliorate threats identified in the COT report and to reverse the trends in habitat condition. The COT report can be viewed online at the following address:

<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/birds/sagegrouse/COT/COT-Report-with-Dear-Interested-Reader-Letter.pdf>

The highest level objective in the COT report is identified as meeting the objectives of WAFWA’s 2006 GRSG Comprehensive Strategy of “reversing negative population trends and achieving a neutral or positive population trend.”

The COT report provides a WAFWA Management Zone and Population Risk Assessment. The report identifies localized threats from sagebrush elimination, fire, conifer encroachment, weed and annual grass invasion, mining, free-roaming wild horses and burros, urbanization, and widespread threats from energy development, infrastructure, grazing, and recreation (USFWS 2013a).

Key areas across the landscape that are considered “necessary to maintain redundant, representative, and resilient populations” are identified within the COT report. The USFWS, in concert with the respective state wildlife management agencies, identified these key areas as PACs.

Within the planning area, the PACs consist of 7,420,900 acres, regardless of ownership. Of that, 4,715,700 acres (64 percent) are administered by the BLM or

Forest Service. Under the Proposed Plans, the PACs are comprised of 3,279,300 acres of PHMA managed by the BLM and Forest Service, 18,100 acres of GHMA managed by the BLM and Forest Service, and 1,418,300 acres of non-habitat managed by the BLM and Forest Service.

1.9.2 Baseline Environmental Report

The *Summary of Science, Activities, Programs, and Policies That Influence the Rangewide Conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus)* (Manier et al. 2013), often referred to as the Baseline Environmental Report or BER, is a USGS- and BLM-produced document that examines each threat identified in the USFWS listing decision at the national and WAFWA MZ level. The purpose of this environmental report is to assist in describing the Affected Environment (**Chapter 3, Affected Environment**) and provide a baseline for the cumulative impacts analysis (**Chapter 5, Cumulative Impacts**).

For each threat, the report summarizes the current, scientific understanding of various impacts to GRSG populations and habitats. When available, patterns, thresholds, indicators, metrics and measured responses that quantify the impacts of each specific threat are recognized. Then the location, magnitude, and extent of the threat are shown for each management entity and within each MZ.

1.9.3 Secretarial Order 3336

The Secretary of Interior issued Secretarial Order 3336 on January 5, 2015 which establishes the protection, conservation and restoration of “the health of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem and, in particular, greater sage-grouse habitat, while maintaining safe and efficient operations as a critical fire management priority for the Department.” The Secretarial Order will result in a final report of activities to be implemented prior to the 2016 Western fire season. This will include prioritization and allocation of fire resources and the integration of emerging science, enhancing existing tools to implement the LUPA, and improve our ability to protect sagebrush-steppe from damaging wildfires.

1.9.4 Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Documents

As directed by the planning criteria in **Section 1.7.1**, the BLM and Forest Service utilized several resource documents to identify GRSG habitat requirements and RDFs to conserve GRSG. The BLM and Forest Service considered the following GRSG conservation documents in preparing the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

- WAFWA Conservation Assessment of Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Habitats (Connelly et al. 2004) and WAFWA Greater Sage-Grouse Comprehensive Conservation Strategy (Stiver et al. 2006). WAFWA prepared a conservation assessment for GRSG and its habitat in two phases. Phase I (Connelly et al. 2004) is an assessment of GRSG populations and sagebrush habitats upon which they depend, and Phase II (Stiver et al. 2006) is a conservation strategy for GRSG and sagebrush habitats.
- Near-Term Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan (Range-wide Interagency Sage-Grouse Conservation Team 2012). The Range-wide Interagency Sage-Grouse Conservation Team evaluated risks to GRSG populations, conservation measures that address those risks, by area, expected outcomes and the resources needed to accomplish those conservation measures, and prioritized those actions. The report provides a summary of the specific threats addressed; priority expected outcomes; and a summary of costs.
- Wildfire has been identified as one of the primary factors linked to loss of sagebrush-steppe habitat and corresponding population declines of GRSG (Connelly and Braun 1997; Miller and Eddleman 2001). While fire is a naturally occurring disturbance in the sagebrush steppe, the incursion of nonnative annual grasses has facilitated an increase in mean fire frequency which can preclude the opportunity for sagebrush to become re-established. As such, the LUPA includes requirements (referred to as the Draft Greater Sage-Grouse Wildland Fire and Invasive Species Assessment [Appendix M] in the Draft LUPA/EIS) that

landscape scale Fire and Invasives Assessments (see **Appendix K**, Fire and Invasives Assessment Tool) be completed and updated regularly to more accurately define specific areas to be treated to address threats to sagebrush steppe habitat from wildfire. Within the Great Basin Region, the first five PACs were singled out for the initial round of assessments because fire was identified as a primary threat to GRSG habitat and the first phase of these assessments were completed in March of 2015.

I.10 NATIONAL GREATER SAGE-GROUSE PLANNING STRATEGY

On December 9, 2011, an NOI was published in the Federal Register to initiate the BLM/Forest Service GRSG Planning Strategy across nine western states, including Northeast California, Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, Utah, and Southwest Montana in the Great Basin Region and Northwest Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, and North Dakota in the Rocky Mountain Region. The BLM is the lead agency for this planning effort and the Forest Service is participating as a cooperating agency. On February 10, 2012 the BLM published a Notice of Correction that changed the names of the regions that are coordinating the EISs, extended the scoping period, and added 11 Forest Service LRMPs to this process. This LUPA/EIS is 1 of 15 separate EISs that are currently being conducted to analyze and incorporate specific conservation measures across the range of the GRSG, consistent with National BLM and Forest Service policy.

On December 27, 2011, the BLM Washington Office released IM 2012-044, which directed all of the planning efforts across the GRSG range to consider all applicable conservation measures when revising or amending its RMPs in GRSG habitat, including the measures developed by the NTT that were presented in their December 2011 document, *A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures*. The BLM's IM 2012-044 directs all planning efforts associated with the national strategy to consider and analyze (as appropriate) the conservation measures presented in the report.

Along with the applicable measures that were outlined in the NTT Report, planning efforts associated with this National GRSG Planning Strategy will also analyze

applicable conservation measures that were submitted to the BLM and Forest Service from various state governments and from citizens during the public scoping process. It is the goal of the BLM and Forest Service to make a final decision on these plans by the end of 2014, so that adequate regulatory mechanisms are integrated into the LUPs before the USFWS makes a listing decision in 2015.

I.11 DESCRIPTION OF THE PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED LUPA/FINAL EIS

A notice of availability for the Draft LUPA/EIS was published in the Federal Register on November 1, 2013 (78 *Federal Register* 65700-65701). The NOA initiated a 90-day public comment period, which ended on January 29, 2014. The BLM issued a news release on October 31, 2013, announcing the release of the Draft LUPA/EIS, which provided the dates, locations, and times of eight public open houses. The BLM also distributed a postcard via US mail and e-mail to individuals on the BLM mailing list, which provided the date and city locations of the public open houses. The BLM and Forest Service also notified the public of open house meetings via the project website and a news release to media sites including newspapers, radio, and television.

The BLM and Forest Service held eight public comment open houses for the Draft LUPA/EIS from November 19 – December 12, 2013. The goal of the open houses was to inform the public about the Draft LUPA/EIS and to obtain further public input on the alternatives that were developed and analyzed. A total of 176 unique comment letters, forms, and emails were received during the 90-day public comment period. These documents resulted in 1,138 substantive comments. See **Section 6.7.4**, Public Comments on the Draft LUPA/EIS, for a detailed description of the comments received during the public comment period, as well as the comment analysis methodology used. **Appendix X**, Response to Comments on the Draft Land Use Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement, includes summaries of substantive comments received and responses to those summaries.

I.12 CHANGES BETWEEN THE DRAFT LUPA/EIS AND PROPOSED LUPA/FINAL EIS

As a result of public comments, best science, cooperating agency coordination, and internal review of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the BLM and Forest Service have developed the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS for managing BLM-administered and National Forest System lands within the Utah Sub-region. The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS focuses on addressing public comments, while continuing to meet the BLM's and Forest Service's legal and regulatory mandates. The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS is a variation of the preferred alternative (Alternative D), though it does include several actions that, while new, are qualitatively within the range of alternatives analyzed in the Draft LUPA/EIS.

The NEPA requires agencies to prepare a supplement to the draft EIS: 1) if the agency makes substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns; or 2) if there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts (40 CFR 1502.9). A supplement is not necessary if a newly formulated alternative is a minor variation of one of the alternatives or is qualitatively within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS (CEQ's *NEPA's Forty Most Asked Questions*, question 29b; 46 *Federal Register* 18026 (1981)).

While there are many changes between the Preferred Alternative identified in the Draft LUPA/EIS (Alternative D) and the Proposed Plans in the Final EIS, most result from internal and external comments. The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS includes components of the alternatives analyzed in the Draft LUPA/EIS. Taken together, these components present a suite of management decisions that present a variation of the alternatives already identified in the Draft LUPA/EIS that are qualitatively within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed.

The BLM and Forest Service have determined that the changes in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS would not affect the human environment in a substantial manner or to a significant extent not already considered in the Draft LUPA/EIS. The impacts disclosed in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS are similar or identical to those described

Draft LUPA/EIS. As such, there is no need for the BLM and Forest Service to complete a supplement.

The remainder of this section identifies the changes between the Draft LUPA/EIS and the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. When discussing the Proposed Plans, there is also a discussion of where the given changes were addressed, whether specifically or qualitatively within the range of alternatives considered in the Draft LUPA/EIS.

General changes from the Draft LUPA/EIS include the following:

- New information on resources or resource use was added (e.g., the addition of remote sensing information for cheatgrass presence and the addition of the disturbance inventory information).
- Calculations have been updated and new information since the Draft LUPA/EIS has been incorporated to reflect better or more current information, where available and germane to the current conditions and analysis (e.g., updated GRSG population data, updated fluid mineral leasing and well data, and updated wildfire data).
- Nomenclature. In the Draft LUPA/EIS, management areas in Alternatives B, C, and D were called Preliminary Priority Management Areas (PPMA) and Preliminary General Management Areas (PGMA). In the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, the nomenclature for these areas has changed to Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA) and General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA). The Proposed Plans also use PHMA and GHMA to describe habitat. See **Section 1.3.2**.

Chapter 2

As previously described, the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS was developed based on public comments, best science, cooperating agency coordination, and internal review of the Draft LUPA/EIS. The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS consists of a combination of various management action from all of the draft alternatives. General changes to **Chapter 2** and major differences between the Proposed Plans and other alternatives are described below.

- Adjustments to PHMA/GHMA: PHMA and GHMA delineations for the Proposed Plans were adjusted for a variety of reasons identified during public comments, in coordination with cooperating agencies, and based on internal review. This included review and evaluation of population distribution and trends, GPS and radio telemetry data, the presence of existing developments and valid existing rights, and the potential to improve, connect or expand habitat. The adjustments were considered within the range of alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIS, so no supplement is required. Adjustments include:
 - removal of PHMA and GHMA from municipality boundaries
 - removal of PHMA and GHMA from the Parker Mountain Population Area in the valley surrounding the towns of Loa, Fremont, Lyman, and Bicknell
 - changing the area southwest of the town of Minersville from GHMA to PHMA
 - changing the portions of the Panguitch Population Area south of the town of Hatch from GHMA to PHMA
 - changing portions of the Halfway Hollow area in the Uintah Population Area from PHMA to GHMA, and changing other portions from GHMA to PHMA
 - changing portions of the Carbon Population Area from PHMA to GHMA
 - adding areas as PHMA in the Box Elder Population Area
 - adding areas as PHMA and SFA in the Rich Population Area
- Allocations for PHMA and GHMA: Allocations in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS provide more opportunities for uses in GHMA, while still maintaining conservation management by establishing screening criteria for project/activity review in GRSG habitat. Allocations that

were changed between the preferred alternative (Alternative D) and the Proposed Plans include the following:

- Allocations were changed from being lek centric, using 1- and 4-mile buffers, to applying to the entire areas that GRSG populations use at some point during their yearly life-cycle (e.g., breeding, nesting, brood-rearing, late brood-rearing, transitional, and winter habitats), as well as adjacent areas where actions could affect GRSG. This change is consistent with the approaches considered in Alternatives B, C, and E. Further, the allocations applied in the Proposed Plans (e.g., no surface occupancy [NSO] for fluid minerals, avoidance for ROWs, closure for mineral materials and nonenergy leasable minerals, and limited for travel) were all analyzed within the range of alternatives considered. While allocations were adjusted to apply to populations, the importance of habitat near leks, as reflected in numerous scientific studies, was maintained through consideration and application of lek buffers at the implementation level (see **Appendix F**).
- ROWs in PHMA were changed from being managed with different allocation by type (i.e., linear, site-type, and underground) to applying one ROW avoidance allocation to the all ROW types, with avoidance criteria specific to types (which was considered in Alternatives D and E).
- Allocations in GHMA were changed from lek buffers for NSO, ROW avoidance, and closures to other minerals, to applying allocations from Alternative A (no action) with the addition of mitigation requirements (e.g., net conservation gain). This was considered in Alternatives A and D.
- PHMA would not include exclusion areas for transmission lines with designated ROW corridors to concentrate disturbance where it would have the least impact on GRSG. Instead, all PHMA would be an avoidance area (similar to Alternative D outside the

exclusion areas and corridors), but if avoidance was not possible, any development would have to align with existing infrastructure to minimize impacts on GRSG. This approach was considered in Alternative E.

- Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFA): On October 27, 2014, the USFWS provided the BLM and Forest Service a memorandum titled [Greater Sage-Grouse: Additional Recommendations to Refine Land Use Allocations in Highly Important Landscapes](#). The memorandum and associated maps provided by the USFWS identify areas that represent recognized “strongholds” for GRSG that have been noted and referenced as having the highest densities of GRSG and other criteria important for the persistence of the species. Within these areas, the BLM and Forest Service identified SFA, which are PHMA with the following additional management (**Map 2.6**):
 - Recommended for withdrawal from the Mining Law of 1872, subject to valid existing rights.
 - Managed as NSO, without waiver, exception, or modification, for fluid mineral leasing.
 - Prioritized for management and conservation actions in these areas, including, but not limited to, review of livestock grazing permits/leases (see the Livestock Grazing/Range Management sections of the BLM and Forest Service Proposed Plans in **Section 2.6**, Proposed Plan Amendments, for additional actions).

Alternatives B and C recommended PHMA for withdrawal. Alternative D considered managing fluid minerals with an NSO stipulation. Alternatives B and D considered prioritization for grazing land health assessments and processing grazing permits. The actions proposed for SFAs were analyzed in the Draft LUPA/EIS range of alternatives. As such, the management of these areas as SFA and the impacts of the associated management decisions were addressed in the Draft LUPA/EIS and are qualitatively within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed.

The BLM and Forest Service will manage these areas as SFAs, totaling approximately 228,500 acres within the Utah Sub-region, because of the importance of these areas of habitat to the conservation of the species range-wide. Specifically, SFA include characteristics such as existing high-quality sagebrush habitat; highest breeding densities; have been identified as essential to conservation and persistence of the species; represent a preponderance of current federal ownership and in some cases are adjacent to protected areas that serve to anchor the conservation importance of the landscape. In light of the landscape level approach to GRSG conservation provided through this planning effort and as defined by the characteristics set forth above, as well as additional considerations, including potential for impacts from climate change, fire and invasives, these areas have been identified as SFA.

As noted in the Draft LUPA/EIS, one of the goals of this planning effort is to protect both the habitat and the species (see the Draft LUPA/EIS Goal GRSG-1 across the range of alternatives). The Draft LUPA/EIS also notes the importance of managing GRSG at a landscape scale (see Draft LUPA/EIS Objective GRSG-5) to implement habitat conservation. Further, the Draft LUPA/EIS also stated that mapped habitat would be changed through the appropriate BLM and Forest Service planning processes (see the Draft LUPA/EIS Section 2.5, Draft LUPA/EIS MA-GRSG-2 and Draft LUPA/EIS MA-GRSG-8). The habitat in the SFA exhibits areas of high-quality sagebrush habitat, areas with highest breeding densities, and areas identified as essential to conservation and persistence of the species.

- USGS lek buffer study: The Proposed Plans include a management action to incorporate the lek buffer distances identified in the USGS report *Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage Grouse—A*

Review: USGS Open File Report 2014-1239 (Manier et al. 2014) during NEPA analysis at the implementation stage. Although the buffer report was not available at the time of the Draft LUPA/EIS release, applying these buffers was addressed in the Draft LUPA/EIS and is qualitatively within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed. Specifically, Alternatives B and C identified and analyzed allocation restrictions such as closure to fluid minerals, recommendation for withdrawal, and elimination of grazing. For example, Alternative C proposed closure to fluid, saleable and nonenergy leasable minerals in all GRSG habitat. In Alternative C, all GRSG habitat was also excluded from ROW development. Also considered in the range of alternatives were Alternatives D and E, which identified and analyzed fewer restrictions on development in GRSG habitat than Alternatives B and C. Alternative D proposed avoidance and exclusion of ROWs within various buffers (1 and 4 miles) within both PHMA and GHMA, as well as considering closures for saleable and nonenergy leasable minerals within buffers. Alternative E considered no actions within 1 mile of a lek, if visible, and seasonal restrictions out to 3.1 miles from the lek. Accordingly, the management decision to apply lek buffers for development within certain habitat types during NEPA analysis at the implementation stage is within the range of alternatives analyzed.

- Adaptive management: The Proposed Plans includes the identification of hard and soft adaptive management triggers for population and habitat and specifies the appropriate management responses. Chapter 2 of the Draft LUPA/EIS identified that the BLM and Forest Service would further develop the adaptive management approach by identifying hard and soft triggers and responses. All of the adaptive management hard trigger responses identified in **Appendix B** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS were analyzed within the range of alternatives.

Adaptive management responses in the Proposed Plans are derived from various action alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIS and are therefore within the range of alternatives. For example, if a hard trigger

is reached in the Sheeprocks Population Area, the response would be to change the PHMA boundary to reflect that considered under Alternative B, which was analyzed in the Draft LUPA/EIS. Another example is management of ROWs outside of corridors. If a hard trigger is reached, that area would be changed to be an exclusion area for high voltage transmission lines (greater than or equal to 100 kilovolts [kV]). Alternatives B and C considered exclusion of all ROWs, so the adaptive response is within the range of the Draft EIS alternatives. Another example is the wildland fire management adaptive response to “Reassess GRSG habitat needs to determine if priorities for at risk habitats, fuels management areas, preparedness, suppression and restoration have changed.” This was analyzed under Alternative D as action Draft LUPA/EIS MA-FIRE-1.

- Monitoring and disturbance: The monitoring framework was further refined in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, and further clarification as to how disturbance cap calculations would be measured were developed for the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. During the public comment period, the BLM and Forest Service received comments on how monitoring and disturbance cap calculations would occur at implementation. The Draft LUPA/EIS outlined the major components of the monitoring strategy, as well as provided a table portraying a list of anthropogenic disturbances that would count against the disturbance cap. A Disturbance and Monitoring Sub-team further enhanced the two appendices (**Appendix C** and **Appendix E**) in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.
- Net conservation gain mitigation strategy: The net conservation gain mitigation strategy is in response to the overall landscape-scale goal which is to enhance, conserve, and restore GRSG and its habitat. All of the action alternatives provided management actions to meet the landscape-scale goal. The overarching goal in the Draft LUPA/EIS was to “Maintain and/or increase abundance and distribution of GRSG by conserving, enhancing, or restoring the sagebrush ecosystem upon which populations depend, in cooperation with other conservation

partners” (see Draft LUPA/EIS Goal GRSG-1). Further, the Draft LUPA/EIS included the concepts of net conservation for GRSG habitat by requiring impacts to GHMA be offset by the successful completion of compensatory mitigation in PHMA (see Draft LUPA/EIS MA-GRSG-7), as well as the employment of off-site mitigation as a form of mitigation (see Draft LUPA/EIS MA-GRSG-9). The GRSG mitigation strategy has been further defined in **Section 2.7.3**, Regional Mitigation, and **Appendix D** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

- Forest Service Plan Amendment: The Forest Service Proposed Plans and the BLM Proposed Plan are displayed separately in **Chapter 2**. The Forest Service has two stand-alone Proposed Plans, identified in **Section 2.6.3** and **Section 2.6.4** in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS (for National Forest System lands in Utah and National Forest System lands that overlap into Wyoming). This is because the Forest Service has different guidance for writing planning language than the BLM; however, the actions are essentially the same for both the BLM and Forest Service under the Proposed Plans. The Forest Service has two Proposed Plans for National Forest System lands in Utah and those that overlap into Wyoming because GRSG in the Wyoming-Uinta and Wyoming-Blacks Fork population areas more closely associate with those in Wyoming and not with those in Utah.
- The Fire and Invasives Assessment Tool (FIAT) method has been incorporated (**Appendix K**). The FIAT address threats to GRSG from wildfire, invasive annual grasses and conifer expansion assessment. The Draft LUPA/EIS (see Draft LUPA/EIS action MA-FIRE-1) noted that a process would be identified to provide a mechanism for the BLM and Forest Service to work with other agencies to prioritize future implementation-level habitat treatment and fire management activities. **Appendix K** identifies that process, using resistance and resilience concepts from Chambers et al. (2014).
- A decadal treatment target objective for conifer encroachment and annual grass reduction, derived from modeling results from the

Vegetation Dynamics Development Tool (VDDT), has been added. This expands on the Draft LUPA/EIS Objective GRSG-2 and Draft LUPA/EIS action MA-GRSG-3, addressing increasing the amount and functionality of habitat. The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS merely identifies treatment objectives based on modeling applied in response to public comments on the Draft LUPA/EIS.

- Specific habitat objectives were included in the Proposed Plans, including the identification of percentages and heights for sagebrush, grasses and forbs. This is consistent with Draft LUPA/EIS Objective GRSG-2, which notes that “desired cover percentages and heights for sagebrush, grasses and forbs in seasonal habitats will be managed to meet habitat guidelines from scientific literature (e.g., Connelly et al. 2000 and Hagen et al. 2007).” It also noted that “adjustments from the guidelines may be made, but must be based on documented regional variation of habitat characteristics...” Based on several public comments requesting the guidelines from literature be included, as well as public and internal comments related to the timing of setting habitat objectives, the Proposed Plans incorporate a table that quantifies the objective contained in the Draft LUPA/EIS. As described in the Draft LUPA/EIS, the objectives included in the Proposed Plans are based on scientific literature, with any adjustments based on local GRSG use patterns as documented through on-the-ground research.
- The BLM and Forest Service Proposed Plans were organized and numbered for logical groupings and to better correlate with other sub-regions.
- Wild horse and burro actions were updated to be consistent throughout the Great Basin.

Chapter 3

- Additional literature was reviewed and added to the baseline information, particularly in **Section 3.3**, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse.

Chapter 4

- The likely direct and indirect impacts on the human and natural environment that could occur from implementing the BLM and Forest Service Proposed Plans presented in **Chapter 2** were incorporated.
- Analyses for the draft alternatives (Alternatives A – E) were adjusted based on public and internal comments, as well as the identification of additional literature in public comments.
- In response to public comments, a more detailed, quantitative analysis of the impacts from implementing the disturbance cap for the various alternatives was included.

Chapter 5

- The cumulative impacts analysis was separated from **Chapter 4** and included as a separate chapter (**Chapter 5**) in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.
- WAFWA MZ cumulative effects Analysis on GRSG. A quantitative cumulative effects analysis for GRSG was included in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS (see **Section 5.4**, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse). This analysis was completed to analyze the effects of management actions on GRSG at a biologically significant scale which as determined to be at the WAFWA MZ level. Chapter 4 of the Draft LUPA/EIS included a qualitative analysis and identified that a quantitative analysis would be completed for the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS at the WAFWA MZ level.
- The cumulative effects that could occur from implementing the BLM and Forest Service Proposed Plans presented in **Chapter 2**, in conjunction with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, were incorporated.

Chapter 6

- In the Draft LUPA/EIS, Consultation and Coordination was addressed in **Chapter 5**. In the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, discussion of cumulative effects has been separated from the direct and indirect impacts discussed in **Chapter 4** and has become its own chapter. As a result, Consultation and Coordination has been moved from **Chapter 5** to **Chapter 6**.
- Information related to ongoing consultation and coordination efforts was included.
- The section addressing consistency with state, local and tribal plans has been revised to reflect just the Proposed Plans rather than all of the draft alternatives. Consistency discussions have also been consolidated.
- Language outlining public outreach efforts on the Draft LUPA/EIS was added.
- Language summarizing comments received on the Draft LUPA/EIS and how the BLM and Forest Service addressed those comments was added.

Appendices

- Maps for the Proposed Plans were added to **Appendix A**. Maps were updated with new data where available and appropriate for analysis.
- The GRSG adaptive management plan has been further defined in **Appendix B** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.
- The GRSG monitoring strategy has been further defined in **Appendix C** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.
- The GRSG mitigation strategy has been further defined in **Appendix D** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.
- The methodology to be used in determining whether the Proposed Plan's three percent anthropogenic disturbance cap is exceeded is detailed in **Appendix E** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

- **Appendix F** was included to provide additional detail for how lek buffers would be applied to various land uses activities during implementation.
- RDFs have been compiled into a single appendix in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS (**Appendix G**).
- A baseline disturbance inventory has been completed and the impact analysis has been revised to incorporate the results of that inventory. The baseline disturbance inventory is provided in **Appendix L**, Baseline Disturbance Inventory.
- In response to public comments requesting additional information on predation, **Appendix M** was included to address the biological effects of predation on GRSG and to present predation data from research conducted in the Utah Sub-region.
- Based on public and internal comments, the GRSG baseline habitat appendix (**Appendix N**) was refined, including the addition of a habitat update protocol.
- The Biological Assessment was added to **Appendix O**.
- A summary of the Draft EIS public comment process, including comment issue topics and responses, was added as **Appendix X** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.