
Appendix X

Response to Comments on the Draft Land Use Plan
Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement

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APPENDIX X

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

After publishing the Draft Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the United States (US) Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service) held a 90-day public comment period to receive comments on the Draft LUPA/ EIS. The BLM and Forest Service received written comments on the Draft LUPA/EIS by mail, email, and submissions at the public meetings and oral comments transcribed at public meetings. Comments covered a wide spectrum of thoughts, opinions, ideas, and concerns. The BLM and Forest Service recognize that commenters invested considerable time and effort to submit comments on the Draft LUPA/EIS and developed a comment analysis methodology to ensure that all comments were considered, as directed by National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) regulations.

According to the NEPA, the BLM and Forest Service are required to identify and formally respond to all substantive public comments. The BLM and Forest Service developed a systematic process for responding to comments to ensure all substantive comments were tracked and considered. Upon receipt, each comment letter was assigned an identification number and logged into the BLM's comment analysis database, CommentWorks, which allowed the BLM and Forest Service to organize, categorize, and respond to comments. Substantive comments from each letter were coded to appropriate categories based on the content of the comment, retaining the link to the commenter. The categories generally follow the sections presented in the Draft LUPA/EIS, though some relate to the planning process or editorial concerns.

Comments similar to each other were grouped under a topic heading, and the BLM and Forest Service drafted a statement summarizing the issues contained in the comments. The responses were crafted to respond to the comments, and, if warranted, a change to the EIS was made.

Although each comment letter was diligently considered, the comment analysis process involved determining whether a comment was substantive or nonsubstantive in nature. In performing this analysis, BLM and Forest Service relied on the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) regulations to determine what constituted a substantive comment.

A substantive comment does one or more of the following:

- Questions, with a reasonable basis, the accuracy of the information and/or analysis in the Draft LUPA/EIS
- Questions, with a reasonable basis, the adequacy of the information and/or analysis in the Draft LUPA/EIS
- Presents reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the Draft LUPA/EIS that meet the purpose and need of the proposed action and addresses significant issues
- Questions, with a reasonable basis, the merits of an alternative or alternatives
- Causes changes in or revisions to the proposed action
- Questions, with a reasonable basis, the adequacy of the planning process itself

Additionally, the BLM's NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1) identifies the following types of substantive comments:

- Comments on the Adequacy of the Analysis: Comments that express a professional disagreement with the conclusions of the analysis or assert that the analysis is inadequate are substantive in nature but may or may not lead to changes in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. Interpretations of analyses should be based on professional expertise. Where there is disagreement within a professional discipline, a careful review of the various interpretations is warranted. In some cases, public comments may necessitate a reevaluation of analytical conclusions. If, after reevaluation, the manager responsible for preparing the EIS (Authorized Officer) does not think that a change is warranted, the response should provide the rationale for that conclusion.
- Comments That Identify New Impacts, Alternatives, or Mitigation Measures: Public comments on a Draft LUPA/EIS that identify impacts, alternatives, or mitigation measures that were not addressed in the draft are substantive. This type of comment requires the Authorized Officer to determine whether it warrants further consideration. If it does, the Authorized Officer must determine whether the new impacts, new alternatives, or new mitigation measures should be analyzed in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, a supplement to the Draft LUPA/EIS, or a completely revised and recirculated Draft LUPA/EIS.
- Disagreements with Significance Determinations: Comments that directly or indirectly question, with a reasonable basis, determinations regarding the significance or severity of impacts are substantive. A reevaluation of these determinations may be warranted and may lead to changes in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. If, after

reevaluation, the Authorized Officer does not think that a change is warranted, the response should provide the rationale for that conclusion.

Comments that failed to meet the above description were considered nonsubstantive. Many comments received throughout the process expressed personal opinions or preferences, had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the Draft LUPA/EIS, represented commentary regarding resource management and/or impacts without any real connection to the document being reviewed, or were considered out of scope because they dealt with existing law, rule, regulation, or policy. These comments did not provide specific information to assist the planning team in making changes to the alternatives or impact analysis in the Draft LUPA/EIS and are not addressed further in this document. Examples of nonsubstantive comments include the following:

- The best of the alternatives is Alternative D (or A, B, C, or E).
- The preferred alternative does not reflect balanced land management.
- More land should be protected as wilderness.
- BLM needs to change the Taylor Grazing Act and charge higher grazing fees.
- I want the EIS to reflect the following for this area: no grazing, no logging, no drilling, no mining, and no off-highway vehicles (OHVs).
- More areas should be made available for multiple uses (e.g., drilling, OHVs, or rights-of-ways [ROWs]) without severe restrictions.

Opinions, feelings, and preferences for one element or one alternative over another, and comments of a personal and/or philosophical nature, were all read, analyzed, and considered. However, because such comments are not substantive in nature, the BLM and Forest Service did not include them in the report and did not respond to them. While all comments were reviewed and considered, comments were not counted as “votes.” The NEPA public comment period is neither considered an election, nor does it result in a representative sampling of the population. Therefore, public comments are not appropriate to be used as a democratic decision-making tool or as a scientific sampling mechanism.

Comments citing editorial changes to the document were reviewed and incorporated. The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS has been technically edited and revised to fix typographic errors, missing references, definitions, and acronyms, and other clarifications as needed.

Copies of all comment documents received on the Draft LUPA/EIS are available by request from the BLM’s Utah State Office. Comments received by mail, email, and at meetings, or delivered orally during the public meetings are tracked by commenter name and submission number.

Campaign Letters

Several organizations and groups held standardized letter campaigns for the GRSG effort through which their constituents were able to submit the standard letter or a modified version of the letter indicating support for the group’s position on the BLM and Forest Service actions in the Draft LUPA/EIS. Individuals who submitted a modified standard letter generally added new comments or information to the letter or edited it to reflect their main concern(s). Modified

letters with unique comments were given their own letter number and coded appropriately. All commenters who used an organization's campaign letter were tracked in a commenter list and are available from the BLM upon request.

How This Appendix is Organized

This appendix is divided into three main sections. The first section, Introduction, provides an overview of the comment-response process. The second section, Issue Topics, Responses, and Comments, is organized by the primary topic and then by specific issue subtopics that relate to an aspect of NEPA, the BLM and Forest Service planning processes, or specific resources and resource uses. For example, all comment summaries that relate to Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) fall under Section 7, Greater Sage-Grouse. This includes subsections such as Best Available Information and Baseline Data, Range of Alternatives, and Impacts. Each topic or subtopic contains a statement that summarizes all substantive comments received on that topic or subtopic and the BLM's and Forest Service's response to the summary statement. These issue summaries and responses are coded as they appear in CommentWorks. Excerpts of all substantive comments are posted on the project website: http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/planning/SG_RMP_rev.html.

The terms preliminary priority management area (PPMA) and preliminary general management area (PGMA) were used in the Draft LUPA/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. As the BLM and Forest Service moved from a Draft LUPA/EIS to a Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, such prioritizations are necessarily no longer "preliminary" in nature. As such, they have been replaced with the terms Priority Habitat Management Area (PHMA) and General Habitat Management Area (GHMA). Comments on the Draft LUPA/EIS referred to PPMA and PGMA. As such, the summary statements also use these terms. However, responses use the terminology used in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

The third section, Commenter List, provides the names of individuals who submitted unique comment letters (not campaign letters) on the Draft LUPA/EIS. Commenters are listed alphabetically by the organization name or commenter's last name.

ISSUE TOPICS, RESPONSES, AND COMMENTS

Section 4 - NEPA

Section 4.1 - Public Notification

Summary

BLM needs to include a complete listing of commenters on the Draft LUPA/EIS, the number of commenters that are in favor of, or against, any particular alternative, and what changes resulted from the comments.

Response

Requirements for responding to public comments on a Draft LUPA/EIS are found in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 1503.4. CEQ's *NEPA's Forty Most Asked Questions*, question 29a, also clarifies requirements (46 *Federal Register* 18026 (1981)). All substantive comments received on the Draft LUPA/EIS were considered and reviewed for information that would result in changes to the document. Comments simply stating a preference for or against a specific alternative, or opinions without reasonable basis were considered nonsubstantive since they do not meet the substantive comment requirement of BLM Handbook H-1790-1, Section 6.9.2.1. This appendix summarizes the substantive comments received and responses to those comments. **Section 6.7.4**, Public Comments on the Draft LUPA/EIS, of the Proposed LUPA/FEIS provides additional summaries about all comments received, along with a complete explanation of the procedures followed for analyzing comments. This appendix also includes a list of agencies, organizations, and individuals that submitted unique submissions (see *Commenter List*).

Changes between the Draft LUPA/EIS and the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS have been described at the beginning of each chapter in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 4.2 - Cooperating Agency Relationships

Summary

The BLM did not coordinate with state and local agencies that would be affected by the actions considered in the LUPA/EIS, as required by the NEPA and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Several agencies requested cooperator status for review and revisions to the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Response

Both the CEQ and BLM planning regulations define cooperating agency status, including what it is, who is eligible to become a cooperating agency, and how the lead agency should invite participation as a cooperating agency (40 CFR 1501 and 1508; 43 CFR 1601.0-5). Cooperating agency relationships are limited to government entities, state agencies, local governments, tribal governments, and other federal agencies that have jurisdiction by law or special expertise. Additionally, per the regulations and BLM policy, there is no coordinating agency status (BLM Desk Guide to Cooperating Agency Relationships and Coordination with Intergovernmental Partners, pages 21 and 31, respectively). To be a cooperating agency, the local agency must meet the eligibility criteria set out in the regulations and policies. The specific role of each cooperating agency is based on jurisdiction by law or special expertise, which is determined on an agency-by-agency basis and identified in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Cooperating agency relationships are described in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS in **Section 6.4, Cooperating Agencies**. In December 2011, the BLM sent letters to 15 tribal governments inviting them to be cooperating agencies. The BLM also sent letters to 36 local, state, and federal agencies inviting them to participate as cooperating agencies for the LUPA/EIS. Subsequently, the State of Wyoming and four local government agencies in Wyoming requested and were granted cooperating agency status for the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS effort because portions of two National Forests that overlaps into Wyoming and their proximity to the Utah Sub-region. To date, 29 agencies have agreed to participate on the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS as designated cooperating agencies, 28 of which have signed Memoranda of Understanding with the BLM's Utah State Office (see **Table 6.1, Cooperating Agencies**, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS).

In addition to the BLM's invitations to a wide variety of agencies to participate as cooperating agencies, US Department of the Interior regulations (43 CFR 46.225(c)) require the BLM, as lead agency, to consider any request by a government entity to participate as a cooperating agency (BLM Desk Guide to Cooperating Agency Relationships and Coordination with Intergovernmental Partners, pages 8-9). From the time that the Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register and throughout the development of the EIS, an agency could notify the BLM requesting cooperating agency status. Section 202 of the FLPMA requires the BLM and Forest Service, to the extent consistent with the laws governing the administration of the public lands, coordinate the land use inventory, planning, and management activities of, or for, such lands with the land use planning and management programs of other federal departments and agencies, and of the States and local governments within which the lands are located.

All agencies participating as cooperating agencies have been given opportunities to participate during various steps of the planning process, including regular briefings, requests for input on draft alternatives and the administrative draft EIS, and identification of issues and data during public scoping and the Draft LUPA/EIS public comment period, as required by 40 CFR 1503.2 and 40 CFR 1506.10. Further, coordination continued with cooperating agencies in order to identify consistency issues and to be compliant with the relevant laws and regulations. While the laws and regulations associated with cooperating agencies and coordination with other federal agencies and state, local, and tribal governments, state that coordination must occur; they do not prescribe the methods necessary to meet the legal or regulatory requirements. Based on the coordination efforts describe above, the BLM and Forest Service have met the legal and regulatory requirements for coordination to date, as described in **Chapter 6, Consultation and Coordination**, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 4.3 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

The comments were focused on several issues related to the alternatives presented in the Draft LUPA/EIS:

1. Commenters believed that the preferred alternative does not meet the stated purpose and need.
2. Commenters felt that the alternatives were largely the same, and that the BLM needed to provide more distinction (range) between the alternatives.

3. BLM needs to consider the alternatives presented by cooperating agencies and environmental organizations, including county proposed alternatives, the Sage-Grouse Recovery Alternative, and alternatives for the listing of the species or not listing the species.
4. The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to fully account for federal regulatory mechanisms that are currently in place and adequately address the threats to the species.
5. Commenters felt there was no methodology or scientific backing in the Draft LUPA/EIS for establishing the disturbance cap in the alternatives, and that the BLM and Forest Service needed to demonstrate more range in the disturbance cap amounts presented in the alternatives. There is also no discussion in the Draft LUPA/EIS of how this disturbance cap will be implemented.

Response

1. In accordance with NEPA, the BLM and Forest Service have discretion to establish the purpose and need for action (40 CFR 1502.13). CEQ regulations direct that an EIS "...shall briefly specify the underlying purpose and need to which the agency is responding in proposing the alternatives including the proposed action" (40 CFR 1502.13). Also, under the CEQ regulations, the BLM and the Forest Service are required to "study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal which involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources as provided by section 102(2)(E) of the Act [NEPA]." (40 CFR 1501.2(c)). The breadth or narrowness of the purpose and need statement has a substantial influence on the scope of the subsequent analysis. The purpose and need statement provides a framework for issue identification and will inform the rationale for alternative selection. The range of alternatives developed is intended to meet the purpose and need, and address the issue; thereby, providing a basis for eventual selection of an alternative in a decision (BLM NEPA Handbook and Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 – National Environmental Policy Act Handbook Chapter 10 – Environmental Analysis).

As stated in the Draft LUPA/EIS in Section 1.1, Introduction, the BLM and the Forest Service prepared this Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS to be applied to lands with GRSG habitat. This effort responds to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) March 2010 'warranted, but precluded' listing petition decision, and that existing regulatory mechanisms in BLM and the Forest Service land use plans were inadequate to protect the species and its habitat. The range of alternatives, including the preferred alternative and its components (such as the disturbance caps), focus on areas affected by threats to GRSG habitat identified by the USFWS in its *12-Month Findings for Petitions to List the Greater Sage-Grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus) as Threatened or Endangered*. Formulated by the planning team, the preferred alternative represents those goals, objectives, and actions determined to be most effective at resolving planning issues, balancing resource use at this stage of the process, and meeting the stated purpose and need for action. While collaboration is critical in developing and evaluating alternatives, the final designation of a preferred alternative remains the exclusive responsibility of the BLM and Forest

Service. See Section 2.9, Preferred Alternative, of the Draft LUPA/EIS for further details.

As stated in the Draft LUPA/EIS in Section 1.7, Development of Planning Criteria, the LUPA will recognize all valid existing rights. The potential impacts on valid existing rights from management decisions in this plan amendment are further discussed in Section 4.20, Minerals, and Appendix R, Oil and Gas Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario for Greater Sage-Grouse Occupied Habitat in Utah Sub-region, in the Draft LUPA/EIS.

2. The BLM and Forest Service considered a range of reasonable alternatives during the planning process in full compliance with the NEPA. The CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1502.1) require that the BLM and Forest Service consider reasonable alternatives that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment. While there are many possible alternatives or actions to manage public lands and GRSG in the planning area, the BLM and Forest Service fully considered the management opportunities presented in the planning issues and criteria developed during the scoping process to determine a range of reasonable alternatives. In addition, question 2a of NEPA's *Forty Most Asked Questions* states that an EIS is required to examine all reasonable alternatives rather than all alternatives (46 *Federal Register* 18026 (1981)). As a result, five alternatives (including two subalternatives) were analyzed in detail in the Draft LUPA/EIS that best addressed the issues and concerns identified by the affected public. The range of alternatives in the Draft LUPA/EIS represented a full spectrum of options which address the issues of GRSG protection, including a no action alternative (current management, Alternative A), up to a conservation of all occupied GRSG habitat within Utah (Alternative C). Suggested alternatives that fit within the range of alternatives are considered to have been adequately analyzed and were not addressed separately.

As described in Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA. The BLM and Forest Service complied with NEPA and the CEQ implementing regulations at 40 CFR 1500 in the development of alternatives for the Draft LUPA/EIS, including seeking public input and analyzing reasonable alternatives. The alternatives include management options for the planning area that would modify or amend decisions made in the BLM or Forest Service land use plans, as amended, to meet the planning criteria, to address issues and comments from cooperating agencies and the public, or to provide a range of reasonable alternatives. Since this is a plan amendment to address GRSG conservation, many decisions from the BLM and Forest Service land use plans are acceptable and reasonable.

Public input received during the scoping process was considered to ensure that all issues and concerns would be addressed, as appropriate, in developing the alternatives. The planning team developed planning issues to be addressed in the

LUPA, based on broad concerns or controversies related to conditions, trends, needs, and existing and potential uses of planning area lands and resources.

Additionally, the four resulting action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, D, and E) offer a range of possible management approaches for responding to planning issues and concerns identified through public scoping, and to maintain or increase GRSG abundance and distribution in the planning area. While the goal is the same across alternatives, each alternative contains a discrete set of objectives and management actions, and constitutes a separate LUPA with the potential for different long-range outcomes and conditions. Each alternative was analyzed to determine the relative effects and impacts on GRSG as well on other land uses, resource constraints, and socioeconomics.

The relative emphasis given to particular resources and resource uses differs as well, including allowable uses, restoration measures, and specific direction pertaining to individual resource programs. When resources or resource uses are mandated by law or are not tied to planning issues, there are typically few or no distinctions between alternatives. Meaningful differences among the five alternatives are described in Table 2.3, Summary Comparison of Alternatives by Decision, in the Draft LUPA/EIS.

As part of the alternatives development process, only alternatives that are considered practical and feasible from a technical and economic standpoint were considered for analysis in the Draft LUPA/EIS (CEQ's *NEPA's Forty Most Asked Questions*, question 2a; 46 *Federal Register* 18026 (1981)). Some alternatives were considered, but eliminated from analysis for a variety of reasons. See Section 2.8, Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis, in the Draft LUPA/EIS for explanations of these alternatives and why they were eliminated from consideration.

3. Based on this alternative development process, the BLM and Forest Service considered input from cooperating agencies, environmental organizations, and the public. As described in Section 2.1.2, Alternative B, of the Draft LUPA/EIS the BLM and Forest Service used the GRSG conservation measures in *A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures* (NTT 2011) to form management direction under Alternative B, which is consistent with the direction provided in BLM Instruction Memorandum (IM) 2012-044 (the BLM must consider all applicable conservation measures developed by the National Technical Team (NTT) in at least one alternative in the land use planning process).

During scoping for the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS, individuals and conservation groups submitted management direction recommendations for protection and conservation of GRSG and their habitat, including the Sage-grouse Recovery Alternative and proposed disturbance cap. The recommendations, in conjunction with resource allocation opportunities and internal sub-regional BLM and Forest Service input, were reviewed in order to develop management direction for GRSG under Alternative C (Draft LUPA/EIS, Section 2.1.3, Alternative C).

Alternative D incorporates adjustments to the NTT report (NTT 2011) to provide a balanced level of protection, restoration, enhancement, and use of resources and services to meet ongoing programs and land uses, and was developed in full cooperation with the cooperating agencies; taking note of the agencies' concerns with socioeconomic issues.

Alternative E1 is based on the State of Utah's *Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-grouse in Utah*, and would apply to all BLM-administered and National Forest System lands located in Utah. Alternative E2 is based on the State of Wyoming's Governor's Executive Orders 2011-05 and 2013-3 with adjustments by the Forest Service interdisciplinary team, which includes members of the Wyoming Governor's Office.

In Section 2.8 of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the Garfield County Alternative was analyzed but not considered in detail in the Draft LUPA/EIS primarily because it is contained within the existing range of alternatives (see Section 2.8.6 of the Draft LUPA/EIS, County Sage-Grouse Management Plan). The disturbance concept of "no net loss" has been added to the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS in the Proposed Plans.

Whether GRSG is listed as threatened or endangered by the USFWS is outside the jurisdiction of the BLM and Forest Service and beyond the scope of this EIS. As noted in the Purpose and Need, the BLM and Forest Service were to consider regulatory mechanisms that would protect the species and its habitat. As such, the BLM and Forest Service did not develop alternatives should the USFWS choose to list or not list the GRSG (see Section 2.8.9, USFWS-Listing Alternative, of the Draft LUPA/EIS).

4. The BLM is currently in full compliance with existing laws, rules, regulations, and policy, including BLM Manual 6840, Special Status Species Management, rangeland health regulations, found at 43 CFR 4180.2, 36 CFR 219.42 and Forest Service Manual 1920, and Forest Service Handbook 1909.12. As discussed in the USFWS's *12-Month Findings for Petitions to List the Greater Sage-Grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus) as Threatened or Endangered*, these current existing regulatory mechanisms have not been sufficient to prevent GRSG habitat loss or population declines. See Section 2.8.8, BLM Policies and Regulations, of the Draft LUPA/EIS for a detailed explanation on why an alternative based on compliance with BLM Manual 6840 and rangeland health regulations was considered but excluded from detailed analysis.
5. In determining the disturbance cap level for each alternative, the BLM and Forest Service utilized the recommendations and input specific to each alternative. For example, for Alternative B, the BLM and Forest Service utilized the cap levels recommended in the NTT report. Conservation measures included in Alternative B focus primarily on PHMA and include a 3-percent disturbance cap in PHMA. PHMA areas have the highest conservation value to maintaining or increasing GRSG populations. Ample literature establishes a relationship between disturbance, and GRSG occupancy and persistence. Two papers in particular establish thresholds of disturbance related to development and GRSG persistence. Section 4.2.2,

Alternative A, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, specifically references to Kiroi 2012 and Knick 2013, which are recent studies done on disturbance thresholds and GRSG. Based on this literature, the alternatives consider a range of appropriate disturbance caps.

While the disturbance caps would set a particular level of disturbance, the implementation of the disturbance caps would occur after the LUPA is approved in the record of decision (ROD). The BLM and Forest Service inventoried the habitat with the best available information at the time of the Draft LUPA/EIS, but would also perform additional in-depth analysis and inventory within WAFWA Management Zones in Utah at the implementation stage. The BLM and Forest Service have added **Appendix L**, Baseline Disturbance Inventory, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS to more accurately assess current disturbance levels and potential impacts across the planning area. In addition, **Appendix E**, Greater Sage-Grouse Disturbance Cap Guidance, was added to provide additional detail such as enhanced descriptions of what types of activities would count towards the disturbance totals, where disturbance activities would count against the cap, reclamation and habitat requirements for a disturbed area for both temporary and permanent disturbance, and how the cap would be implemented, calculated, and monitored.

Future activities that are expected to cause disturbance, such as ROW/special use permit (SUP) applications, would be evaluated and approved on a case-by-case basis based upon site-specific determination of ability to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts on GRSG habitat at the implementation phase. A proposed project's contribution to the amount of disturbance on the landscape will be evaluated during site-specific NEPA analysis. Per requirements of the NEPA, the BLM and Forest Service consider disturbance on private lands when making land use decisions since actions on private lands could impact the agencies' ability to manage GRSG. So while the BLM and Forest Service cannot make planning or implementation decisions on private lands, the disturbance levels of nearby private lands will be considered in this planning process and future project-level decisions. Clarifications to the document have been made in the Proposed Plan Amendments (**Section 2.6**) and **Appendix E** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 4.4 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS did not provide sufficient affected environment information to meet NEPA requirements, and failed to include local and site-specific information.

Response

The CEQ regulations require an EIS to “succinctly describe the environment of the area(s) to be affected or created by the alternatives under consideration. The description shall be no longer than is necessary to understand the effects of the alternatives. Data and analyses in a statement shall be commensurate with the importance of the impact, with less important material summarized, consolidated, or simply referenced. Agencies shall avoid useless bulk in statements and shall concentrate effort and attention on important issues” (40 CFR 1502.15). Additionally, the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS is a programmatic NEPA effort to conserve GRSG and

its habitat across a broad geographic area. As such, the BLM and the Forest Service described the current conditions and trends in the affected environment broadly, across a range of conditions, appropriate to program-level land use planning actions.

The BLM and the Forest Service complied with these regulations in describing the affected environment. The requisite level of information necessary to make a reasoned choice among the alternatives in an EIS is based on the scope and nature of the proposed decision. The affected environment provided in Chapter 3, Affected Environment, and various appendices in the Draft LUPA/EIS, including Appendices A, N, O, P, and Q, is sufficient to support, at the general land use planning-level of analysis, the environmental impact analysis resulting from management actions presented in the Draft LUPA/EIS. For example, listing every water quality-impaired stream within the planning area by name would not provide useful information at this broad-scale analysis, particularly where the proposed plan alternatives did not vary the level of riparian protections to provide reduced levels for nonimpaired streams. The riparian protections within each alternative were applied to all streams, whether or not they were water quality-impaired. However, understanding the miles of impaired streams, as presented in the Draft LUPA/EIS at Section 3.6.1, Conditions Statewide, of the Draft LUPA/EIS is useful in establishing a baseline by which the BLM and Forest Service may analyze the relative effects of each alternative's broad-based approach.

Since this is a programmatic effort, county-by-county or planning-by-planning area level of detail is not consistent with the level of detail required for a programmatic analysis. Programmatic documents are regional in scope and place emphasis on developing broad environmental policies, programs, or plans. Site-specific data is important during implementation level decisions, which may be tiered to the decisions made in this document. Data scales include broad scale, midscale, fine scale, and site scale. The Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS utilizes midscale (e.g., Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies [WAFWA] Management Zones) and fine scale (e.g., sub-region data). The Draft LUPA/EIS uses the best available information as generated and provided by the organizations and agencies with authority, and special expertise to provide that information on a planning scale.

The LUPA/EIS contains only planning actions and does not include any implementation actions. A more quantified or detailed and specific analysis would be required only if the scope of the decision included implementation actions. As specific actions that may affect the area come under consideration, the BLM and Forest Service will conduct subsequent NEPA analyses that include site-specific project and implementation-level actions. Site-specific concerns and more detailed environmental descriptions will be addressed when project-level reviews are tiered to the analysis in this LUPA/EIS (40 CFR 1502.20, 40 CFR 1508.28). In addition, as required by NEPA, the public will be offered the opportunity to participate in the NEPA process for any site-specific actions.

The BLM and Forest Service added an additional appendix in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS describing preliminary baseline disturbance information in (see **Appendix L**), including a methodology for how baseline disturbance was calculated. Information that the BLM and Forest Service determined necessary to provide more complete information was also added to the document to help arrive at a final decision, including GRSG population data in **Table 3.2**,

Estimated Population and Acres of GRSG Habitat within Population Areas, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 4.5 - GIS Data and Analysis

Summary

The BLM and Forest Service has failed to take the “hard look” required by NEPA because it failed to use adequate baseline data for its analysis. Commenters noted several issues with the Geographic Information System (GIS) data and analysis conducted in the Draft LUPA/EIS:

1. The maps and data layers do not provide enough detail to address "local ecological site variability". The data are too coarse and do not provide assurances to more localized decision making; some habitat type areas are inaccurately identified in the maps.
2. BLM and Forest Service used old data layers to develop maps, including PPMA [now known as PHMA], PGMA [now known as GHMA], and population area boundaries; BLM and Forest Service should use the newer data layers that local and state agencies developed.
3. The agencies must provide a mechanism to ground-truth the proposed PPMA and PGMA [now known as PHMA and GHMA] habitats on a project-specific basis in order to effectively assess the potential impacts of management decisions.

Response

Before beginning the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS and throughout the planning effort, the BLM and Forest Service considered the availability of data from all sources, adequacy of existing data, data gaps, and the type of data necessary to support informed management decisions at the land-use plan level. The data needed to support broad-scale analysis of the planning area are substantially different than the data needed to support site-specific analysis of projects. The LUPA/EIS data and information is presented in map and table form, and is sufficient to support the broad-scale analyses required for land use planning.

Additionally, the BLM and the Forest Service consulted with, collected, and incorporated data from other agencies and sources, including but not limited to the USFWS, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and the Public Lands Policy Coordination Office within the Governor’s Office. Considering GRSG related data layers, including occupied habitat, GRSG management areas, and lek data, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources is continually collecting and refining population and habitat data for species, and the Draft LUPA/EIS notes that the BLM and Forest Service would incorporate any refinements or updates once the data was made available.

As a result of these actions, the data gathered by the BLM and Forest Service is of the appropriate scale and provided an adequate analysis that led to an adequate disclosure of the potential environmental consequences of the alternatives.

A land use planning-level decision is broad in scope and, therefore, does not require an exhaustive gathering and monitoring of baseline data. The baseline data provides the necessary basis to make informed land use plan-level decisions. Land use plan-level analyses are typically broad and qualitative rather than focused on site-specific actions (BLM Land Use Planning

Handbook H-1601-1, Chapter II, A-B at 11-13 and Chapter IV, B at 29; Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 – Land Management Planning). The BLM and Forest Service will conduct subsequent project-specific NEPA analyses for projects proposed for implementation under the land use plan. The subsequent NEPA analyses for project-specific actions will tier to the land-use planning analysis and evaluate project impacts at the appropriate site-specific level (40 CFR 1502.20, 40 CFR 1508.28). As required by NEPA, the public will have the opportunity to participate in the NEPA process for site-specific actions.

Commenters noted that in the discussion of the data from the Baseline Environmental Report (BER), "...some local data may have been omitted." (Draft LUPA/EIS, Section 3.1). Since the BER report covers many states across the western United States, broad-scale national data were deemed to be the most consistent data available. As such, data that may also be collected at a state-wide level by different state agencies were omitted from that report. This allows for a more consistent comparison across state and sub-region boundaries. State data was utilized in the document for other purposes that did not require a region-wide comparison. County-level data was deemed to be too fine scale for the purposes of this analysis.

Section 4.6 - Indirect Impacts

Summary

Indirect impacts discussed in the Draft LUPA/EIS are inadequate because the environmental consequences of the no action alternative (Alternative A) compared with the other alternatives do not differentiate between actual impacts and theoretical impacts.

The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to accurately describe the assumptions used to complete big game and impact analysis.

Response

Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences, of the Draft LUPA/EIS presents the impacts anticipated from the various alternatives based on best available science and professional judgment. Effects from the current management situation are described in Chapter 3 and projected impacts from each alternative are identified in Chapter 4.

As required by 40 CFR 1502.16, the Draft and Final LUPAs/EISs provides a discussion of the environmental impacts of the alternatives including the no action alternative, any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided should the alternatives be implemented (e.g., impacts from existing infrastructure), the relationship between short-term uses of the built environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved in the proposal should it be implemented. The Draft and Final LUPAs/EISs provide sufficiently detailed information to aid in determining whether to proceed with the preferred alternative or make a reasoned choice among the other alternatives in a manner such that the public could have an understanding of the environmental consequences associated with the alternatives, in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.1.

Because land use plan-level decisions are typically broad and qualitative rather than quantitative or focused on site-specific actions (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1, Chapter II, A-B

at 11-13 and Chapter IV, B at 29; Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 – Land Management Planning), the associated analyses are correspondingly high level.

As stated in **Section 4.2.1**, the discussion of impacts is based on best available data. Knowledge of the planning area and decision area and professional judgment, based on observation and analysis of conditions and responses in similar areas, are used for environmental impacts where data are limited.

Section 4.7 - Cumulative Impacts

Summary

The BLM and Forest Service need to consider the cumulative effects of the adjoining sub-regional GRSG planning efforts, and the other actions occurring on state and private lands in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, including reasonably foreseeable future actions on private lands, which were omitted from the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Response

The BLM and Forest Service have complied fully with the requirements of 40 CFR 1508.7 and prepared a cumulative impact analysis to the extent possible based on the broad nature and scope of the proposed management options under consideration at the land use planning level. The BLM and Forest Service thoroughly explained their consideration and analysis of cumulative effects in the Draft LUPA/EIS in Section 4.24, Cumulative Impacts. The Draft LUPA/EIS considered the present effects of past actions, to the extent that they are relevant, and present and reasonably foreseeable (not highly speculative) federal and nonfederal actions, taking into account the relationship between the proposed alternatives and these reasonably foreseeable actions. This discussion summarizes CEQ guidance from June 24, 2005, stating that “[g]enerally, agencies can conduct an adequate cumulative effects analysis by focusing on the current aggregate effects of past actions without delving into the historical details of individual past actions.” This is because a description of the current state of the environment inherently includes the effects of past actions. Information on the current conditions is more comprehensive and more accurate for establishing a useful starting point for cumulative effects analysis. The BLM and Forest Service explicitly described their assumptions regarding proposed projects and other reasonably foreseeable future actions. On National Forest System lands, reasonably foreseeable actions are those that would occur under their current land use plans from a broad-scale perspective. Additionally, as the analysis is broad scale, it is not limited to effects on just federally-administered lands, but looks across jurisdictional boundaries. While decisions made from this EIS will only apply to BLM-administered and National Forest System lands, the analysis was conducted statewide regardless of land status to facilitate statewide planning.

The Draft LUPA/EIS contains a qualitative discussion of cumulative effects at the WAFWA Management Zone scale to set the stage for a more quantitative analysis contained in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. Additional quantitative cumulative analysis was added to the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS in **Section 5.4**, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse.

Per 40 CFR 1503, the BLM provided cooperating agencies the opportunity to comment on cumulative impacts and reasonably foreseeable future actions during both the comment period for the administrative draft LUPA/EIS and the public comment period for the Draft LUPA/EIS.

All reasonably foreseeable future actions that cooperating agencies provided were added to **Table 5.2**, Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 4.9 - Monitoring and Mitigation

Summary

1. BLM and Forest Service need to release the monitoring strategy for public comment and produce a supplemental EIS to address this change.
2. The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS needs to clarify the relationship between the disturbance thresholds and the monitoring framework.

Response

The Draft LUPA/EIS included a description of the monitoring framework, mitigation strategy, and adaptive management in Chapter 2, Alternatives. The Draft LUPA/EIS also included a monitoring framework and mitigation strategy in the Appendices. These sections of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS have been revised with more detailed information (**Sections 2.7.1**, Adaptive Management Plan, **2.7.2**, Monitoring for the Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy, and **2.7.3**, Regional Mitigation, and **Appendix B**, Adaptive Management, **Appendix C**, Greater Sage-Grouse Monitoring Framework, and **Appendix D**, Mitigation Strategy Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA).

The Greater Sage-Grouse Monitoring Framework in **Appendix C** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS outlines the methods that the BLM and Forest Service will use to monitor, and evaluate, the implementation and effectiveness of the planning strategy and the land use plans to conserve the species and its habitat. The regulations for the BLM (43 CFR 1610.4-9) and the Forest Service (36 CFR 219.12) require that land use plans establish intervals and standards, as appropriate, for monitoring and evaluations, based on the sensitivity of the resource to the decisions involved.

Implementation monitoring results will provide information to allow the BLM and Forest Service to evaluate the extent that the decisions from the BLM resource management plans and Forest Service land and resource management plans to conserve GRSG and their habitat have been implemented. Effectiveness monitoring will provide the information to evaluate whether BLM and Forest Service actions achieve the objective of the planning strategy (BLM IM 2012-044) and the conservation measures contained in the land use plans to conserve GRSG populations and their habitats.

Monitoring efforts will include data for measurable quantitative indicators of sagebrush availability, anthropogenic disturbance levels, and sagebrush conditions. This information will assist the BLM and the Forest Service with identifying whether or not they are achieving their land use plan goals and objectives, reaching an adaptive management soft or hard trigger, as well as providing information relative to the disturbance cap. Specifically, habitat degradation (percent of human activity in a biologically significant unit), habitat availability (percent of sagebrush in a biologically significant unit), and habitat degradation intensity (density of energy facilities and mining locations) were gathered to inform the disturbance cap objective (MA-GRSG-3 of the BLM Proposed Plan Amendment, and GRSG-GEN-ST-001 of the Forest Service-Utah Proposed Plan Amendment).

Mitigation will be applied to all implementation actions/decisions that take place on federal lands within GRSG habitat during the life of this plan amendment. The mitigation strategy (**Appendix D** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS) was developed to follow the BLM's Regional Mitigation Manual MS-1794, Forest Service Handbook FSH 1909.15, and CEQ 40 CFR 1508.20.

The Mitigation Strategy, through the mitigation hierarchy, guides the BLM and Forest Service. The hierarchy direction is to first, avoid impacts entirely by not taking a certain action or parts of an action, second, if unable to avoid, minimize impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of an action or parts of an action, and lastly, if avoidance or minimizing is not possible, compensate impacts associated with future implementation actions. If residual impacts to GRSG from implementation-level actions remain after applying avoidance or minimization measures, then compensatory mitigation projects will be used to offset the residual impacts in an effort to achieve the land use plan goals and objectives. As articulated in **Appendix D** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, compensatory mitigation will occur on sites that have the potential to yield the greatest conservation benefit to the GRSG, regardless of land ownership. These sites should be sufficiently "durable." According to BLM Manual 1794, durability is defined as "the administrative, legal, and financial assurances that secure and protect the conservation status of a compensatory mitigation site, and the ecological benefits of a compensatory mitigation project, for at least as long as the associated impacts persist.

Specific mitigation strategies, based on the Mitigation Strategy Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA (**Appendix D**), will be developed by regional teams (at the WAFWA Management Zone level) within one year of the issuance of the ROD. These strategies will guide the application of the mitigation hierarchy to address GRSG impacts within that WAFWA Management Zone. The WAFWA Management Zone Regional Mitigation Strategy will be applicable to BLM-administered and National Forest System lands within the Zone's boundaries. Subsequently, the BLM and Forest Service's NEPA analyses for implementation-level decisions that might impact GRSG will include analysis of mitigation recommendations from the relevant WAFWA Management Zone Regional Mitigation Strategy(ies).

Section 5 - FLPMA

Summary

The alternatives are overly focused on protecting GRSG, would unnecessarily restrict energy development, and they don't meet FLPMA's multiple use mandate requirement. BLM and Forest Service must comply with the provisions in FLPMA and the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (16 USC 528–531) related to closing areas of 5,000 and 100,000 acres to minerals or other uses.

Response

As stated on page 2-3 of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the alternatives "meet the purpose and need for the LUPA." The LUPA is a targeted amendment specifically addressing goals, objectives, and conservation measures to conserve GRSG and respond to USFWS's *12-Month Findings for Petitions to List the Greater Sage-Grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus) as Threatened or Endangered* that the GRSG is "warranted" to be listed under the Endangered Species Act (see Proposed LUPA/Final EIS **Section 1.2**, Purpose and Need).

FLPMA (Section 103(c)) defines "multiple use" as the management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people. Accordingly, the BLM is responsible for the complicated task of striking a balance among the many competing uses to which public lands can be put. The BLM's multiple-use mandate does not require that all uses be allowed on all areas of the public lands. The purpose of the mandate is to require the BLM to evaluate and choose an appropriate balance of resource uses which involves tradeoffs between competing uses. The FLPMA also directs the BLM to develop and periodically revise or amend its resource management plans, which guide management of BLM-administered lands, and provides an arena for making decisions regarding how public lands would be managed and used.

Consistent with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (16 USC 528–531), the Forest Service manages National Forest System land to sustain the multiple use of its renewable resources in perpetuity while maintaining the long-term health and productivity of the land. Resources are managed through a combination of approaches and concepts for the benefit of human communities and natural resources. Land management plans guide sustainable, integrated resource management of the resources within the plan area in the context of the broader landscape, giving due consideration to the relative values of the various resources in particular areas. The Forest Service is required by statute to have a national planning rule: the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, as amended by the National Forest Management Act of 1976, requires the Secretary of Agriculture to issue regulations under the principles of the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 for the development and revision of land management plans.

Both the BLM's and Forest Service's planning processes allowed for analysis and consideration of a range of alternatives in the Draft LUPA/EIS that identified and incorporated appropriate regulatory mechanisms to conserve, enhance, and restore GRSG habitat, and to eliminate, reduce, or minimize threats to this habitat to ensure that a balanced management approach was recommended. The Draft LUPA/EIS includes alternatives that provide a greater and lesser degree of restrictions in various use programs, but would not eliminate or invalidate any valid existing development rights.

The BLM is aware of their requirements to notify the US Congress under Sections 202 and 204 of FLPMA. When the BLM makes a decision on such actions, which will occur when the ROD is finalized, the appropriate notifications related to the decision made at that time will be submitted to the US Congress, as necessary.

Section 5.1 - Inventories

Summary

The BLM should complete detailed habitat assessments on a project-by-project basis since the data is not at a fine enough scale to determine where non-GRSG habitat exists in mapped habitat areas.

Response

As part of the LUPA process, the BLM and Forest Service will make land use planning decisions and utilize data appropriate for that scale of planning and analysis. Conducting field investigations prior to construction is a standard requirement at the implementation level, with involvement of

private industry, the BLM or Forest Service, and other appropriate parties. The LUPA/EIS does not define who will conduct these investigations since this decision will be made at the implementation level. See response in **Section 4.9**, Monitoring and Mitigation, of this comment report for details on the monitoring framework and mitigation strategy.

Section 5.2 - Consistency with Other State, County, or Local Plans

Summary

The BLM's actions considered in the alternatives conflict with local and state agency plans and policies; furthermore, the BLM did not coordinate with agencies to ensure that conservation measures are as consistent as possible with other planning jurisdictions. A request was made for BLM to provide a detailed listing of every federal law that overrides county plans with an accompanying description of the limits of the law and its impacts on county plan, program, and policy.

Response

To the extent possible under existing law, the BLM's land use plans must be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans of Indian tribes, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments (see 43 CFR 1610). The BLM has worked closely with State and local governments during preparation of the Draft LUPA/EIS. The Draft LUPA/EIS lists the cooperating agencies actively involved in the planning process in Section 5.3, Cooperating Agencies. As described in Section 5.4, Coordination and Consistency, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the BLM requested the state, county, and tribal government cooperating agencies assist in the consistency reviews by reviewing the range of alternatives associated with the Draft LUPA/EIS, and identify potential inconsistencies between the alternatives and each agency's applicable plans. This allows the state, local, and tribal cooperating agencies to use their special expertise regarding the familiarity with their own state, local, or tribal plans. On the local level, it is a county's responsibility to accurately identify and communicate any inconsistencies between that county's plan and the proposed alternative.

The BLM works to find a balance among uses and needs as reflected in these local government plans, and has done so in the preparation of the LUPA/EIS; a list of these plans can be found in Section 1.8, Relationship to Other Policies, Plans, and Programs, of the Draft LUPA/EIS. The BLM is aware that there is specific State or local laws relevant to aspects of public land management that are discrete from, and independent of, federal law. However, the BLM is bound by federal law. As a consequence, there may be inconsistencies that cannot be reconciled. The FLPMA requires that BLM's land use plans be consistent with State and local plans "to the extent...practical." In a situation where State and local plans conflict with federal law, there will be an inconsistency that cannot be resolved. Thus, while State, county and federal planning processes, under FLPMA, are required to be as integrated and consistent as practical, the federal agency planning process is not bound by or subject to county plans, planning processes, or planning stipulations. While the BLM is not obligated to seek consistency, the agency is required to describe the inconsistencies between the proposed action and the other plans, policies, and/or controls within the EIS, so that the State and local governments have a complete understanding of the impacts of the Proposed Plan on State and local management options. This information has been updated in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS in **Section 1.8**, Relationship to Other Policies, Plans, and Programs.

The BLM coordinates with cooperating agencies commensurate with each agency's recognized jurisdiction or expertise. In areas where the State of Utah has clear jurisdiction, such as wildlife populations, the BLM has worked closely with that State agency. In cases where a county or agency has expertise, such as local county socioeconomic information, the BLM has worked closely with the group to incorporate the information into the EIS.

State of Wyoming 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 noncore habitat areas in the State of Wyoming. This strategy is the basis of Alternative E2 being considered in the Draft LUPA/EIS. The Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Proposed LUPA/Final EIS will be consistent with the Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 5.4 - Forest Service Planning Role

Summary

Forest Service should have used the 2012 planning regulations and must explain why they used the 1982 regulations.

Response

The BLM and the Forest Service began working together to address conservation of GRSG and its habitat in 2010. At that time, the Forest Service's 2012 Planning Rule was not final; it became final May 9, 2012. For plan amendments initiated before May 9, 2012, the Forest Service may complete and approve the amendments under the prior planning regulations, including its transition provisions (36 CFR part 219, published at 36 CFR parts 200 to 299, revised as of July 1, 2010). Land use plan amendments associated with the GRSG conservation effort are using the 1982 planning rule procedures that are allowed under the transition procedures of the prior planning rule. The 1982 planning rule procedures may be found in 36 CFR parts 200 to 299, Revised as of July 1, 2000 or at <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/includes/nfmareg.html>.

Section 6 - Other Laws

Summary

The BLM has failed to document how the EIS and/or actions considered in the EIS comply with other laws, including the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, Data Quality Act, Regulatory Flexibility Act, Onshore Orders regulating oil and gas development, Energy Policy Act of 2005, Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 2000, Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970, Federal Advisory Committee Act, 2000 Defense Department Appropriations Act, and the Taylor Grazing Act.

Response

In Section 1.8.1, Planning Criteria, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, there is a criterion stating that all alternatives would comply with existing laws, regulations, and policies. The BLM and Forest Service have reviewed all actions in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS and found them to be consistent and within the bounds of all required laws, regulations, and policies.

Section 7 – Greater Sage-Grouse

Section 7.1 - NTT Report/Findings

Summary

Commenters had two opposing views regarding the NTT report. One group suggested that the BLM and Forest Service should not use the NTT report for various reasons, including that it:

- Is not based on local conditions.
- Has methodological and technical errors.
- Was not peer-reviewed.
- Has authors with conflicts of interests.

In addition, BLM IM 2012-044 directing consideration of the NTT report expired in September 2013, prior to the release of the Draft LUPA/EIS, and thus the NTT report does not need to be considered. The agencies have not justified the need for using the NTT report as the basis for GRSG management direction.

Another group suggested that the BLM and Forest Service did not go far enough in conserving GRSG by weakening the recommendations of the NTT report; the findings in the NTT report should have been used as is, without any changes.

Response

The NTT report was not the sole source of management decisions for the range of alternatives. A NTT was formed as an independent, science-based team to ensure that the best information about how to manage the GRSG is reviewed, evaluated, and provided to the BLM and Forest Service in the planning process. The group produced a report in December 2011 that identified science-based management considerations to promote sustainable GRSG populations. The NTT report was intended to be used at a programmatic scale and may not reflect local conditions. The NTT report was a synthesis of peer-reviewed literature. The NTT report cited 122 references including published papers from formal scientific literature such as *Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Conservation Biology*, *Biological Conservation*, *Wildlife Biology*, *BioScience* and others, as well as graduate theses and dissertations, conservation strategies, USFWS 2010 finding, and others representing the best available science.

GRSG conservation measures in *A Report on National Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Measures* (NTT 2011) were used to form the BLM and Forest Service management direction under Alternative B, which is consistent with the direction provided in BLM IM 2012-044 and Forest Service Interim Conservation Recommendations for Greater Sage-Grouse and Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat (2012). The BLM IM required the BLM to consider all applicable conservation measures developed by the NTT in at least one alternative in the land use planning process. Forest Service recommendations provided similar guidance for National Forest System lands until the RODs are signed.

The BLM is implementing IM 2012-044 through the National GRSG planning effort. When an IM expires without being superseded, it can still be applicable and provide guidance to the BLM.

The fact that IM 2012-044 expired does not mean the BLM has no authority to continue to analyze the conservation measures identified in the NTT report. The BLM is appropriately considering and evaluating the measures in the NTT report, in addition to any other relevant science, through the National GRSG planning process.

Section 7.3 – COT Report

Summary

Commenters felt that the USFWS Conservation Objectives report (COT report) was flawed for various reasons, including:

- Data quality issues and not representing the best available information.
- Subjectivity and overly biased.
- Not being comprehensive.
- Conflict of interest among peer reviewers.

As a result, commenters felt it should not have been used as the basis of the EIS alternatives.

Response

In March 2012, the USFWS initiated a collaborative approach to develop range-wide conservation objectives for the GRSG to inform the 2015 decision about the need to list the species and to inform the collective conservation efforts of the many partners working to conserve the species. In March 2013, this team of state and USFWS representatives released the COT report based upon the best scientific and commercial data available at the time that identifies key areas for GRSG conservation, key threats in those areas, and the extent to which they need to be reduced for the species to be conserved. The report serves as guidance to federal land management agencies, state GRSG teams, and others in focusing efforts to achieve effective conservation for this species. The USFWS will use the COT report to evaluate the alternatives and measure the sufficiency of regulatory mechanisms in reducing threats for the various priority areas for conservation.

Additionally, none of the alternatives in the Draft LUPA/EIS are exclusively based on the COT report recommendations. For example, Alternative D incorporates adjustments to the NTT report (NTT 2011) based on interdisciplinary team and cooperating agency input, and addresses local ecological site variability to provide a balanced level of protection, restoration, enhancement, and use of resources and services to meet ongoing programs and land uses. During development of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, the BLM and Forest Service have continued to work with the USFWS to ensure the proposed plan meets the COT objectives to the extent possible.

Section 7.4 - Policy Guidance

Summary

The BLM and Forest Service failed to acknowledge that the agencies already have existing guidance and policies to manage for special status species, including candidate species such as GRSG.

Response

The BLM and Forest Service do have existing laws, regulations, and guidance for special status species including GRSG. These are listed in Section 1.7.1, Preliminary Planning Criteria, and Section 1.8, Relationship to Other Policies, Plans, and Programs, of the Draft LUPA/EIS. While such relevant guidance does exist, the USFWS finding stated that “existing regulatory mechanisms are inadequate to protect the species. The absence of adequate regulatory mechanisms is a significant threat to the species, now and in the foreseeable future.” This National GRSG planning process is intended to provide more specific, planning-level direction for land managers in order to conserve GRSG and by providing consistent regulatory mechanisms to further GRSG conservation.

Section 7.5 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

Commenters provided specific recommendations to meet the COT report objectives. Commenters had specific issues with the range of management actions specific to GRSG:

- The need for changes or additions to the existing alternatives and maps, such as the noise level considerations, requirements for review by a GRSG implementation working group, and survey requirements.
- Management actions are arbitrary, without scientific backing. Commenters also suggested new literature that should be included in the alternatives.
- The BLM needs to provide more details on various aspects of the alternatives for clarification, including wintering habitat, buffers, and disturbance cap.
- The BLM considered an insufficient range of alternatives.
- The BLM needs to explain the scientific basis and methodology for its identification of PPMA and PGMA [now known as PHMA and GHMA].
- Site-specific decisions (Conditions of Approval [COAs]) should be removed from the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Response

As described in Sections 7.1, NTT Report/Findings, and 7.3, COT Report, in this comment report, the BLM and Forest Service used the best available scientific data, including recent sources such as published scientific literature, the COT report, NTT report, and the BER to develop management recommendations, strategies and regulatory guidelines to meet GRSG management objectives in the 2006 WAFWA Greater Sage-grouse Comprehensive Conservation Strategy.

Through this land use planning process, the BLM and Forest Service identified PHMA and GHMA. PHMA are BLM-administered and National Forest System lands identified to be managed as having the highest value to maintaining sustainable GRSG populations. GHMA are BLM-administered and National Forest System lands identified as requiring special management to sustain GRSG populations, but that are not as important as PHMA. The PHMA and GHMA are derived from and generally follow the preliminary priority habitat and preliminary general habitat boundaries, respectively, but have been modified in extent based on the objectives of

each alternative. Likewise, management strategies applied to the PHMA and GHMA may vary by alternative.

Several commenters provided additional citations, references, and information to be considered as part of the Draft LUPA/EIS. The BLM and Forest Service reviewed the suggested studies and references to determine if they presented new information that would need to be incorporated into the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, were references already included in the Draft LUPA/EIS, or if the references provided the same information as already used or described in the Draft LUPA/EIS. Any study or reference that provided new relevant information was incorporated into the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Impacts on wintering GRSB and habitats are discussed in Section 4.2, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse, of the Draft LUPA/EIS. Restoration of historical GRSB habitat is considered in that section.

As noted above in the response in **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah GRSB LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA. The agencies considered a range of alternatives that would meet the purpose and need. Section 2.8, Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis, in the Draft LUPA/EIS, provides rationale regarding alternatives that would not meet the purpose and need. The alternatives developed support a broad-scale analysis of the planning area and are substantially different than the alternatives and information needed to support site-specific analysis of projects. COAs are an implementation level action but are appropriately disclosed at this programmatic planning level.

Also as previously noted, the relative emphasis given to particular resources and resource uses differs as well, including allowable uses, restoration measures, and specific direction pertaining to individual resource programs. When resources or resource uses are mandated by law or are not tied to planning issues, there are typically few or no distinctions between alternatives. Meaningful differences among the five alternatives are described in Table 2.1, Description of Alternatives A, B, C1, C2, D, E1, and E2, of the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Section 7.6 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Commenters provided several references and studies that the BLM and Forest Service did not consider in the Draft LUPA/EIS but should include or consider in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. Also, commenters questioned the accuracy and validity of the NTT report.

Response

As described in **Section 4.4**, Best Available Information and Baseline Data, of this comment report, the BLM and Forest Service considered the availability of data from all sources, adequacy of existing data, data gaps, and the type of data necessary to support informed management decisions at the land-use plan level. The data needed to support broad-scale analysis of the planning area are substantially different than the data needed to support site-specific analysis of projects. The LUPA/EIS data and information is presented in map and table form and is sufficient to support the broad-scale analyses required for land use planning.

Several commenters provided additional citations, references, and information to be considered as part of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. The BLM and Forest Service reviewed the suggested studies and references to determine if they presented new information that would need to be incorporated into the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, were references already included in the Draft LUPA/EIS, or if the references provided the same information as already used or described in the Draft LUPA/EIS. Any study or reference that provided new relevant information was incorporated into the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. The new information does not result in impacts not previously considered and analyzed within the spectrum of the alternatives in the Draft EIS, nor does it present a seriously different picture of the impacts.

Section 7.1, NTT Report/Findings, of this comment report details the accuracy and validity of the NTT report.

Section 7.7 - Impact Analysis

Summary

The BLM should revise some of their assumptions, including the assumption that the analysis did not include historic or potential habitat. The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to adequately analyze the impacts on GRSG and its habitat from other wildlife, infrastructure, grazing, and travel. The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to accurately describe the nature and type of effects to GRSG and their habitat from existing resource uses and activities. The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to analyze the effectiveness of current rangeland health standards. The BLM and Forest Service did not do enough analysis of impacts to GRSG outside PH and GH [now known as PHMA and GHMA]. The Draft LUPA/EIS is not consistent in its evaluation of indirect impacts associated with various disturbances. The thresholds concept is not adequately analyzed.

The BLM did not do enough analysis for actions in the priority habitat areas.

The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to analyze the impacts to GRSG from hunting.

Response

The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS provides an updated and expanded discussion of the environmental consequences, including the assumptions and disturbance thresholds, of the presented alternatives in **Section 4.3**, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse. As required by 40 CFR 1502.16, the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS provides a discussion of the environmental impacts of the alternatives including the proposed action, any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided should the alternatives be implemented, the relationship between short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources should the proposal be implemented. The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS provides sufficiently detailed information to aid in determining whether to proceed with the proposed plan in a manner such that the public could have an understanding of the environmental consequences associated with the alternatives, in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.1.

Land use plan-level analyses are typically broad and qualitative rather than quantitative or focused on site-specific actions (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1, Chapter II, A-B at 11-13 and Chapter IV, B at 29; Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 – Land Management Planning). The LUPA/EIS contains only planning actions and does not include any implementation actions.

A more quantified or detailed and specific analysis would be required only if the scope of the decision included implementation actions. As specific actions that may affect the area come under consideration, the BLM and Forest Service will conduct subsequent NEPA analyses that include site-specific project and implementation-level actions. The site-specific analyses will tier to the plan-level analysis and expand the environmental analysis when more specific information is known. In addition, as required by NEPA, the public will be offered the opportunity to participate in the NEPA process for implementation actions.

In its 12 month finding, the USFWS determined that the threat of hunting, “is not significant to the species such that it causes the species to warrant listing under the Act” (75 Federal Register 13966, March 23, 2010). Thus hunting was not analyzed in detail in the Draft LUPA/EIS. However, changes have been made to the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS to include more discussion regarding how the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources regulates hunting (**Section 1.6.3**, Issues Eliminated from Detailed Analysis), in addition to a description about hunting under applicable population areas (**Section 3.3.5**, Conditions in Population Areas).

Section 7.8 - Cumulative Impact Analysis

Summary

Commenters suggested that the BLM did not address the cumulative impacts of the GRSG actions on non-BLM-administered lands or non-National Forest System lands adequately. Commenters questioned the accuracy of cumulative impact analysis by WAFWA management zone.

Response

As described in **Section 4.7**, Cumulative Impacts, of this comment report, the BLM and Forest Service analyzed cumulative effects in the Draft LUPA/EIS in Section 4.24.3, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse. This discussion summarizes CEQ guidance from June 24, 2005, stating that “[g]enerally, agencies can conduct an adequate cumulative effects analysis by focusing on the current aggregate effects of past actions without delving into the historical details of individual past actions.” This is because a description of the current state of the environment inherently includes the effects of past actions. Information on the current conditions is more comprehensive and more accurate for establishing a useful starting point for cumulative effects analysis. The CEQ interpretation was accepted by the Ninth in *NW Env'tl. Advoc. v. Nat'l Marine Fisheries Serv.*, 460 F.3d 1125, 1141 (9th Cir. 2006). The BLM and Forest Service explicitly described their assumptions regarding proposed projects and other reasonably foreseeable future actions. On National Forest System lands, reasonably foreseeable actions are those that would occur under their current land use plans from a broad-scale perspective.

The BLM and Forest Service have complied with the requirements of 40 CFR 1508.7 and prepared a cumulative impact analysis to the extent possible based on the broad nature and scope of the proposed management options under consideration at the land use planning level.

The cumulative effects analysis on GRSG has been updated in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS (**Section 5.4**, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse) to include an expanded discussion of cumulative effects and a quantified analysis by WAFWA Management Zones.

Section 7.9 - Mitigation Measures

Summary

Commenters encouraged the BLM and Forest Service to incorporate in the LUPA management objectives and directive that permit development of an Enhanced Mitigation/Expanded Use Authorizations Program. More detail should be provided in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS regarding the ways in which the disturbance caps would be monitored and implemented. The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to provide hard evidence that compensatory mitigation actually increases GRSG populations. The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to provide science describing effectiveness of proposed mitigation. The BLM needs to clarify how mitigation applies to private lands and valid existing rights.

Commenters also provided specific mitigation measures to be considered in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Response

The Draft LUPA/EIS included a description of the monitoring framework and mitigation strategy in Chapter 2. The Draft LUPA/EIS also included a monitoring framework and mitigation strategy in the appendices. These sections of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS have been revised with more detailed information: **Sections 2.7.2**, Monitoring for the Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy, and **2.7.3**, Regional Mitigation, and **Appendix C** and **Appendix D**. See **Section 4.9**, Monitoring and Mitigation, of this comment report for a detailed response to mitigation and monitoring.

Section 8 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Section 8.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

The BLM can use administrative designations other than areas of critical environmental concern, such as Priority Areas, to protect GRSG.

Response

These types of designations are not in the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1). The BLM has determined that, under any of the alternatives, management proposed to protect GRSG would be equivalent to protections afforded via an area of critical environmental concern or other designation.

Section 9 - Air Resources

Section 9.3 - Impact Analysis

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to adequately analyze the effects to air quality from oil and gas development related to removing or restricting development of transmission lines in ROWs. Additionally, the Draft LUPA/EIS fails to adequately address the impacts to air quality from livestock grazing management actions.

Response

Section 4.4, Air Quality, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS has been updated to include additional analysis from removing or restricting development of transmission lines that are related to oil and gas development. The BLM and Forest Service have updated this information in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS to provide the necessary information to make informed land use plan-level decisions. Specifically, within oil and gas development areas such as the Uinta Basin, limiting ROWs would limit the development of power lines to run oil and gas well production equipment. Absent a source of electricity, new and existing well equipment would continue to be powered by natural gas- and diesel-fired compressors and generators.

In regards to impacts from livestock grazing management actions, land use plan-level analyses are typically broad and qualitative rather than quantitative or focused on site-specific actions (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1, Chapter II, A-B at 11-13 and Chapter IV, B at 29; Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 – Land Management Planning). The Draft LUPA/EIS contains only planning actions and does not include any implementation actions. A more quantified or detailed and specific analysis would be required only if the scope of the decision included implementation actions. As specific actions that may affect the area come under consideration, the BLM and Forest Service will conduct subsequent NEPA analyses that include site-specific project and implementation-level actions. The site-specific analyses will tier to the plan-level analysis and expand the environmental analysis when more specific information is known. In addition, as required by NEPA, the public will be offered the opportunity to participate in the NEPA process for implementation actions.

Section 10 - Climate Change

Section 10.3 - Impact Analysis

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS does not adequately address the impacts of livestock grazing in conjunction with climate change on vegetation communities. Climate change effects in the southern part of the Panguitch Population Area should be eliminated or identified as speculative based on inconclusive models. A consistent method to determine droughts should be adopted, including adaptive management measures such as for changes in grazing management, and made publically available.

Response

As described in **Section 4.6**, Indirect Impacts, of this comment report, the Draft LUPA/EIS provides an adequate discussion of the environmental consequences of the presented alternatives in Section 4.3, Air Quality, of the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Per the requirements of NEPA as noted in **Section 4.6** of this comment report, the effects of livestock grazing on GRSG and GRSG habitat are discussed in Section 4.2, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse, under Impacts from Domestic Livestock Forage Use (Herbivory) (page 4-37 of the Draft LUPA/EIS), including the compounding effects of drought conditions on the herbivory (page 4-41 of the Draft LUPA/EIS).

Regional climate change projections were developed as part of the Colorado Plateau Rapid Ecological Assessment (Bryce et al. 2012) and are summarized in Section 3.4.1, Conditions

Statewide (Climate Change) of the Draft LUPA/EIS. The methodology for the regional modeling is described in Section 3.2.7 of the Rapid Ecological Assessment and the results of the modeling are contained in Section 5.4 of the Rapid Ecological Assessment; both sections are available online at: http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/Landscape_Approach/reas/coloplateau.html. As described in Section 3.4.1 of the Draft LUPA/EIS (page 3-42), the northern part of the ecoregion may be considered transitional, while the southern part of the ecoregion to which the commenter refers is within the southwestern region subject to the influence of the summer monsoon.

Section 11 - Cultural Resources

Section 11.2 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to provide management actions that address cultural resources and areas.

Response

The BLM regulations in 43 CFR 1600 and the NEPA process detailed in the CEQ regulations in 40 CFR 1500 guide preparation of plan amendments. As stated in Section 1.2, Purpose and Need, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the purpose for the LUPA 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. Because this LUPA is a targeted amendment to conserve GRSG, the alternatives in the Draft LUPA/EIS included management actions for resource programs that could conserve GRSG and its habitat. Impacts to local customs and culture are analyzed in Section 4.22, Social and Economic Impacts, of the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Section 11.3 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

The BLM and Forest Service needs to update the cultural section to include a statement that the majority of cultural resources inventory has been associated with energy development projects.

Response

No cultural resource inventories were undertaken as part of this LUPA. Information from broad-scale assessments was used to help set the context for the decision-making process. As stated on page 3-140 of the Draft LUPA/EIS, new cultural resource discoveries have a progressive trend towards more sites being recorded and logged into the Utah State Historic Preservation Office's cultural resource database due to increases in actions permitted by federal agencies. Energy development is among the many "actions permitted by federal agencies" that increase discoveries.

Section 11.4 - Impact Analysis

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to include the impacts on modern cultural resources that qualify as historic properties during the life of the plan from GRSG management actions.

Response

As stated in Section 4.11.1, Methods and Assumptions, (Draft LUPA/EIS, page 4-160) potential impacts on cultural resources and their settings from subsequent undertakings (implementation of the planning decisions or site-specific project proposals) require separate compliance with NEPA and Section 106, and result in the continued identification, evaluation, and mitigation of cultural resources to the National Register of Historic Places. Per the Utah Protocol, and standard BLM and Forest Service operating procedures, effects on cultural resources eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and potentially eligible cultural resources would be mitigated. If previously undiscovered resources are identified during an undertaking, work would be suspended while the resource is evaluated and mitigated to avoid any further impact.

Section 12 - Fire and Fuels

Section 12.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

Commenters included information about the inclusion of fire in the disturbance cap and the effects of fire on sagebrush availability. Additionally, commenters questioned the use of various treatment types such as prescribed fire in GRSG habitats and appropriateness of best management practices.

Commenters suggested that Alternative D should be revised to meet the COT objectives for fire.

Response

The BLM and Forest Service considered a range of reasonable alternatives during the GRSG planning process in full compliance with the NEPA (see **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, of this comment report, as well as **Chapter 2** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS).

Within the range of alternatives, fire is included as disturbance under Alternatives C and E. Fire is not counted as disturbance under Alternatives B or D. Under the proposed plan fire would not be counted as disturbance but would be taken into consideration when evaluating habitat availability-percent sagebrush on the landscape. The LUPA/EIS also considers a range of alternatives considering use of prescribed fire within PHMA and use of certain best management practices.

As discussed in **Section 4.9**, Monitoring and Mitigation, of this comment report, the BLM and Forest Service have updated the monitoring framework and adaptive management approach in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS (Sections 2.7.1, Adaptive Management Plan, and 2.7.2, Monitoring for the Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy, and **Appendix B** and **Appendix C**). The monitoring framework and adaptive management approach account for habitat losses due to natural causes (fire and invasives) and/or population declines at the appropriate localized scale.

As indicated by the USFWS COT report, many of the measures recommended are currently included within the preferred alternative in the Draft LUPA/EIS. In addition, many of these measures are already used by the BLM and Forest Service as part of standard fire management policy and procedures. Specific language that states GRSG must occupy an area for restoration to be considered successful is included in the range of alternative under Alternative C.

Section 12.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to include citations indicating that implementation of fuel breaks in sagebrush systems where herbaceous forage remained reduce the ignition potential or spread of fire.

Response

Section 4.14, Wildland Fire Management, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS has been updated to include clarifications to the use of fuelbreaks as a treatment method. New reference material cited in the revised section has been included to the list of references in the References section of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 13 – Fish and Wildlife

Section 13.3 - Other Special Status Species

Section 13.3.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

USFWS Utah prairie dog focus areas (under consideration) should be excluded from GRSG population areas and GRSG management.

Response

The BLM and Forest Service would continue to cooperate with USFWS in order to determine and manage habitats to support the species. Site-specific analysis will occur at the implementation level.

Section 13.3.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Western banded gecko is not likely to occur in the Rich and Uintah population areas because the Mojave Desert, its habitat, is in the southwest part of Utah.

Response

The Western banded gecko is a Mojave Desert species and does not exist in sagebrush ecosystems; therefore, it is unlikely to be found in GRSG habitat. Western banded gecko has been removed from the **Table 3.34**, BLM and Forest Service Sensitive Species in the Planning Area, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 14 - Lands and Realty

Section 14.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

The comments were focused on several issues related to the alternatives presented in the Draft LUPA/EIS:

- I. Additions to the range of alternatives considered and provided information on the feasibility of the alternatives (e.g., implementation of the disturbance cap, perch

diverters, co-location, valid existing rights, overhead versus burying lines, and potential limitations on the expansion or modification of existing infrastructure).

2. ROW/SUP authorizations, including linear and site-type facilities.
3. The BLM and Forest Service must address both existing and future development, including foreseeable renewable energy development.
4. Management actions related to Title V ROWs in GRSG are not feasible; Title V ROWs maintain and improve roads for use by the public for safety and welfare. Commenters noted that Alternative D did not meet the “as is, where is” criteria for Title V.
5. Revisions to road and transmission line required design features (RDFs) in Appendix J of the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Response

As noted above in the response in **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA. The BLM and Forest Service complied with NEPA and the CEQ implementing regulations at 40 CFR 1500 in the development of alternatives for the Draft LUPA/EIS, including seeking public input and analyzing reasonable alternatives. The alternatives include management options for the planning area that would modify or amend decisions made in the LUPs, as amended, to meet the planning criteria, to address issues and comments from cooperating agencies and the public, or to provide a range of reasonable alternatives.

The impacts of the alternatives are adequately discussed in Chapter 4 of the Draft LUPA/EIS. None of the comments identified specific deficiencies in the existing analysis or provided additional information for inclusion in the impact analysis. Section 4.24, Cumulative Impacts, adequately discusses both existing and future development in the Draft LUPA/EIS.

As stated in the Draft LUPA/EIS in Section 1.7, Development of Planning Criteria, the LUPA will recognize all valid existing rights. **Section 4.19**, Lands and Realty, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS has been revised to include an analysis of any potential indirect effects to valid existing rights as a result of the alternatives.

Future ROW/SUP applications would be evaluated and approved on a case-by-case basis, based upon site-specific determination of ability to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts on GRSG habitat at the implementation phase, including application of current best management practices (e.g., Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidelines). A proposed project's contribution to the amount of disturbance on the landscape will be evaluated during site-specific NEPA analysis.

The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS provides information related to the management of activities and mitigation measures in PHMA where the 3 percent disturbance cap applies. The process for determining existing disturbance is described in **Appendix L** and mitigation is further addressed in **Appendix D** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

In granting Title V ROWs, the BLM would follow current policy and regulations.

As discussed in the Draft LUPA/EIS, the placement of power lines underground may result in greater short-term GRSG habitat disturbance. Over the long term and following appropriate reclamation of the surface above underground lines, there would be less surface disturbance. See **Section 4.3**, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS for a discussion of disturbance impacts from burying power lines.

RDFs in Appendix J of the Draft LUPA/EIS were clarified in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS (see **Appendix G**, Required Design Features), where appropriate. In addition, the Draft LUPA/EIS identified instances where RDFs are appropriate for implementation on a case-by-case basis.

Section 14.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Commenters stated that the BLM and Forest Service did not provide sufficient affected environment information to meet NEPA requirements. For example, commenters noted there was no baseline disturbance inventory. In addition, commenters identified reasonably foreseeable lands and realty actions that should be considered as part of the affected environment.

In addition, commenters raised concerns with the baseline assumption (as noted in Ellis 1984 and Connelly et al. 2000) that power lines and other vertical structures increase perching opportunities for raptors and increase the potential for GRSG to abandon leks).

Commenters also suggested that the BLM and Forest Service should have considered several additional references in their analysis, related to the relationship between GRSG and transmission lines. For example, commenters noted the Draft LUPA/EIS did not include studies that found underground power lines have more environmental impacts than overhead power line placement.

Response

As described in **Section 4.4**, Best Available Information and Baseline Data, of this comment report, the BLM and Forest Service considered the availability of data from all sources, adequacy of existing data, data gaps, and the type of data necessary to support informed management decisions at the land-use plan level. The data needed to support broad-scale analysis of the planning area are substantially different than the data needed to support site-specific analysis of projects. The LUPA/EIS data and information is presented in map and table form, and is sufficient to support the broad-scale analyses required for land use planning.

A baseline disturbance inventory (**Appendix L**) has been completed and data from the inventory has been incorporated in the affected environment (**Chapter 3**) and environmental consequences (**Chapter 4**) sections of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS where appropriate.

Several commenters provided additional citations, references, and information to be considered as part of the Draft LUPA/EIS. The BLM and Forest Service reviewed the suggested studies and references to determine if they presented new information that would need to be incorporated into the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, were references already included in the Draft LUPA/EIS, or if

the references provided the same information as already used or described in the Draft LUPA/EIS. Any study or reference that provided new relevant information was incorporated into the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 14.3 - Impact Analysis

Summary

Commenters stated that impacts on valid existing rights and state lands from lands and realty decisions needed to be clarified. Commenters noted the need to discuss impacts of lands and realty decisions on private lands, and the indirect effects on mineral and renewable energy development.

Response

As described in Section 4.6, Indirect Impacts, of this comment report, the Draft LUPA/EIS provides an adequate discussion of the environmental consequences, including the cumulative impacts, of the presented alternatives.

As specific actions that may affect the area come under consideration, the BLM and Forest Service will conduct subsequent NEPA analyses that include site-specific project and implementation-level actions. The site-specific analyses will tier to the plan-level analysis and expand the environmental analysis when more specific information is known. In addition, as required by NEPA, the public will be offered the opportunity to participate in the NEPA process for implementation actions.

Impacts of lands and realty decisions on renewable energy development are discussed in Section 4.19, Renewable Energy, of the Draft LUPA/EIS. Discussion of impacts of lands and realty decisions on nonfederal lands has been added to the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS in **Section 4.19**, Lands and Realty.

As stated in Section 1.7 of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the LUPA will recognize all valid existing rights, and will provide reasonable access to mineral leases. The potential impacts on valid existing mineral rights from lands and realty management decisions in this plan amendment are further discussed in **Section 4.21**, Minerals, and **Appendix R** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 14.4 - Cumulative Impact Analysis

Summary

Commenters expressed concern that the BLM and Forest Service did not consider the cumulative impacts of lands and realty decisions in the Utah planning area across the GRSR range.

Commenters also noted that the BLM and Forest Service did not adequately consider reasonably foreseeable conditions regarding renewable energy on all lands.

Response

As the decisions under consideration by the BLM and Forest Service are programmatic in nature and would not result in on-the-ground planning decision or actions (e.g., the BLM is not approving an application for permit to drill to start drilling), the scope of the analysis was conducted at a regional, programmatic level. The analysis focuses on the direct, indirect, and

cumulative impacts that could potentially result from on-the-ground changes. This analysis identifies impacts that may result in some level of change to the resources.

As described in Section 4.7, Cumulative Impacts, of this comment report, the Draft LUPA/EIS contains a qualitative discussion of cumulative effects at the WAFWA Management Zone scale to set the stage for a more quantitative analysis contained in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. Additional quantitative cumulative analysis was added to the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS in **Chapter 5, Cumulative Impacts**.

The Draft LUPA/EIS included a Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) scenario for wind projects in GRSG habitat (see Section 4.19, Renewable Energy, of the Draft LUPA/EIS). A list of specific reasonably foreseeable future actions proposed in GRSG habitat is also included in Table 4.55, Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions, of the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Section 15 - Leasable Minerals

Section 15.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

The comments were focused on several issues related to the alternatives presented in the Draft LUPA/EIS:

1. The Draft LUPA/EIS violates valid existing rights by applying unreasonable additional restrictions to existing mineral leases.
2. The Draft LUPA/EIS should not apply blanket restrictions in this programmatic document. Site-specific restrictions tailored to individual circumstances are more appropriate.
3. The restrictions on leasable mineral development proposed in the Draft LUPA/EIS are too vague to be consistently enforced.
4. The restrictions on leasable mineral development proposed in the Draft LUPA/EIS are too burdensome and will have unintended negative consequences, including environmental compliance, economic, and adverse safety impacts. Other measures would work just as well and provide more flexibility for developers.
5. The restrictions on leasable mineral development proposed in the Draft LUPA/EIS are not stringent enough to adequately protect GRSG.

Response

As noted previously in the response in **Section 4.3, Range of Alternatives**, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA. The BLM and Forest Service complied with NEPA and the CEQ implementing regulations at 40 CFR 1500 in the development of alternatives for this Draft LUPA/EIS, including seeking public input and analyzing reasonable alternatives. The alternatives include management options for the planning area that would modify or amend decisions made in the LUPs, as amended, to meet the planning criteria, to

address issues and comments from cooperating agencies and the public, or to provide a range of reasonable alternatives.

As stated in Section 1.7, Development of the Planning Criteria, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the LUPA will recognize all valid existing rights. The potential impacts on valid existing rights from management decisions in this plan amendment are further discussed in the Minerals sections of **Chapters 4 and 5** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

The range of alternatives analyzed in Section 2.6, Detailed Comparison of Alternatives, of the Draft LUPA/EIS included alternatives that focus on both site-specific and broad restrictions, and the impacts of these varying types of restrictions are analyzed in Section 4.20, Minerals, of the Draft LUPA/EIS. In appropriate cases where broad restrictions are applied, exceptions ensure that these restrictions are only applied where appropriate. Additionally, off-site mitigation is included as a way to improve habitat, in addition to other means to eliminate or minimize impacts.

Where appropriate, clarification has been added to explain how restrictions will be applied. The Proposed Plans include stipulations, lek buffer requirements, disturbance cap, energy density requirements, and RDFs, among other things. These are described in **Chapter 2** and **Appendix E, Appendix F, Applying Lek Buffer Distances, Appendix G, and Appendix K, Stipulations Associated with Fluid Mineral Leasing**, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

The Draft LUPA/EIS evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives. The impacts of these alternatives on leasable mineral development are discussed in Section 4.20.2. The applicability of the RDFs depends on the alternative being considered. For example, under Alternative D, an RDF would not be applied if the RDF is not applicable given the site-specific conditions (see the Draft LUPA/EIS at Table 2.1, MA-MIN-30: “The RDFs identified in Appendix J, Required Design Features for Fluid Minerals, would be attached as mandatory COAs during development of a lease, unless at least one of the following can be demonstrated in the NEPA analyses associated with the specific project: - A specific design feature is documented to not be applicable to the site-specific conditions of the project/activity; - A proposed design feature or best management practices is determined to provide equal or better protection for GRSG or its habitat; - Analyses conclude that following a specific feature will provide no more protection to GRGS or its habitat than not following it, for the specific project being proposed.”).

Section 15.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS needs to clarify that the RFD scenario does not place any limits on future development.

A new mineral report needs to be written for the Utah planning area because the one used for this plan did not follow the requirements in BLM Manual 3060 and is inaccurate in its assessment of occurrence and potential.

The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to discuss the existing known phosphate leasing area within GRSG habitat.

The data on coal occurrence and development potential in the planning area is inadequate.

Response

Section 3.21.7, Trends, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS have been clarified to describe that future development is not limited under the RFD scenario.

The RFD scenario included in the Draft LUPA/EIS is not a mineral potential report and therefore is not subject to the requirements of BLM Manual 3060. By law, a mineral potential report is not required for land-use planning efforts (see BLM Manual 3031, Energy and Mineral Resource Assessment). The BLM has collected sufficient information to support the analysis in this broad-scale planning document. For the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Draft LUPA/EIS, including the RFD scenario, the BLM used a modified version of the oil and gas potential map contained in the US Geological Survey publication *Summary of Science, Activities, Programs, and Policies That Influence the Rangeland Conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse* (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), also known as the BER. This map was originally included in a peer reviewed document titled *Mapping Oil and Gas Development Potential in the US Intermountain West and Estimating the Impacts to Species* (Copeland et al. 2009¹). During development of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the baseline map was reviewed by qualified BLM mineral specialists, including geologists and petroleum engineers, in the BLM Utah State Office. Numerous changes were made to the map to more accurately reflect oil and gas potential in the planning area. For example, approximately 3,339,234 acres of additional moderate potential, and 265,278 acres of additional high potential were identified. A modified version of the map developed by Copeland et al. was used for the Draft LUPA/EIS because it estimates oil and gas potential for all GRSG habitat in the planning area, and there are few if any products similar to this available. Oil and gas potential maps were included in the mineral reports completed for the Cedar City, Price, Vernal, Richfield, and Kanab Resource Management Plans; these maps were not used because the combination of these maps does not provide information on oil and gas potential covering all GRSG habitat located in the Utah planning area. In addition, these mineral potential reports, which were completed for individual planning units were not edge-matched, meaning when the layers were placed side-by-side there were inconsistencies. Finally, these maps (Cedar City excepted) were created between approximately 2000 and 2005 and therefore, also do not include up-to-date information given new information and technologies.

A description of the known phosphate leasing area has been added to **Section 3.21.2**, Nonenergy Leasable Minerals, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS and the map showing gilsonite and phosphate occurrence and development potential (**Map 3.21-5**, Gilsonite and Phosphate Occurrence and Development Potential, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS) has been updated to show the known phosphate leasing area (see **Appendix A**, Maps, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS). The entire known phosphate leasing area is included within the area identified as having high phosphate potential. The high development potential area also includes areas where there are expressions of interest and permit applications for prospecting. The analysis of impacts on high potential areas adequately discloses impacts on the known phosphate leasing area in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

¹ Copeland H. E., K.E. Doherty, D. E. Naugle, A. Pocewicz A, and J. M. Kiesecker. 2009. Mapping Oil and Gas Development Potential in the US Intermountain West and Estimating Impacts to Species. PLoS ONE 4(10): e7400.

Information on coal potential included in the Draft LUPA/EIS provides an adequate baseline to be able to analyze the potential impacts of the decisions being considered. The coal potential map included in the Draft LUPA/EIS was reviewed by BLM mineral specialists including BLM's mining engineers. Areas shown as having occurrence potential but no development potential are outside GRSG habitat and are not expected to be developed within the 15-20 year timeframe covered by the LUPA.

Section 15.3 - Impact Analysis

Summary

The impact analysis in the Draft LUPA/EIS should include oil shale and tar sands because existing leases will be impacted by these management actions. The analysis should consider the fact that fluid mineral extraction operations can only be relocated where resources exist and are accessible.

The impacts of the management actions, including seasonal restrictions, proposed in the Draft LUPA/EIS on leasable minerals will be more severe than those discussed in the document based on the totality of the restrictions that would be applied.

The Draft LUPA/EIS incorrectly assumes that horizontal drilling can be used in all cases to economically reach areas subject to a no surface occupancy (NSO) 4-mile radius stipulation. Technology and geology limit the use of this technology to reach resources and could result in wasting of mineral resources. Due to this incorrect assumption, the impacts stated in the socioeconomic section should also be revised.

Response

Analysis of impacts of the management actions proposed under this LUPA/EIS on oil shale and tar sands has been added to **Section 4.21.6**, Oil Shale and Tar Sands, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. No oil shale or tar sands development is allowed in GRSG habitat per the 2012 Programmatic EIS, except for in the Asphalt Ridge Special Tar Sands Area and the White River Oil Shale Research, Development, and Demonstration site and Preference Lease Right Area. The BLM needs to disclose the impacts of these operations on GRSG and the impacts of GRSG management on these two operations. Potential impacts on these operations could occur from lands and realty management decisions (ROW exclusion/avoidance precluding access) and mitigation requirements. The White River Oil Shale Research, Development, and Demonstration site and Preference Lease Right Area operations constitute a valid existing right.

The Draft LUPA/EIS assumed that technological advancements, such as directional drilling, could lead to changes in levels of fluid mineral development potential throughout the planning area as additional resources become more easily accessible.

Impact analysis has been revised as appropriate to discuss additional impacts of seasonal limitations, closures, and RDFs (see **Section 4.21.1**, Oil and Gas, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS).

Section 4.21.1, Oil and Gas (Alternative A) of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS recognizes that there are technical limitations on both horizontal and directional drilling and that the use of these technologies may not provide access to all formations containing fluid mineral resources.

Language has been added to the RFD scenario describing the current limitations and potential future conditions of directional and horizontal drilling technology. The RFD scenario predicts economically feasible development over a period of 15-20 years and, at times, assumes that technological advances (such as improved drilling methods) will continue to occur. Therefore, estimated future well development in the RFD scenario is not necessarily tied to current limitations of directional and horizontal drilling. Clarification has been added to the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS noting that horizontal drilling may not be technologically feasible in all cases.

Section 15.4 - Cumulative Impact Analysis

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to adequately analyze the cumulative impacts of the other GRSG LUPAs/EISs on the Western Phosphate Field.

Response

Additional information on the cumulative impacts to the Western Phosphate Field has been added to **Section 5.22.2**, Nonenergy Leasable Minerals, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 15.5 - Mitigation Measures

Summary

Requiring off-site mitigation regardless of site-specific circumstances is contrary to current BLM mitigation policy.

The BLM needs to modify its language on exceptions, waivers, and modifications of stipulations to ensure adequate protection for the GRSG when exceptions, waivers, and modifications are awarded. The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS needs to clarify the insurance of protection to GRSG when exceptions are made to stipulations.

Response

Mitigation has been further defined and is detailed in **Appendix D** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. See **Section 4.9**, Monitoring and Mitigation, of this comment report for additional information on updates to the mitigation strategy.

The conditions under which the BLM or Forest Service would exempt, modify, or waive a stipulation are specific to the stipulation in question and are outlined in the tables in **Appendix K. Table K.6**, BLM Proposed Plan Fluid Minerals Stipulations and Exception, Modification, and Waiver Criteria, **Table K.7**, US Forest Service – Utah Proposed Plan Fluid Minerals Stipulations and Exception, Modification, and Waiver Criteria, and **Table K.8**, US Forest Service – Wyoming Proposed Plan Fluid Minerals Stipulations and Exception, Modification, and Waiver Criteria, outline the criteria for waivers, exceptions, and modifications to all stipulations in the Proposed Plan. Specifically, under the Proposed Plan, NSO stipulations will be included in new fluid mineral leases at the time of leasing only and may not be applied to existing fluid mineral leases that did not include NSO stipulation at the time of leasing. No waivers or modifications to a fluid mineral lease NSO stipulation will be granted except for narrow criteria as defined in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 16 - Livestock Grazing

Section 16.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

Several commenters requested an alternative that reduces or eliminates livestock grazing on public lands. However other commenters asserted the benefits of grazing in terms of fuel reduction and preservation of GRSG habitat, and/or stated that it was not proven that grazing damages GRSG habitat, or that there was any benefit to reducing grazing adjacent to burned areas.

Several recommendations were made regarding the use of rangeland health standards, specifically whether they would be based on Connelly and Hagen's research, how clearly those standards and objectives would be stated, and how they would be enforced. Two commenters suggested using reference areas to judge habitat recovery or impacts of no grazing, and others suggested adaptive management and monitoring of grazing controls.

Commenters provided a broad range of specific recommendations for implementation of grazing management.

Commenters stated that the BLM has no authority to retire or terminate grazing permits.

Response

As noted previously in the response in **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA. The range of alternatives in the Draft LUPA/EIS identified GRSG habitat objectives, percent cover, residual cover, and grasses and forb heights. Alternative C1 eliminates grazing entirely within occupied habitat and Alternative C2 reduces grazing in occupied habitat accordingly. Increased grazing and associated animal unit months (AUMs) was considered in Section 2.8.1, Increased Livestock Grazing, in the Draft LUPA/EIS, but was eliminated from detailed analysis.

Livestock grazing is identified by USFWS as a threat to GRSG in the March 23, 2010 Federal Register Notice, and therefore it is addressed in this LUPA. Existing regulatory mechanisms, including the fundamentals for rangeland health, would continue to provide the basis for managing grazing in GRSG habitat. However, the preferred alternative would provide additional consistency in application of rangeland health standards relative to GRSG habitat, and would provide additional guidance for prioritizing land health assessments and review of grazing permits to ensure that grazing management is compatible with attainment of GRSG habitat objectives within the planning area. In addition, best management practices would be adopted to reduce effects of range improvements and livestock trailing across public lands.

Habitats will be managed to meet habitat guidelines from scientific literature (e.g., Connelly et al. 2000 and Hagen et al. 2007), where appropriate based on site potential. Adjustments from the guidelines may be made, but must be based on documented regional variation of habitat characteristics (e.g., sagebrush type, ecological site potential), quantitative data from population and habitat monitoring, and evaluation of applicable research. Information on implementation of

grazing management is provided in Sections 2.6, Proposed Plan Amendments, and 2.10, Detailed Description of Draft Alternatives, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. Blanket, one-size-fits-all standards and objectives would not be imposed on existing permits under the amended LUPs. As described in **Section 2.6.2**, BLM Proposed Plan Amendment (Livestock Grazing/Range Management), of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, the NEPA analysis for renewals and modifications of livestock grazing permits/leases that include lands within PHMA will include specific management thresholds based on the GRSG Habitat Objectives Table (Objective GRSG-3) and BLM Utah Public Land Health Standards and defined responses that will allow the authorizing officer to make adjustments to livestock grazing without conducting additional NEPA. The Utah Sub-regional Adaptive Management Strategy outlines additional measures that would be implemented if GRSG populations or habitat are reduced to the extent that it is necessary to protect GRSG from impacts of livestock grazing (see **Appendix B** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS).

FLPMA grants the Interior Secretary the authority to make land use planning decisions, taking into consideration multiple use and sustained yield, areas of critical environmental concern, present and potential uses of the land, relative scarcity of values, and long-term and short-term benefits, among other resource values (43 USC 1711 Sec 201 (a)). 43 CFR 4100.0-8 provides that the BLM shall manage livestock grazing on public lands in accordance with applicable land use plans. Further, the BLM may designate lands as "available" or "unavailable" for livestock grazing through the land use planning process (H-1601, Land Use Planning Handbook, Appendix C).

Section 16.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Commenters disagree on whether science has determined if livestock grazing damages GRSG habitat or affects wildfire frequency; commenters on both sides of the question offer references and citations, and/or claim there is no science supporting the opposing position. Multiple commenters call for a comprehensive peer-reviewed study to answer the question before the BLM and Forest Service implements any changes to grazing management.

Several commenters emphasize site-specific data: The BLM should not average grazing utilization across pastures, ecosystems and time, and should disclose and analyze grazing uses and impacts more specifically. Grazing conditions should depend on specific habitat assessments, using Grazing Response Index scores.

Several comments refer to the Duck Creek Office of Hearing and Appeals ruling, in which the BLM's rangeland health assessments and grazing management decisions were found to be legally insufficient.

Response

As noted in **Section 4.4**, Best Available Information and Baseline Data, of this comment report, before beginning the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Draft LUPA/EIS and throughout the planning effort, the BLM and Forest Service considered the availability of data from all sources, adequacy of existing data, data gaps, and the type of data necessary to support informed management decisions at the land-use plan level. Any proposed changes to grazing management would be analyzed through site-specific NEPA and would utilize best available science.

All comments related to the Duck Creek Office of Hearing and Appeals ruling are out of scope for the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning process.

Section 16.4 - Cumulative Impact Analysis

Summary

Commenters stated the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS should address effects on management of checkerboard land, particularly related to fencing of such lands if grazing is limited or prohibited.

Response

Section 4.16.4, Livestock Grazing (Alternatives C1 and C2) of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS was revised to discuss the potential time and cost impacts (particularly in areas with checkerboard land ownership) if fencing is required due to limiting or prohibiting grazing on public lands.

Section 17 - Locatable Minerals

Section 17.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

Commenters noted that the alternatives should take site-specific conditions into account when prohibiting or allowing locatable mineral activities.

Response

As noted above in the response in **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA. The BLM and Forest Service complied with NEPA and the CEQ implementing regulations at 40 CFR 1500 in the development of alternatives for the Draft LUPA/EIS, including seeking public input and analyzing reasonable alternatives. The alternatives include management options for the planning area that would modify or amend decisions made in the LUPs, as amended, to meet the planning criteria, to address issues and comments from cooperating agencies and the public, or to provide a range of reasonable alternatives.

The Draft LUPA/EIS considered a broad range of alternatives that considers variations in PHMA and GHMA as well as different restrictions on locatable mineral development.

Section 17.4 - Cumulative Impact Analysis

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to adequately analyze the cumulative impact of locatable mineral withdrawals across the GRSG range.

Response

Due to the variation in types of minerals and occurrence and development potential across the range, the types of data available for the planning area compared to the entire GRSG range, and uncertainty in which alternative from the Draft LUPA/EIS would be selected, cumulative impact analysis across the entire GRSG range would not provide meaningful, appropriate analysis. The total number of acres proposed for withdrawal under certain alternatives is included in each of

the Great Basin sub-region Draft LUPA/EISs. The Draft LUPA/EIS has met the NEPA/CEQ requirements for cumulative impacts analysis in each of the respective sub-regional EISs. Information explaining the rationale behind the chosen geographic extent of the cumulative impact analysis area has been added to **Section 5.22.4**, Locatable Minerals, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 18 - National Trails

Section 18.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Garfield County has not been contacted regarding management of National Historic Trails.

Response

The Draft Comprehensive Management Plan for the Old Spanish Trail is being prepared under a separate planning process and is not part of the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning process.

Section 20 - Recreation

Section 20.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

Commenters stated that various alternatives are inadequate to protect GRSG from the impacts of recreation (e.g., antler collection, camping, and OHV travel) and that more stringent measures should be put in place. Additional comments suggested changes to the noise restrictions included in the Draft LUPA/EIS as they affect recreational activities.

Response

As noted above in the response in **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA.

The Draft LUPA/EIS considers an adequate range of alternatives to protect GRSG, including varying levels of restriction on recreational activities. The State of Utah regulates antler collection in the planning area, and the BLM does not allow cross-country motorized travel for collection of antlers in areas that are limited or closed to such travel. Under all action alternatives, GRSG habitat would be designated as at least limited to existing routes until route designation is completed. Noise restrictions in the EIS only apply to discretionary activities (e.g., special recreation permits for competitive events) and would not apply to dispersed recreational use. The noise standards included in the Draft LUPA/EIS were developed based on the best available science regarding the impacts of noise on GRSG.

Section 20.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Commenters stated that the BLM and the Forest Service did not sufficiently incorporate local recreation plans into the Draft LUPA/EIS. Additionally, commenters were concerned that the

BLM and Forest Service did not take appropriate baseline recreation opportunities into account in the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Response

Garfield County has not identified any specific instances in which this plan amendment conflicts with recreational decisions in local plans.

Section 3.17, Recreation, of the Draft LUPA/EIS recognizes that GRSG population areas overlapping Garfield County (i.e., Panguitch and Parker Mountain) contain a designated route network. Travel management plans completed for Kanab, Richfield, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, and Dixie National Forest identified this network. The BLM and Forest Service are not proposing changes to this route network as part of this planning effort. Additional information has been added to Sections 3.17.1, Conditions in Population Areas, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS discussing recreational opportunities in the Parker Mountain and Panguitch population areas.

Section 20.3 - Impact Analysis

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to adequately analyze the impacts of the alternatives on recreation.

Response

As described in **Section 4.6**, Indirect Impacts, of this comment report, the Draft LUPA/EIS provides an adequate discussion of the environmental consequences, including the cumulative impacts, of the presented alternatives.

Recreation was not identified as a threat to GRSG in the USFWS 2010 listing determination. As such, very few decisions affecting recreation are being considered in the LUPA/EIS. Given that the BLM and Forest Service are considering few decisions affecting recreation management, the level of analysis required to adequately assess the impacts of those decisions is minimal. Those decisions that would impact recreation, such as restrictions on special recreation permits, are analyzed in Section 4.16, Recreation of the Draft LUPA/EIS according to the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook.

Section 22 - Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

Section 22.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to adequately describe the current local and regional socioeconomic conditions in the planning area. Economic data used in the analysis is from 2009, when communities were hard hit from the recession. Socioeconomic data in Chapter 4 is not consistent with data provided in Chapter 3. The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to recognize the cultural values and uses of the land of the local population. Religious groups and the rural population may be considered minorities in comparison to national and statewide trends and the subjects of environmental justice. Analysis ignores other readily available data.

Response

The BLM and Forest Service used the best available data at the time of preparation of the Draft LUPA/EIS. Most data are from 2010 and provide a snapshot of data at the time. The analysis of economic impacts of management alternatives through effects on the oil and gas industry is based on projected development over the 2014-2028 fifteen year period, not on the baseline data used. The baseline data serves as a reference for the relative magnitude of impacts, and the BLM and Forest Service do not expect the difference in impacts across alternatives to be meaningfully altered by updating the baseline. However, the BLM and Forest Service expanded and updated the baseline information in **Section 3.23**, Social and Economic Conditions (including Environmental Justice), of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, to the extent needed to support an expanded discussion of the geographic distribution of impacts and to avoid data that may not accurately reflect long term trends, due to the recession of 2008 and 2009.

The BLM and Forest Service followed CEQ guidance in the definition and identification of minority and low-income populations for the purpose of environmental justice analysis. However, in response to comments, the BLM and Forest Service expanded the discussion of cultural values and uses of public lands in the study area in **Section 3.23** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, recognizing rural and religious characteristics of the population.

The BLM and Forest Service reviewed the suggested studies and references put forth by the commenters and incorporated to the extent that they presented new and high quality information that would need to be incorporated into the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

All agencies participating as cooperating agencies have been given opportunities to participate during various steps of the planning process, including regular briefings, requests for input on draft alternatives and the administrative draft EIS, and identification of issues and data during scoping and during the Draft LUPA/EIS comment period, as required by 40 CFR 1503.2 and 40 CFR 1506.10. Based on the coordination efforts describe above, the BLM and Forest Service have met the legal and regulatory requirements for coordination to date, as described in **Section 4.2**, Cooperating Agency Relationships, of this comment report. As the planning process moves towards the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS and ROD, additional coordination will continue with cooperating agencies.

Section 22.3 - Impact Analysis

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS analysis underestimates/understates the economic hardships that restrictive management actions would impose on planning area operators, communities, and services. The analysis was overly generalized and did not provide county specific impacts. No effort is made to identify the size or intensity of impacts listed in the document. County land use plans were not considered in the analysis. The authors failed to recognize the cultural impacts associated with the alternatives (some counties have designated grazing as an activity of historic and cultural significance). The analysis is biased in favor of nonmarket valuation methods based on questionable methodology.

With respect to socioeconomic impacts of management alternatives through effects on specific resources:

1. The Draft LUPA/EIS does not adequately analyze the impacts of management alternatives on recreation, lands and realty and travel management;
2. The Draft LUPA/EIS does not adequately analyze the impacts of management alternatives on locatable minerals and mineral materials. The analysis fails to address the consequences from eliminating access to phosphate minerals;
3. The RFD scenario for oil and gas overestimates the number of oil and gas wells that would be developed from existing leases under each alternative. Therefore, the socioeconomic analysis on the impacts of this development is flawed;
4. The analysis underestimates impacts to wind resources. The action alternatives would create a substantial increase in ROW exclusion and avoidance areas, making it difficult to transmit power from wind farms to markets.

Other aspects missing that must be analyzed are:

1. The specific economic effect on school trust lands from making federal lands unavailable for various resource uses;
2. Impacts on private land owners;
3. Other costs of management alternatives including administrative costs and additional impacts to recreation, natural resources, the value of land and beauty;
4. The economic calculus for the Proposed Plan must be accounted for in all of the agency plans in the GRSG range.

Response

As required by 40 CFR 1502.16, the Draft LUPA/EIS provides a discussion of the environmental impacts of the alternatives including the proposed action, any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided should the alternatives be implemented, the relationship between short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved in the proposal should it be implemented. The Draft LUPA/EIS describes the methodology and assumptions used for conducting the socioeconomic impact analysis (see Section 4.22.2, Methodology and Assumptions, and Appendix W, Economic Impact Analysis Methodology, of the Draft LUPA/EIS). The methodology and assumptions provide a starting point for discussion of the environmental consequences, including the cumulative impacts, of the presented alternatives. As required by 40 CFR 1502.24, the Draft LUPA/EIS identified methodologies used and made reference to the scientific and other sources relied upon for conclusions in the analysis. Based on these methodologies and assumptions, the Draft LUPA/EIS provided sufficiently detailed information to aid in determining whether to proceed with the preferred alternative or make a reasoned choice among the other alternatives in a manner such that the public could have an understanding of the environmental consequences associated with the alternatives, in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.1.

Land use plan-level analyses are typically broad and qualitative rather than quantitative or focused on site-specific actions (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1, Chapter II, A-B at 11-13 and Chapter IV, B at 29; Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 – Land Management Planning). The Draft LUPA/EIS contains only planning actions and does not include any implementation actions. A more quantified or detailed and specific analysis would be required only if the scope of the decision included implementation actions. As specific actions that may affect the area come under consideration, the BLM and Forest Service will conduct subsequent NEPA analyses that include site-specific project and implementation-level actions. The site-specific analyses will tier to the plan-level analysis and expand the environmental analysis when more specific information is known. In addition, as required by NEPA, the public will be offered the opportunity to participate in the NEPA process for implementation actions.

Socioeconomic impacts assessed include impacts on output, employment, earnings and tax revenues in the affected area, nonmarket values, population and public services, specific groups and communities as well as environmental justice impacts. See Section 4.22, Social and Economic Impacts (Including Environmental Justice) of the Draft LUPA/EIS.

In response to comments, BLM and Forest Service revised the impact analysis in **Section 4.23** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS as follows:

- Additional discussion of impacts to counties was included where possible and appropriate;
- An expanded discussion of the potential social impacts of the loss of public lands for various uses, including grazing;
- The explanation of the potential socioeconomic impacts of management alternatives through recreation was expanded;
- A discussion of the potential socioeconomic impacts of management alternatives through lands and realty, and travel management was inserted, including a discussion of the potential impacts of power line restrictions on energy ratepayers;
- A discussion of the potential socioeconomic impacts of management alternatives through mining of locatable and saleable minerals was included, as was a discussion of phosphate minerals;
- The oil and gas RFD scenario was revised to recognize impacts of management alternatives on current leases;
- The discussion of potential impacts on wind energy was expanded;
- Information on the socioeconomic impact on school trust lands from making surrounding BLM-administered and National Forest System lands unavailable for various uses has been added;
- A discussion of the economic impacts of shifting development from federal to private lands was added;
- A brief explanation of impacts on BLM administrative costs was included;

- The socioeconomic analysis was expanded to include a qualitative discussion of impacts cumulative with those of GRSG habitat management alternatives being considered for other western states.

The BLM considers that several aspects commented on are appropriately addressed in the Draft LUPA/EIS. In particular, the treatment of nonmarket values in this EIS is consistent with BLM guidance (see BLM IM 2013-131). Only those nonmarket values that could reasonably be expected to be meaningfully affected by the choice of management alternatives were discussed.

Section 23 - Soil

Section 23.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Commenters specifically request verification of the information and identification of any cropland within County boundaries.

Response

As noted in **Section 4.4**, Best Available Information and Baseline Data, of this comment report, before beginning the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Draft LUPA/EIS and throughout the planning effort, the BLM and Forest Service considered the availability of data from all sources, adequacy of existing data, data gaps, and the type of data necessary to support informed management decisions at the land-use plan level. As stated in Section 3.5.2, Conditions in Population Areas, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, available data on prime farmland, unique farmland, and farmland of statewide importance is not of sufficient accuracy to add value to this discussion or to the related impact analysis. Any future site-specific projects would require an evaluation of soil types.

Section 23.3 - Impact Analysis

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to adequately analysis of the impacts of livestock on soils and soil processes.

Response

As described in **Section 4.6**, Indirect Impacts, of this comment report, the Draft LUPA/EIS provides an adequate discussion of the environmental consequences, including the cumulative impacts, of the presented alternatives.

Section 4.5.2, Alternatives Analysis, in the Draft LUPA/EIS discusses the effects of livestock grazing on vegetation (ground cover) and the elevated potential for soil erosion.

Section 24 - Travel Management

Section 24.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

Commenters questioned how this LUPA/EIS would apply to the pending Cedar City Field Office Resource Management Plan revision. Commenters were divided on what changes would need to be made to alternatives. Some commenters requested more restrictive measures be added to

the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS to protect GRSG; while some commenters felt the management actions in the Draft LUPA/EIS were too restrictive to travel opportunities. Commenters emphasized the need for the BLM and Forest Service to prioritize implementation-level travel management planning. They also questioned how this implementation-level planning would occur and expressed dissatisfaction with the BLM and Forest Service's approach for moving to a limited-to-designated route system from the current OHV area designations. Commenters also noted the importance of allowing administrative access for valid existing rights.

Response

As noted above in the response in **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA.

The GRSG management decisions being considered in this EIS will be incorporated into the Cedar City Field Office Resource Management Plan revision. Cedar City's implementation-level travel management plans will be consistent with guidance included in the LUPs.

The BLM has complied with its travel and transportation policy in identifying areas that are open, limited, and closed to motorized vehicle travel. All areas currently identified as open in GRSG habitat would be changed to limited to existing routes until route designations are complete. The BLM has established priorities for completing travel plans in GRSG habitat based on the amount of motorized vehicle use and the value of the habitat. The BLM has added decisions to the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS (see **Chapter 2**) explaining the process that will be used in moving from a limited to existing routes category to a limited to designated routes category. The BLM has also added a decision that provides guidance to be taken into consideration when completing route designations. Decisions on seasonal closures, route purpose, and avoiding harassment and disruption of wildlife and their habitat will be addressed during the implementation-level travel planning process. Addressing these issues at the implementation level allows the BLM and Forest Service to take new information into account as it becomes available.

Needs for administrative access to valid existing rights, grandfathered uses, or permitted activities would be taken into consideration during site-specific NEPA analysis. Restrictions applied to recreational OHV use may not apply to permitted administrative uses.

The BLM and Forest Service have not added a restriction that would limit road densities to less than 0.09 kilometers per kilometer squared (Wisdom et al. 2011) in GRSG habitat because the threshold established by Wisdom used coarse road data. When taking into consideration actual road density information collected at a site-specific level, use of this threshold is not appropriate which was developed using a route network dataset collected at a west-wide scale. The BLM and Forest Service have included surface disturbance thresholds, which would restrict the density of disturbance tied to new and existing roads in GRSG habitat.

Section 24.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Commenters requested that the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS take existing travel management plans and route networks into consideration.

Response

As noted in **Section 4.4**, Best Available Information and Baseline Data, of this comment report, before beginning the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Draft LUPA/EIS and throughout the planning effort, the BLM and Forest Service considered the availability of data from all sources, adequacy of existing data, data gaps, and the type of data necessary to support informed management decisions at the land-use plan level. The Draft LUPA/EIS considered information from completed BLM and Forest Service travel management plans in the planning area. With the exception of Alternative C, the BLM and Forest Service are not proposing any changes to those existing plans as part of this planning process. Under Alternative C, the BLM and Forest Service have identified potential closed areas. Within these areas, some existing or designated routes could be affected. Consistency with local plans is addressed in Section 1.8, Relationship to Other Policies, Plans, and Programs, and Section 5.4, Coordination and Consistency, of the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Section 24.4 - Cumulative Impact Analysis

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to adequately identify specific or cumulative impacts from OHV uses in a way that clearly conveys consequences to the public.

Response

As described in **Section 4.7**, Cumulative Impacts, of this comment report, the BLM and Forest Service analyzed cumulative effects in the Draft LUPA/EIS in Section 4.24.18, Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management. This analysis included an analysis of the impacts of OHVs, as defined in the Glossary of the Draft LUPA/EIS. This discussion summarizes CEQ guidance from June 24, 2005, stating that "[g]enerally, agencies can conduct an adequate cumulative effects analysis by focusing on the current aggregate effects of past actions without delving into the historical details of individual past actions." This is because a description of the current state of the environment inherently includes the effects of past actions. Information on the current conditions is more comprehensive and more accurate for establishing a useful starting point for cumulative effects analysis. The CEQ interpretation was accepted by the Ninth in *NW Env'tl. Advoc. v. Nat'l Marine Fisheries Serv.*, 460 F.3d 1125, 1141 (9th Cir. 2006). The BLM and Forest Service explicitly described their assumptions regarding proposed projects and other reasonably foreseeable future actions. On National Forest System lands, reasonably foreseeable actions are those that would occur under their current land use plans from a broad-scale perspective.

The BLM and Forest Service have complied with the requirements of 40 CFR 1508.7 and prepared a cumulative impact analysis to the extent possible based on the broad nature and scope of the proposed management options under consideration at the land use planning level.

Section 25 - Tribal Interest

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to address populations of GRSG on tribal lands throughout the West and how these populations could impact anticipated USFWS action under the Endangered Species Act.

Response

As stated in Section 1.3.1, Planning Area Overview, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the planning area for the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS is the geographic area within which the BLM and Forest Service will make decisions during this planning effort. The 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. Tribal surface estate with Tribal mineral estate is not considered part of the decision area. However, the cumulative effects analysis for all topics in the Draft LUPA/EIS included an analysis of cumulative effects at the planning area level, including past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions on tribal lands. As described in **Section 4.7**, Cumulative Impacts, of this comment report, the BLM and Forest Service have complied fully with the requirements of 40 CFR 1508.7 and prepared a cumulative impact analysis to the extent possible based on the broad nature and scope of the proposed management options under consideration at the land use planning level.

Section 25.1 - Consultation Requirements

Summary

Commenters requested the BLM and Forest Service consider updating consultation with Indian Tribes in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS to include: Executive Order 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, Executive Order 13007 Indian Sacred Sites, and the Department of the Interior Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes.

Response

Specific references to Executive Order 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, Executive Order 13007 Indian Sacred Sites, and the Department of the Interior Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes have been added to **Section 3.24**, Tribal Interests, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 26 - Vegetation Sagebrush

Section 26.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

Commenters stated that the Draft LUPA/EIS failed to consider a full range of alternatives. Commenters provided specific suggestions to meet the objectives related to the COT report.

Commenters provided additional measures that should be considered in the alternatives, including,

- Pinyon-juniper restoration
- Specific objectives to measure success

Response

As noted above in the response in **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA.

During the development of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, the BLM and Forest Service coordinated with cooperating agencies, including the USFWS, to determine changes to the management actions and mitigation measures. The outcome from these meetings resulted in noted clarifications and edits to the alternatives in **Chapter 2** and impacts analysis related to pinyon-juniper in **Section 4.8**, Vegetation (Including Noxious Weeds; Riparian; and Wetlands), of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Specific habitat objectives have been 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).” The Draft LUPA/EIS also noted that “adjustments from the guidelines may be made, but must be based on documented regional variation of habitat characteristics...” Based on 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.

Section 26.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Commenters requested the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS be consistent with local GRSG management plans. The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS should use more accurate habitat mapping and scientific literature. The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to provide adequate baseline information.

Response

As described in **Section 4.4**, Best Available Information and Baseline Data, of this comment report, the BLM and Forest Service considered the availability of data from all sources, adequacy of existing data, data gaps, and the type of data necessary to support informed management decisions at the land use plan-level. The BLM and Forest Service reviewed suggested studies and references to determine if they presented new information that would need to be incorporated into the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, were references already included in the Draft LUPA/EIS, or if the references provided the same information as already used or described in the Draft LUPA/EIS. Any study or reference that provided new relevant information was incorporated into the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 26.3 - Impact Analysis

Summary

Commenters requested the BLM to analyze each contiguous block of occupied habitat and publish in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS the percentage of sagebrush cover in that block. The

scientific findings for impacts to GRSG from reduced juniper encroachment are contradictory to the impacts in the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Response

As described in **Section 4.6**, Indirect Impacts, of this comment report, the Draft LUPA/EIS provides an adequate discussion of the environmental consequences, including the cumulative impacts, of the presented alternatives. As specific actions that may affect the area come under consideration, the BLM and Forest Service will conduct subsequent NEPA analyses that include site-specific project and implementation-level actions. The site-specific analyses will tier to the plan-level analysis and expand the environmental analysis when more specific information is known.

The discussion of juniper treatment on page 4-90 of the Draft LUPA/EIS acknowledges the term “limited” only refers to the USFWS’s empirical evidence that treatments haven’t really increased populations. The term “limited” acknowledges one or two successful treatments but also recognizes other conflicting reports.

Section 26.5 - Mitigation Measures

Summary

Commenters requested clarification on several mitigation measures including what would be desirable nonnative seeds, how livestock grazing is managed post vegetation treatment, and how reclamation is counted towards disturbance thresholds.

Response

Mitigation has been further defined and is detailed in **Appendix D** of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. See **Section 4.9**, Monitoring and Mitigation, of this comment report for additional information on updates to the mitigation strategy.

Specific mitigation strategies, based on the Mitigation Strategy, will be developed by regional teams within one year of the issuance of the ROD and will be consistent with the BLM’s Regional Mitigation Manual MS-1794, Forest Service Handbook FSH 1909.15, and CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1508.20.

The Authorized officer at implementation will determine, “where probability of success of adapted seed availability is low”, what other seeds could be acquired as to compete with nondesirable species, provide soil stability and as referenced in the same section, support GRSG habitat objectives. The specific type of desired seed would vary by site, elevation, precipitation and as mentioned availability. Mitigation measures for specific projects are implementation level decisions and will be included in site-specific analysis which is outside the scope of this EIS.

Monitoring efforts, as part of the Greater Sage-Grouse Monitoring Framework (**Appendix C**) in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, will include data for measurable quantitative indicators of sagebrush availability, anthropogenic disturbance levels, and sagebrush conditions. This information will assist the BLM and Forest Service with identifying whether or not they are achieving their land use plan goals and objectives, reaching an adaptive management soft or hard trigger, as well as providing information relative to the disturbance cap. Specifically, habitat degradation (percent of human activity in a biologically significant unit), habitat availability

(percent of sagebrush in a biologically significant unit), and habitat degradation intensity (density of energy facilities and mining locations) was gathered to inform the disturbance cap in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 27 - Vegetation Riparian

Section 27.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

The alternatives in the Draft LUPA/EIS fail to address riparian conditions adequately.

Response

As noted above in the response in **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA. During the development of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, the BLM and Forest Service coordinated with cooperating agencies, including the USFWS, to determine changes to the management actions and mitigation measures. The outcome from these meetings resulted in noted clarifications and edits to the alternatives in **Chapter 2** related to riparian conditions of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 27.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

The Proposed LUPA/Final EIS should note that current proper functioning condition assessment methods need to be modified to incorporate GRSG needs.

Response

Modifications to proper functioning condition assessment methods are outside the scope of this planning effort.

Section 27.3 - Impact Analysis

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to adequately analyze the impacts of water developments on riparian areas.

Response

As described in **Section 4.6**, Indirect Impacts, of this comment report, the Draft LUPA/EIS provides an adequate discussion of the environmental consequences, including the cumulative impacts, of the presented alternatives.

The Draft LUPA/EIS adequately considered impacts to riparian areas from water developments in Section 4.7, Vegetation (Including Noxious Weeds; Riparian Areas; and Wetlands).

Section 28 - Visual Resources

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS fails to incorporate Garfield County's Visual Resource Management plan in any discussion; therefore, the Draft LUPA/EIS is inconsistent with the County plan.

Response

The BLM land use plans and amendments must be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans of local governments to the extent that these resource-related plans comport with FLPMA and other federal laws and regulations (see 43 CFR 1610). The BLM worked closely with local governments during preparation of the Draft LUPA/EIS. The BLM works to find a balance among uses and needs as reflected in these local government plans and has done so in the preparation of the LUPA/EIS; a list of these plans can be found in Section 1.8, Relationship to Other Policies, Plans, and Programs, of the Draft LUPA/EIS. This list has been updated with Garfield County's Visual Resource Management Plan. While the BLM is not obligated to seek consistency, the agency is required to describe the inconsistencies between the proposed action and the other plans, policies, and/or controls within the EIS. Inconsistencies with County Plans are described in **Section 6.5.2, Inconsistencies with County Plans, Policies, and Procedures.**

Section 29 - Water

Section 29.1 - Range of Alternatives

Summary

The BLM and Forest Service must defer decisions with regard to the size of ponds to those private landowners.

Response

As noted above in the response in **Section 4.3, Range of Alternatives**, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA.

Fluid mineral operations on existing federal leases, regardless of surface ownership, would be subject to COAs, including the RDFs in Appendix L, Required Design Features for Preventing West Nile Virus, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, by the BLM Authorized Officer and the authorized officer of the surface management agency when approving an application for permit to drill. Existing leases would be developed consistent with applicable laws and valid existing rights, using as many of the RDFs and conservation measures as possible while still allowing reasonable opportunities for development.

Section 29.2 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Comments stated that the BLM cannot violate Utah laws and requested more stringent and expanded assessments of rangeland health and proper functioning condition.

Response

As stated in Section 4.1.1, Analytical Assumptions, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, implementing actions from any of the LUPA alternatives would be in compliance with all valid existing rights, federal regulations, BLM and Forest Service policies, and other requirements.

Utah's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management were developed in accordance with 43 CFR-4180 to provide for conformance with the Fundamentals of

Rangeland Health. Through conformance and attainment of BLM Utah's Public Land Health Standards, the BLM assures that the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health are met. It is beyond the scope of this LUPA/EIS to revise existing guidelines for rangeland health or technical reports for riparian-wetland areas.

Section 29.3 - Impact Analysis

Summary

Commenters requested that the impacts on water from eroding soil and manure be analyzed for each alternative; supporting documentation that fluid mineral development can have an adverse impact on water quality; and a description of how pinyon/juniper encroachment affects water resources.

Response

Section 4.6, Water Resources, of the Draft LUPA/EIS identifies impacts on water from eroding soil. A discussion of manure impacts on water resources was added to the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS in **Section 4.7**, Water Resources. Additional language on how pinyon/juniper encroachment affects water resources was added to **Sections 3.7**, Water Resources, and **4.7**, Water Resources, of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. Statements of energy development impacts on water resources have been revised in **Section 3.7**, Water Resources, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 30 - Wild Horse and Burros

Summary

The commenters wanted the 25 percent reduction evaluated again based on the fact that only 2 percent of the GRS habitat overlapped with herd management areas (HMAs).

Commenters suggested that the preferred alternative specifically identify the processes (i.e., NEPA) through which management activities will be considered and implemented (i.e., from Alternative B—MA-WHB-3, MA-WHB-4, MA-WHB-6).

Commenters also identified that passages from the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act were misquoted or edited not to reflect the intent of the act and requested revision to the text.

Response

As noted above in the response in **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA.

The BLM protects, manages, and controls wild horses in accordance with the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195, as amended), the purpose of which is to "manage wild horses and burros within HMAs designated for their long-term maintenance, in a manner designed to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple use relationships." The FLPMA directs the BLM to manage wild horses and burros as one of numerous multiple uses including mining, recreation, domestic grazing, and fish and wildlife. It also required a current inventory of wild horses and burros. Additional guidance is

found in 43 CFR 4700, Protection, Management, and Control of Wild Free-roaming Horses and Burros.

Several comments were related to decision making that falls outside the scope of the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS. Reducing the appropriate management level (AML) does fall within the legal mandate of the BLM to protect wild horses and burros. Through monitoring and data analysis, AMLs have been established and will continue to be adjusted based on the analysis of data. AMLs can be adjusted based on the limitations and capability of the range, including the four habitat components, while managing for healthy populations of wild horses and burros in balance with other uses and resources (including GRSG).

The current proportion of wild horse and burro AUMs compared to permitted livestock AUMs is fairly small across all HMAs. Many allotments reflect AMLs in which the AUMs are only a small percentage of the total AUMs allocated. In addition, despite the fact that the AML AUMs are much lower than the livestock AUMs, actual use by wild horses and burros has almost always exceeded the AML on average. Additionally, livestock operators generally do not use all of the available AUMs on an annual basis. Therefore, it is not valid to compare wild horse and burro AUMs and livestock AUMs.

Misquoted Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act text has been revised in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS where applicable.

Section 30.1 - Best Available Information and Baseline Data

Summary

Commenters requested documentation of critical genetic data on each of the wild horse and burro herds in the planning area to identify which HMAs would not be feasible to place AML reductions on while maintaining genetically viable herds.

Commenters stated that the NTT and COT reports did not clearly identify the differences between livestock and wild horse and burros, and their impacts on GRSG. Therefore, by using these two reports and their approach, the BLM and Forest Service wrongly categorized livestock and wild horses together under the description of livestock.

Commenters also stated that the National Academy of Sciences' 2013 recommendations for reform of federal wild horse management program did not appear to be utilized in this LUPA/EIS.

Response

As described in **Section 4.4**, Best Available Information and Baseline Data, of this comment report, the BLM and Forest Service considered the availability of data from all sources, adequacy of existing data, data gaps, and the type of data necessary to support informed management decisions at the land use plan-level.

The National Academy of Sciences' 2013 report has been considered in the development of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS for actions appropriate to the land management planning level. Findings of the report would be considered under separate site-specific NEPA actions.

Genetic documentation of wild horses and burros is an ongoing implementation level process used to monitor the genetic health of the BLM's wild horse and burro populations (see IM 2009-061).

The USFWS did identify grazing as a threat in the NTT and COT reports, but did not specifically delineate between domestic and wild horse and burro grazing. However within the Draft LUPA/EIS, the BLM did analyze impacts on wild horses and burros, and domestic livestock grazing separately and also analyzed the impacts on GRSG from wild horses and burros, and domestic livestock grazing separately. Impacts to GRSG from wild horses and burros, and domestic livestock grazing are identified in Section 4.2, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse, of the Draft LUPA/EIS. Impacts on wild horses and burros from GSRG management strategies are identified in Section 4.10, Wild Horse and Burro Management, of the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Section 30.2 - Impact Analysis

Summary

The majority of commenters were concerned that the alternatives do not adequately protect wild horses and burros per BLM mandate. Commenters state that genetic impacts of the proposed plan must be thoroughly examined including scientific data to justify the claim that any removal and upheaval would not negatively affect the genetic diversity of wild horses and burros, and that any wild horses and burros allowed to remain would be adequate for the genetic viability and future survival of a self-sustaining population.

Commenters are also concerned that the analysis to GRSG from wild horses and burros are not distinguished from livestock, which inaccurately increases the threat. Specifically, wild horse HMAs impact 2 percent of the total mapped GRSG occupied habitat in the planning area, while livestock grazing occurs in 55 percent of the mapped GRSG occupied habitat.

Commenters identified contradictions in the Draft LUPA/EIS such as where the document states that "Under all alternatives, no direct change would occur to areas allocated as HMAs/wild horse and burro territories for wild horses and burros", then the Draft LUPA/EIS proceeds to summarize how every single alternative would restrict wild horse and burro usage in their own federally designated habitats.

Finally, commenters would like the BLM to take into account the social impacts by considering any alternative that could result in a reduction of wild horse and burro population numbers.

Response

As described in Section 4.6, Indirect Impacts, of this comment report, the Draft LUPA/EIS provides an adequate discussion of the environmental consequences, including the cumulative impacts, of the presented alternatives.

Genetic documentation of wild horses and burros is an ongoing implementation level process used to monitor the genetic health of the BLM's wild horse and burro populations (IM 2009-061).

The BLM did analyze impacts to wild horse and burros, and domestic livestock grazing separately. The BLM also analyzed the impacts to GRSG from wild horse and burros, and domestic livestock grazing separately. Impacts to GRSG from wild horse and burros, and domestic livestock grazing are identified in Section 4.2, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse, of the Draft LUPA/EIS. Impacts to wild horse and burros from GRSG management strategies are identified in Section 4.10, Wild Horse and Burro Management, of the Draft LUPA/EIS. The BLM appropriately analyzed the impacts to wild horse and burros from actions not related to changes in AML.

Text in **Section 4.11.2**, Alternatives Analysis, has been reviewed and revised to clarify the distinction between direct impacts on HMAs from changes in AML numbers or acreages (which would occur only under Alternative C2) and indirect impacts on HMAs from restrictions on other uses in those areas.

Socioeconomic impacts are considered in Section 4.22, Social and Economic Impacts (Including Environmental Justice) of the Draft LUPA/EIS. The analysis in the Draft LUPA/EIS concluded that implementing management actions in the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS would have negligible social or economic impacts related to wild horse and burro management.

Section 31 – Wilderness Areas/Wilderness Study Areas

Summary

The BLM has not fully lived up to its obligations under Manual 6320, undertaking the process required for the planning and management of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.

Response

BLM Manual 6320, Considering Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in the BLM Land Use Planning Process, requires the BLM to update and maintain a wilderness inventory consistent with BLM wilderness characteristics inventory guidance. It also directs the BLM to use the land use planning process to determine how to manage lands with wilderness characteristics as part of the BLM's multiple-use mandate. However, BLM Manual 6320 also states, "In some circumstances, consideration of management alternatives for lands with wilderness characteristics may be outside the scope of a particular planning process (As dictated by the statement of purpose and need for the planning effort). For example, a targeted amendment to address a specific project or proposal may not in all circumstances require consideration of an alternative that would protect wilderness characteristics. In these situations, the NEPA document associated with the plan amendment must still analyze effects of the alternatives on lands with wilderness characteristics."

Inventories for wilderness characteristics were conducted from 1979 to the present and reflect the most up-to-date lands with wilderness characteristics baseline information for this planning area. In addition to the inventories conducted for the purposes of land use planning, lands with wilderness characteristics inventories will be updated for site-specific project NEPA analyses that are conducted in the planning area to determine if a project will have impacts on lands with wilderness characteristics identified through previous or updated inventory efforts.

As noted on page I-4 of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the purpose of and need for the national GRSG planning effort is limited to making land use planning decisions specific to the conservation,

enhancement, and/or restoration of GRSG habitat specifically by reducing, eliminating, or minimizing threats to that habitat. No decisions related to the management of lands with wilderness characteristics will be made as part of this planning effort; therefore, management of lands with wilderness characteristics is considered outside the scope of this plan amendment process. Impacts on lands with wilderness characteristics from the alternatives being analyzed for this planning effort are presented in Section 4.14, Wilderness Characteristics, of the Draft LUPA/EIS.

Wilderness characteristics assessments are not applicable to National Forest System lands.

Section 32.1 - Predation

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to adequately address impacts to GRSG from predation.

Response

As stated in Section 1.6.3, Issues Eliminated from Detailed Analysis, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, adding management actions specifically to manage predators is outside the scope of the amendment. However, the BLM and Forest Service have authority to manage the habitat and have provided numerous management actions to address predation risk across the range of alternatives (see **Sections 2.6**, Proposed Plan Amendments, and **2.10**, Detailed Comparison of Draft Alternatives, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS). For example, altering the sagebrush habitat of the GRSG can create an influx of predators into an area and lead to a GRSG population decline. Roads, fences, power lines, trails and other disturbances may make access easier for potential predators and increase risks to GRSG. The Draft LUPA/EIS describes the effects of predation on GRSG in Section 4.2, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse. A detailed description of predator conditions has been added to **Section 3.3.5**, Conditions in Population Areas, and **Appendix M**, Predation of Greater Sage-Grouse in the Utah Sub-Regional Planning Area, in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

Section 32.2 - Noise

Summary

The BLM and Forest Service failed to provide the science behind how noise level criteria in the alternatives were determined. The BLM and Forest Service must provide the methodology for determining how background ambient noise levels are to be measured or evaluated.

Response

The Draft LUPA/EIS includes analysis on the effects of noise to GRSG in several areas in Chapter 4, including many references to scientific research specifically addressing the effects of noise on GRSG. The BLM and Forest Service LUP decisions do not include specific methodologies identifying how monitoring is to occur or how various indicators are to be measured. Incorporating such detail in a land use plan would require amendments whenever new approaches or technologies are developed. Such detail is best developed during implementation of the LUP where advances in technologies can be best incorporated on a site-specific level and applied as part of managing to the goals, objectives, desired conditions, and management actions identified in the LUPs.

Section 32.3 - Weeds

Summary

The Draft LUPA/EIS failed to adequately provide the baseline information of cheatgrass infestation and also failed to consider County designated noxious weeds. Commenters provided specific management actions to meet the COT report objectives.

Response

The Draft LUPA/EIS adequately described baseline conditions for cheatgrass infestations in the planning area; Section 3.2.2, Conditions in Population Areas, describes cheatgrass infestations by GRSG populations while Section 3.7, Vegetation (Including Noxious Weeds and Riparian and Wetlands Ecosystems), describes the baseline invasive vegetation conditions in the planning area.

As stated in Section 3.7.1, Conditions Statewide, of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the BLM and Forest Service work cooperatively with other federal, state, and county agencies as well as private landowners to prevent and control the spread of noxious weeds.

As noted above in **Section 4.3**, Range of Alternatives, of this comment report, Section 1.5, Planning Processes, of the Draft LUPA/EIS describes how the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS planning team employed the BLM and Forest Service planning process to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for the LUPA. The alternatives include management options to address the issue of invasive plants and during the development of the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, the BLM and Forest Service coordinated with cooperating agencies, including USFWS, to determine changes to the management actions and mitigation measures. As such, no changes were warranted in the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS.

COMMENTER LIST

State and Local Governments, Organizations, and Businesses

American Bird Conservancy
American Exploration & Mining Association
American Petroleum Institute
American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign
Anadarko Petroleum
Avian Power Line Interaction Committee
Bear River Watershed Council
Beaver County
Blue Ribbon Coalition
Bowie Resource Partners, LLC
Bridgerland Audubon Society
Business Development CB Technologies, Inc.
C.E. Brooks & Associates, P.C.
Capital Trail Vehicle Association
Carbon County
Castle Country Adaptive Resource Management Group
Chew Livestock, Inc./Chew Ranch LLC;
Coalition of Local Governments

Community- Based Conservation Program
ConocoPhillips
Defenders of Wildlife
Department of the Air Force
Deseret Land and Livestock
Devon Energy Production Company L.P.
DreamCatcher Wild Horse and Burro Sanctuary
Duchesne County
Emery County
Enefit American Oil
EOG Resources, Inc.
Foundation for Quality Resource Management
Garfield County
Garkane Energy
Great Salt Lake Audubon
Harold Selman Inc.
Holsinger Law, LLC
Independent Petroleum Association
Industrial Minerals Association- North America
Ingham Springs LLC
International Mountain Bicycling Association
Iron County
Iron County Commission
J.R. Simplot Company
Johnson and Livestock LLC
Kane County Commission
Mom and Pop Products Co.
Motorcycle Industry Council
National Mining Association
National Park Service
Office of Governor Matthew Mead
Office of the Governor
Pearson Ranch
Petroleum Association of Wyoming
Piute County
Price River Watershed Conservation District
Public Lands Advocacy of America
Public Lands Council/ National Cattlemen's Beef Association
Public Lands Policy Coordination Office
QEP Energy Company
Randolph Land and Livestock
Rich County
Rocky Mountain Power
Sagebrush Habitat Conservation Fund
Sanpete County
Scholes

Sevier County
Sierra Club
Simplot Livestock
Snell & Wilmer L.L.P.
South Central Communications
Stevenson Intermountain Seed, Inc
Sweetwater County
The Nature Conservancy
The State of Wyoming
The Wilderness Society
TransWest Express LLC
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Uintah County
Utah Association of Counties
Utah Cattlemen's Association
Utah Farm Bureau Federation
Utah Mining Association
Utah Phosphate Company
Utah Reclamation Mitigation & Conservation Commission
Utah State University Extension
Vantage Energy Uinta, LLC
Wasatch Audubon Society
Wayne County
Western Counties Alliance
Western Energy Alliance
Western Watersheds Project
Wild Horse Education
Wild Utah Project
WildEarth Guardians
William Marsing Livestock, Inc.
Wintch Livestock Co.

Individuals

Auld, Misty
Barnard, Sue
Beattie, Jane
Belles, Mark
Berman, Kimberly
Blaisdell, Vickey
Bodker, Greg
Bredesen, Rhonda
Bremner, Brian
Brendemuehl, James
Bryant, Anna
Butera, Julie
Christensen, Kyle
Cushing, Georganna

Danielsen, Kim
Degraw, Catherine
Devlin, Marybeth
Dickey, Terry
Doane, Margaret
Dott, Cynthia
Eliason, David
Finn, Christie
Gardner, Elyse
Goodwin, Russell
Gregg, Kathleen
Griffiths, Sue
Hamilton, Danie
Hennessy, Eileen
Hill, Scott
Howell, Ryan
Hughes, Arlin
Jamison, Vickie
Johnson, Brian
Johnson, Ed
Johnson, Redge
Kershaw, Byard
Kunzler, Del Dee
Larsen, Jess
Larsen, Royce
Levi, Judy
Lish, Christopher
Long, Randall
Lynch, Janet
Marshall, Kent
Maxfield, Brien
McFarland, Mary Lou
McKee, Norman
McMullin, Bryant
Morell, Mack
Murphy, Jon
Nevin, Kandace
Newbold, Edward
O. Livingston, Thomas
Olsen, Dave
Oster, Sherry
Plover, Egret
Prescott, Lynne
Proubasta, Dolores
Public, Jean
Ramadorai, Kari

Robb, Albert
Rocklein, Christian
Rovner, Jeffrey
Ryan
Sanders, W Fred
Santerre, Gay and David
Schieron, Nanette
Schulthess, Wallace
Scott, William
Seal, Thom
Sendelbach, Barbara
Seyrig, Maria
Spackman, Ken
Spates, Georgeanne
Stone, Jeff
Suppers, Nora and Terry
Taft, Andrew
Tanner, Diane
Taroli, Gary
Thomlinson, John
Thompson, Larry
Waide, Sandra
Warr, Kelly
West, Logan
West, Reid
White, Sally
Wintch, Barbara
Wintch, Paul
Zeleny, Heather
Zocco, Rachelle

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