Appendix F

Regional Mitigation Strategy

APPENDIX F
REGIONAL MITIGATION STRATEGY

Mitigation strategies, which take into account the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, minimize, restore, offset), are an important tool for ensuring the BLM and Forest Service meet their GRSG resource objectives while continuing to honor the multiple-use mission. The BLM and Forest Service priority is to mitigate impacts to an acceptable level onsite, to the extent practical, through avoidance (not taking a certain action or parts of an action), minimization (limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation), rectification (repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment), or reduction of impacts over time (preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action). While mitigating impacts for proposed projects to an acceptable level onsite is typically analyzed and determined through site-specific, implementation-level NEPA documents and their commensurate decision documents, the analysis and mitigation for project level activities will be tiered to the analysis and mitigation proposed throughout each of the action alternatives in this LUPA.

For those impacts that cannot be sufficiently avoided or minimized onsite, the BLM and Forest Service must ensure implementation of effective measures to offset (or compensate for) such impacts and to maintain or improve the viability of sage-grouse habitat and populations over time, as described in the USFWS's COT Report. Regional mitigation may be a necessary component for many large renewable and nonrenewable energy development projects as well as many smaller projects with cumulative effects on the sage-grouse and its habitat.

Any regional mitigation strategy for BLM-administered lands will comply with BLM's ***Regional Mitigation*** Manual Section 1794, which provides policies, procedures, and instructions for:

1. Adopting a regional approach to planning and implementing mitigation, including pre-identifying potential mitigation sites, projects, and measures
2. Identifying the type of mitigation that is needed to compensate for impacts on resources or values caused by a land use authorization.

It is important to note that any mitigation strategy must include the cooperation and coordination of appropriate and pertinent federal, state, and local land and resource

management agencies across the landscape. The final strategy adopted and implemented within a landscape will be dependent on the unique resources and values of the regional landscape and the mitigation strategies and resources contributed by the regional partners. It is important to acknowledge that the State government working with the BLM and Forest Service as a Cooperating Agency on this land use plan amendment may have already completed, or is currently working on, statewide mitigation strategies. The BLM and Forest Service will continue to work with and support those State government efforts.

The BLM will establish a Mitigation Implementation Team for each of the six WAFWA Management Zones in the West, following the completion of each of the 15 sub-regional EISs that are associated with the National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy. The planning area presented in this sub-regional EIS lies within WAFWA Management Zones II, III, IV, and VII. The teams are responsible for developing a Mitigation Strategy consistent with BLM Manual Section 1794, as appropriate. The teams will coordinate recommended mitigation strategies between RMP planning areas, WAFWA management zones, and local and state jurisdictions for mitigation consistency, where appropriate.

These implementation teams will be responsible for implementing BLM Manual Section 1794, and making recommendations regarding the following items related to compensatory mitigation:

1. A structure for determining appropriate mitigation, including impact (debit) and benefit (credit) calculation methods, mitigation ratios, mitigation "currency" (e.g., numbers of birds or acres), location, and performance standards options by considering local and regional mitigation options
2. How to resolve mitigation oriented discrepancies that arise within the WAFWA Management Zone or between Zones
3. The application and the holding and disposition of any mitigation funds
4. The most appropriate mitigation for impacts from a given land use authorization and type of seasonal habitat impacted
5. Prioritization of potential mitigation sites, projects, and measures, as guided by conservation strategies (e.g., priority areas for conservation and priority habitat areas)
6. Review mitigation monitoring reports and analyzing and reporting on project effectiveness, corrective measures/adaptive management (where required), and cumulative effects of mitigation actions at the priority areas for conservation and the WAFWA zone.

These WAFWA Management Zone Implementation Teams will function as inter-disciplinary teams composed of BLM, Forest Service, USFWS and state fish and game agencies. The Mitigation Implementation Team will make recommendations to the BLM Authorized Officer. If the recommendations are rejected for any reason, the Mitigation Implementation Team will be re-convened to develop additional recommendations.