
Chapter I

Introduction

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

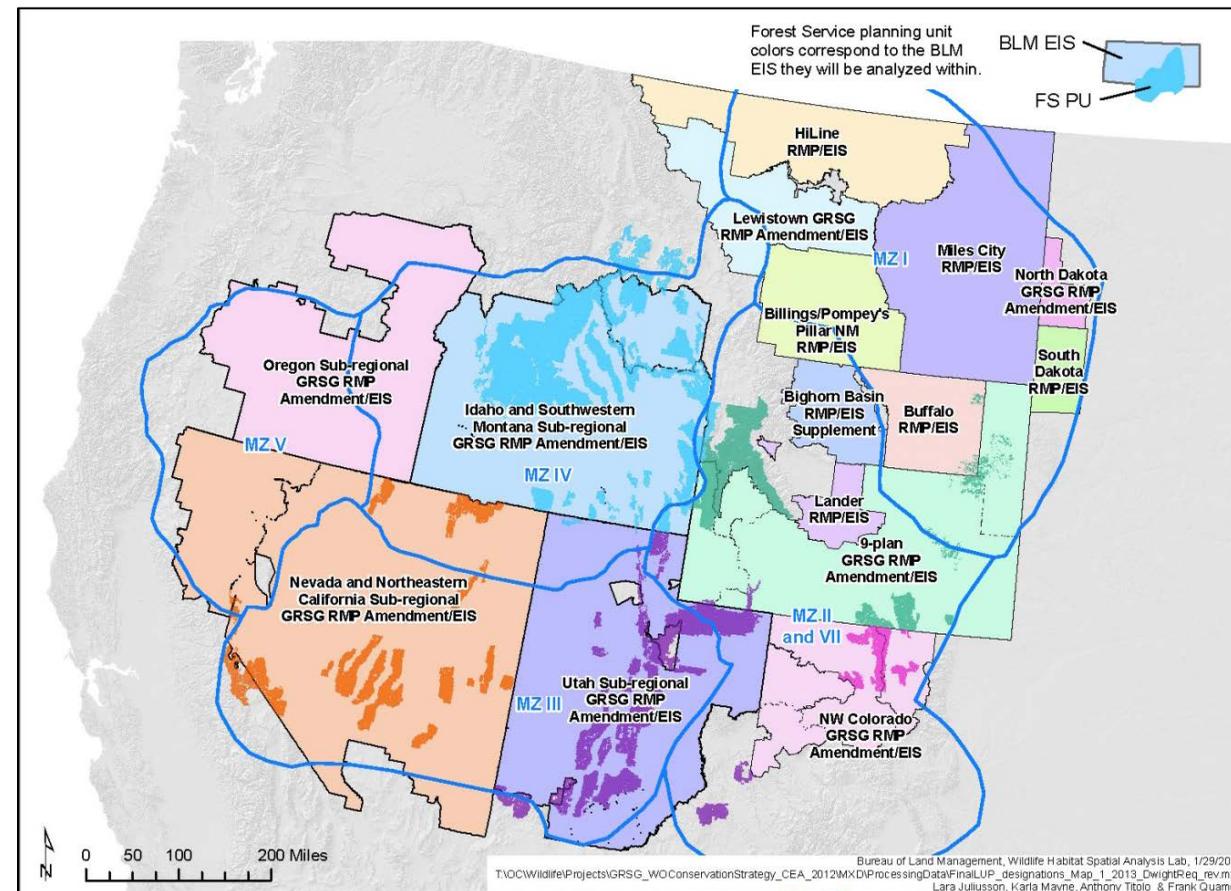
the major ones being habitat loss and fragmentation caused by development (e.g., oil and gas development, energy transmission, and wind energy development).

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

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

On a sub-regional level, the BLM Utah State Office and Forest Service Intermountain Region (Region 4) are proposing to complete this Utah Sub-Region LUPA/EIS to analyze the effects of amending up to 14 BLM RMPs and 6 Forest Service LRMPs in order to provide sub-region wide consistent management of GRSG habitat for all included BLM-administered and National Forest System lands. These proposed LUP amendments would identify and incorporate appropriate regulatory mechanisms to conserve, enhance, and/or restore GRSG habitat, and would be designed to eliminate, reduce, or minimize threats to GRSG priority and general habitats on BLM-administered and National Forest System lands in Utah Sub-Region. The proposed LUP amendments address both Listing Factors A and D (above) and are intended to provide consistency in the management of GRSG habitats across the Utah Sub-Region BLM and Forest Service offices. The BLM and Forest Service intend to issue separate Records of Decision (RODs). The RODs, which will be issued by September 30, 2014, are expected to offer sufficient evidence for the USFWS to consider preclusion of a potential listing for GRSG as a threatened or endangered species under the ESA.

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



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

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

The Forest Service is also proposing to amend oil and gas leasing analyses associated with the aforementioned LRMPs with this analysis as needed. This LUPA/EIS undertaking is one of seven that are ongoing within the 11 western states that have GRSG occupied habitat. A goal of all such LUP amendments is to ensure consistency across the sub-region, as well as across the range of the GRSG.

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

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

necessary to maintain or increase GRSG habitat, it should be recognized that not all mapped habitat is of equal value. Habitat conditions, GRSG populations, and existing threats are discussed in detail in **Section 3.2**, Special Status Species – Greater Sage-Grouse.

Through this land use planning process, the BLM and Forest Service will identify preliminary priority management areas (PPMAs) and analyze actions within PPMAs to conserve GRSG habitat functionality, and, where appropriate, improve habitat functionality, and identify preliminary general management areas (PGMAs) and analyze actions within PGMAs that provide for major life history function (e.g., breeding, migration, or winter survival) in order to maintain genetic diversity needed for sustainable GRSG populations.

PPMAs are BLM-administered and National Forest System lands identified to be managed as having the highest value to maintaining sustainable GRSG populations. PGMAs are BLM-administered and National Forest System lands identified requiring special management to sustain GRSG populations, but that are not as important as PPMAs. The PPMAs and PGMAs are derived from and generally follow the preliminary priority habitat and preliminary general habitat boundaries, respectively, but may be modified in extent based on the objectives of each alternative. Likewise, management strategies applied to the PPMAs and PGMAs may vary by alternative.

I.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The BLM and Forest Service are preparing LUP amendments with associated EISs for LUPs containing GRSG habitat. This effort responds to the USFWS's March 2010 "warranted, but precluded" ESA listing petition decision. Inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms was identified as a significant threat in the USFWS finding on the petition to list the GRSG. The USFWS identified the principal regulatory mechanisms for the BLM and the Forest Service as conservation measures embedded in LUPs. Changes in management of GRSG habitats are necessary to avoid the continued decline of populations that are anticipated across the species' range. These plan amendments will focus on areas affected by threats to GRSG habitat identified by the USFWS in the March 2010 listing decision.

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

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

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

I.3.1 Planning Area Overview

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

For this draft LUPA/EIS, the planning area includes all lands in the State of Utah, minus Washington and San Juan counties and portions of the Sawtooth National Forest located in Box Elder County. Public lands in Washington and San Juan Counties are administered by the BLM St. George and Monticello Field Offices. These offices do not manage any public lands with GRSG habitat. Therefore, no plan amendments are required. Although the Sawtooth National Forest includes GRSG habitat, the majority of the Sawtooth National Forest is located in Idaho. Therefore, amendments to the Sawtooth National Forest Plan are being considered in the Idaho/Montana Sub-region planning process. In addition to lands in Utah, the Utah Sub-Region planning area also includes portions of the Ashley and Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests that extend into the State of Wyoming. In total, there are 48,209,900 acres in the planning area.

The Utah Sub-Region planning area is nearly equally divided between the Rocky Mountain Region and the Great Basin Region. As discussed above, the major USFWS threats in this the Rocky Mountain Region is habitat loss and fragmentation caused by development (e.g., oil and gas development, energy transmission, and wind energy development). Within the Great Basin Region major threats include wildfire, loss of native habitat to invasive species, and habitat fragmentation. GRSG habitat in the Utah Sub-region overlaps four WAFWA MZs including: MZ II – Wyoming Basins, MZ III – Southern Great Basin, MZ IV – Snake River Plain, and MZ VII – Colorado Plateau (see **Map 3.2-2**, WAFWA Management Zones and Greater Sage-Grouse Breeding Bird Density, in **Appendix A**).

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

Within the planning area, there are numerous areas with GRSG habitat. These areas are non-contiguous, meaning they are often separated by natural geographic features/barriers or human development (**Map 1.1**, Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat, **Appendix A**). Because of the disconnected nature of the habitat, for the purposes of this planning process, the BLM and Forest Service have placed all mapped occupied GRSG habitat into 1 of 15 GRSG population areas (13 located in Utah, 2 located in Wyoming). The population areas are shown on **Map 1.2**, Population Areas, included in **Appendix A**. The concept of population areas was developed to improve the organization and structure of this document. Using the population area concept, the BLM and Forest Service are able to discuss differences in habitat,

threats, and impacts in different sections of the planning area by simply referencing a population area.

The population area boundaries were drawn to include all UDWR known occupied GRSG habitat in the State of Utah plus areas within 5 miles of all known occupied leks. The boundaries are also large enough to include areas that are not considered GRSG habitat but have been identified as lands that could provide important connectivity or facilitate the movement of GRSG between habitats. In total, there are approximately 11,536,000 acres (all ownership) within GRSG population areas. Although the boundaries of population areas were drawn using some biological considerations it is important to note that they are not intended to reflect distinct populations. The names of the population areas are as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.3.2 Regional Context

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

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

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

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

Some GRSG mapped occupied habitat located in the planning area, including some of the mapped occupied habitat located in the Rich, Carbon, Emery, Strawberry, Parker, and Panguitch population areas does fall within one of the aforementioned REAs. Mapped occupied GRSG habitat within these population areas generally

extends from north to south and is aligned to a certain extent in the center of Utah. Mapped occupied GRSG habitat in abovementioned population areas that does not fall within one of the aforementioned ecoregions falls within either the Middle Rocky Mountains physiographic province on one of Utah's high plateaus located in the Central Basin and Colorado Plateau transitional zone.

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

1.4 LAND USES

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

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

1.5 PLANNING PROCESSES

1.5.1 BLM Planning Process

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

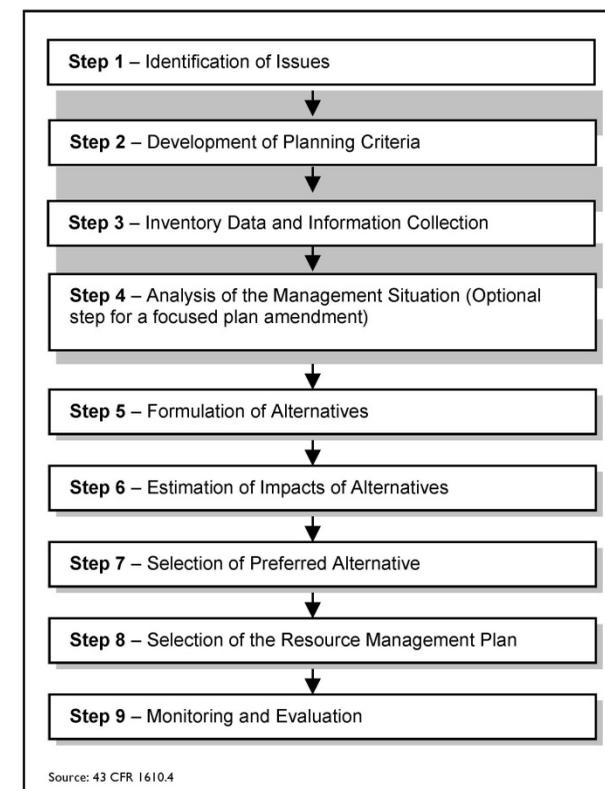
Under BLM regulations, an RMP revision or major amendment of an existing plan is a major federal action requiring disclosure and documentation of environmental effects as described in the NEPA. Thus, this EIS accompanies the amendment of the existing RMPs. This EIS analyzes the impacts of five alternatives,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

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

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

As depicted in **Figure 1.2** the planning process is issue-driven (Step 1). The planning process is undertaken to resolve management issues and problems as well as to take advantage of management opportunities. The BLM utilizes the public scoping process to identify planning issues to direct a revision or amendment of an existing plan. The scoping process also is used to introduce the public to preliminary planning criteria, which set the parameters or “sideboards” for conducting the planning process (Step 2). The BLM uses existing data from files and other sources and collects new data to address planning issues and to fill data gaps identified during public scoping (Step 3). Using these data, information concerning the resource

Figure 1.2
Nine-step Planning Process



management programs, and the planning criteria, the BLM completes an analysis of the management situation (Step 4) to describe current management and develop or inform the affected environment portion of the RMP. Typically, the analysis of the management situation is conducted at the outset of planning for an entire RMP or RMP revision and is incorporated by reference into development of a single focus plan amendment. In this case, direction for the plan amendment is provided through new national policy (BLM IM 2012-044). The affected environment is also

incorporated by reference into the amendment and updated with new information to the degree necessary to set the context for the analysis in the accompanying EIS.

Results of the first four steps of the planning process clarify the purpose and need and identify key planning issues that need to be addressed by the amendment. Key planning issues reflect the focus of the RMP amendment and are described in more detail in **Section 1.6.2**, Issues Identified for Consideration in the Utah Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Plan Amendments.

Alternatives constitute a range of management actions that set forth different priorities and measures to emphasize certain uses or resource values over other uses or resource values (usually representing a continuum from extraction and development to preservation/conservation) pursuant to the multiple-use and sustained yield mandate, so as to achieve certain goals or objectives consistent with the purpose and need. During alternative formulation (Step 5), the BLM collaborates with cooperating agencies to identify goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resources and resource uses within the planning area. The alternatives represent a reasonable range of planning strategies for managing resources and resource uses. **Chapter 2** of this document, Alternatives, describes and summarizes the Preferred Alternative and the other draft alternatives considered in detail.

This draft LUPA/EIS also includes an analysis of the impacts of the Preferred Alternative and the other draft alternatives in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences of Draft Plan and Draft Alternatives, (Step 6). With input from cooperating agencies and BLM specialists, and consideration of planning issues, planning criteria, and the impacts of alternatives, the BLM identifies and recommends a Preferred Alternative from among the alternatives presented in the EIS (Step 7). This is documented in the Draft RMP/EIS, which is then distributed for a 90-day public review and comment period.

Step 8 of the land-use planning process occurs following receipt and consideration of public comments on the draft LUPA/EIS. In preparing the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, the BLM will consider all comments it receives during the public comment period. The Proposed Plan Amendment will be crafted from the draft alternatives.

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

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

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

Effectiveness Monitoring: Effectiveness monitoring is aimed at determining if the implementation of activities has achieved the desired goals and objectives. Effectiveness monitoring asks the question: Was the specified activity successful in achieving the objective? This requires knowledge of the objectives established in the LUP as well as indicators that can be measured. Indicators are established by technical specialists in order to address specific questions, and thus to focus on collection of only necessary data. Success is measured against the benchmark of achieving desired future conditions established by the plan.

Regulations at 43 CFR Part 1610.4-9 require that the proposed plan establish intervals and standards, as appropriate, for monitoring and evaluation of the plan, based on the sensitivity of the resource decisions involved. Progress in meeting the

plan objectives and adherence to the management framework established by the plan is reviewed periodically. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA state that agencies may provide for monitoring to assure that their decisions are carried out and should do so in important cases (40 CFR Part 1505.2(c)). To meet these requirements, the BLM will review the plan on a regular schedule in order to provide consistent tracking of accomplishments and provide information that can be used to develop annual budget requests to continue implementation.

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

1.5.2 Forest Service Planning Process

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

watershed, wildlife and fish, and wilderness. Public participation and input are important components of land-use planning.

The plans developed under the 1982 planning rule procedures (See 36 CFR parts 200 to 299, Revised as of July 1, 2000) have resulted in:

1. Establishment of forest multiple-use goals and objectives
2. Establishment of forest-wide management requirements (standards and guidelines)
3. Establishment of management areas and management area direction (management area prescriptions) applying to future activities in that management area
4. Designation of suitable timber land and establishment of allowable timber sale quantity
5. Non-wilderness allocations or wilderness recommendations
6. Establishment of monitoring and evaluation requirements

Land and resource management plans are never “completed,” or “final,” as the NFMA requires plans to be maintained, amended and revised. Adaptive management requires ongoing adjustment of goals, objectives, management area prescriptions standards, and guidelines constraining land uses. An amendment can be started in response to monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, a change in circumstances or a proposed action that may result in a change in the scope of resource uses or a change in the standards and guidelines of the approved plan. Plan revisions and amendments are part of the collaborative and adaptive cycle of planning, which includes plan development; plan implementation; plan monitoring, inventory and assessment; and plan review and evaluation.

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

- Public notice for initiating plan amendment

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

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

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

On National Forest System lands, activity-level decisions regarding the leasing of minerals resources such as oil and gas and geothermal may be made outside of, and

subsequent to, the LUP process. Regulations at 36 CFR Part 228.102 require the Forest Service to decide which National Forest System lands are administratively available for oil and gas leasing. The Forest Service decision also includes necessary lease stipulations to protect surface resources. The Forest Service doesn't have regulations that address geothermal leasing, but the agency follows a process similar to oil and gas in that it conducts an analysis of leasing National Forest System lands and makes a decision that is consistent with, but independent of the LUP. An example of how Forest Service planning decisions crosswalk with BLM planning decisions is included in **Appendix B**, Draft Forest Service Standards and Guidelines for the GRSG Amendments to the LRMPs in Utah for the Preferred Alternative – Alternative D.

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

I.6.1 The Scoping Process

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

A public scoping period was initiated on December 9, 2011 with the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to begin a planning effort in the Federal Register. Scoping is designed to be consistent with the public involvement requirements of FLPMA, NFMA, and NEPA. The collaborative process included soliciting input from interested and affected state and local governments, tribal governments, other federal agencies and organizations, and individuals, to identify the scope of issues to be addressed in the plan amendment, and to assist in the formulation of reasonable

alternatives. The scoping process is an excellent method for opening dialogue between the BLM, Forest Service, and the general public about management of GRSG and their habitats on public lands and for identifying the concerns of those who have an interest in and in GRSG habitats. As part of the scoping process, the BLM also requested that the public submit nominations for potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) for GRSG and their habitats.

The scoping period for the Utah Sub-Region LUPA/EIS began on December 9, 2011. It was extended through a Notice of Correction published February 10, 2012, and ended on March 23, 2012. Scoping included open-house meetings in Price, Vernal, Salt Lake City, Randolph, Snowville, Richfield, Kanab, and Cedar City, Utah. In addition, news releases were used to notify the public regarding the scoping period and the planning process and to invite the public to provide written comments from many sources including via email, fax, and regular mail. Comments obtained from the public during the scoping period were used to define the relevant issues that would be addressed by a range of reasonable alternatives.

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

1. Issues identified for consideration in the Utah Sub-Region LUPA/EIS;
2. Issues to be addressed through policy or administrative action (and therefore not addressed in the LUPA/EIS);
3. Issues eliminated from detailed analysis because they are beyond the scope of the LUPA/EIS (and therefore not addressed in the LUPA/EIS).

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

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

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

Greater Sage-Grouse

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

Air Quality

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

Climate Change

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

Soil Resources

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

Water Resources

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

Vegetation (Including Noxious Weeds; Riparian and Wetland Ecosystems)

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

Other Special Status Species

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

Fish and Wildlife

- What measures will be put in place to manage habitat for other wildlife species and reduce conflicts with GRSG?

- How will the BLM and Forest Service work with wildlife management agencies in order to manage and mitigate impacts of other wildlife (e.g., predators and competitors for habitat and food) on GRSG?

- How will the BLM and Forest Service manage GRSG habitat for the protection of other sagebrush obligate species?

Wild Horse and Burro Management

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

Cultural Resources

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

Visual Resources

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

Wildland Fire Ecology and Management

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

Wilderness Characteristics

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

Range Management

- What measures will the BLM and Forest Service put in place to protect and improve GRSG habitat while maintaining grazing privileges?
- How will livestock grazing be managed in GRSG and GRSG habitat?

- How will infrastructure associated with grazing, including fences, range improvements, and water developments, be managed?
- How will the BLM and Forest Service manage livestock grazing on public lands to protect GRSB while allowing ranchers to maintain their livelihoods and contribution to the local economy?
- How would livestock grazing be impacted by GRSB management?

Recreation

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

Travel Management

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

Lands and Realty

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

Renewable Energy

- How should renewable energy development be managed to minimize conflict with GRSB, and what guidelines should be developed or implemented to guide siting of renewable energy resources?

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

Minerals

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

Special Designations

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

Social and Economic Conditions

- How could the BLM and Forest Service promote or maintain activities that provide social and economic benefit to local communities while providing protection for GRSB habitat?

- How will mineral and energy development be managed to protect GRSG and limit economic impacts on local communities?
- How will livestock grazing be managed to protect GRSG and limit social and economic impacts on local communities?

Tribal Interests

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

1.6.3 Issues Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

During the scoping process, the public identified a number of issues that will not be addressed in this draft LUPA/EIS. The following issues were determined to be outside the scope of the range-wide planning effort, including the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA/EIS:

Hunting Greater Sage-Grouse—Commenters questioned why GRSG hunting is allowed if the bird is in need of protection. Hunting is an allowed use on public lands and is regulated by state wildlife agencies. Comments regarding hunting relate to state-regulated actions and are outside the scope of draft LUPA/EIS.

Predator control—Commenters stated that control was needed to protect GRSG from predation. Predator control is allowed on BLM-administered and National Forest System lands and is regulated by state agencies; these comments therefore relate to state-regulated actions and are outside the scope of the plan amendment. The BLM and Forest Service will continue to work with agencies, to address current predation of GRSG. Federal lands in the planning area will remain open to predator control under state laws.

Warranted but precluded decision and management under ESA listing—Commenters questioned population levels and the need to incorporate range-wide conservation measures. Others questioned the effectiveness of ESA listing as a method of species conservation. These comments relate to decisions under the purview of USFWS and are not addressed in this plan amendment. The listing of

GRSG by USFWS may include conservation measures identified by USFWS, however, those conservation measures are not known at this time. Therefore, the BLM and Forest Service cannot address those speculative measures as part of its land use planning effort.

Forest Service Inventoried Roadless Areas and Recommended Wilderness—Forest Service Inventoried Roadless Areas and potential or recommended wilderness were issues eliminated from detailed analysis as it was determined that management for GRSG would not have measurable impacts on these areas. As part of this planning process the Forest Service is not considering any actions that would encourage or promote construction of roads thereby impacting roadless areas. In addition, the Forest Service is not considering any management actions or allocations that would prevent the Forest Service from managing recommended wilderness in a manner that would preserve and protect wilderness characteristic values or preclude Congress from designating these areas as wilderness in the future.

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

Oil Shale and Tar Sands—This planning initiative is not addressing oil shale and tar sands resources in Utah, and therefore, no alternatives that consider different management approaches to these resources are carried forward for detailed analysis in this EIS. In April 2011, the BLM initiated a planning effort addressing these resources in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, and the *Approved Land Use Plan Amendments/Record of Decision for Allocation of Oil Shale and Tar Sands Resources on Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming and Final Environmental Impact Statement (OSTS PEIS/ROD)* was completed in March 2013. The OSTS ROD closed all mapped occupied GRSG habitat on BLM-administered lands in Utah to oil shale and tar sands leasing and development, with

the exception of approximately 2,123 acres, which represents the acreage subject to the pending Asphalt Ridge tar sands lease application.

The Utah GRSG planning process does not present or analyze any alternatives for management of OSTs resources that were not already considered in the recently-completed OSTs planning effort, which included consideration of both opening and closing GRSG habitat to future OSTs leasing. As explained in the OSTs ROD, because of the nascent character of the oil shale and tar sands technologies, a measured approach was taken to oil shale and tar sands leasing and development to ensure that commercial viability was proven and the environmental consequences of these technologies is known before any commitment is made to broad-scale development which may impact other resource values. Consistent with this approach, the OSTs ROD closed mapped occupied GRSG habitat in Utah.

Further, the BLM and Forest Service will be using this planning process to determine which lands have the highest conservation value as GRSG habitat. A detailed analysis of an alternative or alternatives that would open areas of GRSG habitat to oil shale and tar sands leasing and development is not warranted because such an alternative or alternatives would be inconsistent with the purpose and need for this EIS which 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.

Once the BLM has completed this GRSG planning process and a decision has been made regarding which GRSG habitat is necessary for conservation, oil shale and tar sands land use planning decisions may be changed through a subsequent plan amendment process to consider leasing and development in areas where such uses would be consistent with other resource management decisions or where lands are of limited conservation value for GRSG.

With respect to National Forest System lands, portions of the Ashley National Forest are underlain by bedrock units of the Green River Formation, and are known to contain oil shale beds of varying thickness and quality. However, these potential mineral resources on the Ashley National Forest are not as thick or as rich as other

oil shale resources on BLM-administered or State lands, and do not fall within the “Most Geologically Prospective Oil Shale Resource” areas mapped and described as part of the recent OSTs PEIS. Because the oil shale resources within the Ashley National Forest are thinner and of lower grade than similar oil shale deposits in the surrounding area, there is no reasonably foreseeable development of these resources. Prior to considering any leasing in the future, the Forest Service would be required to complete a leasing analysis.

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

I.7 DEVELOPMENT OF PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria are based on appropriate laws, regulations, BLM and Forest Service Manual and Handbook sections, and policy directives, as well as on public participation and coordination with cooperating agencies, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and American Indian tribes. Planning criteria are the standards, rules, and factors used as a framework to resolve issues and develop alternatives. Planning criteria are prepared to ensure decision making is tailored to the issues and to ensure that the BLM and Forest Service avoid unnecessary data collection and analysis.

I.7.1 Preliminary Planning Criteria

- The BLM and Forest Service will utilize the WAFWA *Conservation Assessment of Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Habitats* (Connelly et al. 2004), and any other appropriate resources, to identify GRSG habitat requirements and best management practices (BMPs).

- The approved LUP amendments will be consistent with the BLM's National GRSG Conservation Strategy.
- The approved RMP amendments will comply with FLPMA, NEPA, and CEQ regulations at 40 CFR Parts 1500 - 1508 and DOI regulations at 43 CFR 46 and 43 CFR Part 1600; the BLM H-1601-1, *Land Use Planning Handbook*, "Appendix C: Program-Specific and Resource-Specific Decision Guidance Requirements" for affected resource programs; the 2008 BLM NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1), and all other applicable BLM policies and guidance.
- The approved LRMP amendments will comply with NFMA, NEPA, CEQ regulations at 40 CFR Parts 1500 – 1508, Regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture at 36 CFR Part 219 and Forest Service Manual 1920 and Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, Forest Service NEPA regulations found at 36 CFR Part 220, and Forest Service Handbook 1909.15
- The implementation of the decisions in the alternatives would be contingent on the availability of needed budget and staffing resources.
- The LUP amendments will be limited to providing land use planning level direction specific to the conservation of GRSG habitats.
- The BLM and Forest Service will consider standards to conserve GRSG habitat as well as objectives and management actions to restore, enhance, and improve GRSG habitat.
- The LUP amendments will recognize valid existing rights.
- Lands addressed in the LUPAs will be Federal lands (including non-Federal lands with Federal mineral interest) managed by the BLM and Forest Service in GRSG habitats. Any decisions in the LUP amendments will apply only to federal lands administered by either the BLM or the Forest Service.
- The BLM and Forest Service will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where appropriate, to determine the desired future condition of public lands and National Forest System lands for the conservation of GRSG and their habitats.
- As described by law and policy, the BLM and Forest Service will strive to ensure that conservation measures are as consistent as possible with other planning jurisdictions within the planning area boundaries.
- The BLM and Forest Service will consider a range of reasonable alternatives, including appropriate management prescriptions that focus on the relative values of resources while contributing to the conservation of the GRSG and GRSG habitat.
- The BLM and Forest Service will consider a range of reasonable alternatives that are consistent with the conservation objectives and measures included in the Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Objectives Team (COT) Final Report (COT Report) (USFWS 2013a).
- The BLM and Forest Service will address socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives. Socio-economic analysis will use an accepted input-output quantitative model such as IMPLAN or RIMSII, and JEDI for analysis.
- The BLM and Forest Service will use current scientific information, research, technologies, and results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies that will enhance or restore GRSG habitats.
- Management of GRSG habitat in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument will comply with Presidential Proclamation 6920 and other legislation applicable to Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.
- Management of GRSG habitat that intersects with wilderness study areas (WSAs) on Public lands administered by the BLM will be guided by the Manual 6330, *Management of Wilderness Study Areas*. Land use allocations made for WSAs must be consistent with the Manual 6330 and with other laws, regulations, and policies related to WSA management.

- For BLM-administered lands, all activities and uses within GRSG habitats will follow existing land health standards. Standards and guidelines for livestock grazing and other programs that have developed standards and guidelines will be applicable to all alternatives for BLM-administered lands.
- The BLM and Forest Service will consult with American Indian tribes to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage within GRSG habitats.
- The BLM and Forest Service will coordinate and communicate with state, local, and tribal governments to ensure that the BLM and Forest Service consider provisions of pertinent plans, seek to resolve inconsistencies between state, local, and tribal plans, and provide ample opportunities for state, local, and tribal governments to comment on the development of amendments.
- The BLM and Forest Service will develop vegetation management objectives, including objectives for managing noxious weeds and invasive species (including identification of desired future condition for specific areas), within GRSG habitat.
- The LUP amendments will be based on the principles of adaptive management.
- Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenarios and planning for Fluid Minerals will follow the BLM Handbook H-1624-1, Planning for Fluid Mineral Resources, and current fluid minerals manual guidance for fluid mineral (oil and gas, coal-bed methane, oil shale) and geothermal resources. For National Forest System lands, the Forest Service will use applicable and relevant policy and procedures.
- The LUP amendments will be developed using an interdisciplinary approach to prepare reasonable foreseeable development scenarios, identify alternatives, and analyze resource impacts, including cumulative

impacts to natural and cultural resources and the social and economic environment.

- The most current approved BLM and Forest Service corporate spatial data will be supported by current metadata and will be used to ascertain GRSG habitat extent and quality. Data will be consistent with the principles of the Information Quality Act of 2000.
- State game and fish agencies' GRSG data and expertise will be utilized to the fullest extent practicable in making management determinations on federal lands.

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

This planning process will recognize the many ongoing programs, plans, and policies that are being implemented in the planning area by other land managers and government agencies. The BLM and Forest Service will seek to be consistent with or complementary to other management actions whenever possible. Plans that need to be considered during the GRSG planning effort include the following:

I.8.1 Programmatic Documents

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

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

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

1.8.2 State Plans

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

Uintah Basin Energy Zone—The Uintah Basin Energy Zone includes lands within Daggett, Uintah, and Duchesne counties. The Zone was established by law (63J-8-105.5) for the purpose of maximizing efficient and responsible development of energy and mineral resources. The Uintah Basin Energy Zone contain abundant, energy and mineral resources, including oil, natural gas, oil shale, oil sands, gilsonite, coal, phosphate, gold, uranium, and copper, as well as areas with high wind and solar energy potential. The State of Utah supports efficient and responsible full development of all existing energy and mineral resources located within this area.

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

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

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

Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan—The Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation plan is a statewide plan that largely reliant on implementation by local working groups. The plan identifies steps that should be taken to minimize impacts on GRSG, with the goal of halting GRSG declines in Wyoming and increasing the abundance and distribution of GRSG in Wyoming.

1.8.3 Local Plans

County Land Use Plans

- Uintah County Land Use Plan (2011)

- Duchesne County General Plan (2012)
- Daggett County General Plan
- Grand County General Plan
- Carbon County Master Plan (2010)
- Emery County General Plan, as amended, Emery County, Utah
- Beaver County General Plan (1992)
- Iron County General Plan (2009)
- General Plan for Piute County (1994)
- Sanpete County General Plan (2010 and amended 2012)
- Sevier County General Plan (1998)
- General Plan for Wayne County (1994)
- Wayne County Resource Management Plan (2011)
- Kane County, Utah, General Plan (1998 and amended 2013)
- Garfield County, Utah, General Plan (1995 and amended 1998 and 2007)
- Juab County General Plan
- Millard County General Plan (2010)
- Utah County General Plan (2006)
- Box Elder County land Use Management and Development Code (2007)
- Tooele County General Plan (1995)
- Rich County Comprehensive Plan (1996)
- Morgan County General Plan (2010)
- Eastern Summit County General Plan (2010)
- Snyderville Basin General Plan (2002)

- Wasatch County General Plan (2010)
- Cache County General Plan
- Sweetwater County General Plan
- Sweetwater County Conservation District Land and Resource Use Plan
- Uinta County Comprehensive Plan (2011)
- Uinta County Conservation District Plan

Local Sage-Grouse Working Group Plans

- Castle Country Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan (2006)
- West Box Elder Greater Sage-Grouse Local Working Group Conservation Plan (2007)
- Color Country Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2008)
- Morgan-Summit Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2006)
- Parker Mountain Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2006)
- Rich County Coordinated Resource Management Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan (2006)
- Southwest Desert Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2007)
- Strawberry Valley Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2006)
- Uinta Basin Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2007)
- West Desert Greater Sage-Grouse Local Conservation Plan (2007)
- Southwest Wyoming Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Plan (2007)

1.8.4 Endangered Species Recovery Plans and Habitat Conservation Plans

Within the planning area there are many threatened and endangered species. Not all species for which there is a recovery or habitat conservation plan are included in

this section. This section is focused on those species and lands that have the most potential to be affected by GRSG management decisions being considered in this planning process. This is consistent with NEPA regulations, which require agencies to concentrate on the issues that are truly relevant to the action in question.

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

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

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

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

1.8.5 Activity Plans and Amendments

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

- Utah Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire and Fuels Management (2005)
- Salt Lake Fire Management Plan (2005)
- Salt Lake District Proposed Fire Management Plan Amendment (1998)
- Moab Fire District Fire Management Plan (2006)
- Vernal Fire Management Plan (2005)
- Southern Utah Support Area Fire Management Plan (2006)
- Richfield Fire Management Plan (2006)
- Wyoming Wildlife Management and Implementation Plan (2011)
- Range Creek Herd Management Area Plan (1994)
- Bible Springs Wild Horse Management Plan (1975)
- Bible Springs, Blawn Wash, Four Mile, and Tilly Creek Wild Horse Appropriate Management Level Assessment (2005)
- Sulphur Wild Horse Herd Management Plan (1987)
- Onaqui Mountain Herd Management Area Plan signed in 2002
- Stockton Hills Travel Management Plan (2012)
- Richfield Travel Management Plan (2008)
- Vernal Travel Management Plan (2008)
- Price Travel Management Plan (2008)
- Kanab Travel Management Plan (2008)

- Oil and Gas Leasing on Lands Administered by the Dixie National Forest (2011)
- Western Uinta Basin Oil and Gas Leasing EIS and ROD (1997) (Ashley National Forest)
- Oil and Gas Leasing Analysis in Revised Forest Plan, Wasatch-Cache National Forest (2003)
- Oil and Gas Leasing Analysis and ROD Uinta National Forest (2011)
- Oil and Gas Leasing Analysis and ROD, Manti-La Sal National Forest (1994)
- Record of Decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement; Oil and Gas Leasing Analysis – Fishlake National Forest

I.9 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

I.9.1 Conservation Objectives Team Report

In 2012, the Director of the USFWS asked the COT, consisting of state and USFWS representatives, to produce recommendations regarding the degree to which the threats need to be reduced or ameliorated to conserve GRSG so that it would no longer be in danger of extinction or likely to become in danger of extinction in the foreseeable future. The COT Report provides objectives based upon the best scientific and commercial data available at the time of its release.

The highest level objective identified in the COT Report is identified as to meet the objectives of the 2006 WAFWA Greater Sage-grouse Comprehensive Strategy of “reversing negative population trends and achieving a neutral or positive population trend.”

The COT Report provides a Management Zone and Population Risk Assessment. The Report identifies localized threats from sagebrush elimination, fire, conifer encroachment, weed and annual grass invasion, mining, free-roaming horses and burros, and urbanization and widespread threats from energy development,

infrastructure, improper grazing and recreation. Additional information on consistency of this draft LUPA/EIS with the COT Report can be found in **Appendix C**, COT Report Consistency Evaluation.

I.9.2 Baseline Environmental Report

The Baseline Environmental Report (BER) is a USGS- and BLM-produced document that examines each threat identified in the USFWS listing decision at the national and WAFWA MZ level. The purpose of this environmental report is to assist in describing the Affected Environment and provide a baseline for the cumulative impacts analysis.

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

I.10 NATIONAL GREATER SAGE-GROUSE PLANNING STRATEGY

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

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

Along with the applicable measures that were outlined in the NTT Report, planning efforts associated with this National GRSB Planning Strategy will also analyze applicable conservation measures that were submitted to the BLM and Forest Service from various state governments and from citizens during the public scoping process. It is the goal of the BLM and Forest Service to make a final decision on these plans by the end of 2014, so that adequate regulatory mechanisms are integrated into the LUPs before the USFWS makes a listing decision in 2015.