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Utah State Office  
440 West 200 South, Suite 500  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1345  
<http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/html>



United States Department of Agriculture  
U.S. Forest Service  
Intermountain Region  
334 25th Street  
Ogden, UT 84401-2300  
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/r4>

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
6500  
(UT935)

October 11, 2013

Dear Reader:

Attached for your review and comment is the Draft Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft LUPA/Draft EIS) for the Utah Sub-Region, a component of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy.

The planning area covers approximately 48 million acres of land in Utah and Wyoming, of which, approximately 7.2 million acres contain mapped Greater Sage-Grouse occupied habitat. Management direction associated with the Draft LUPA/Draft EIS would apply to approximately 2.5 million acres of BLM-administered lands and 0.8 million acres of National Forest System lands, as well as approximately 0.7 million acres of BLM-administered subsurface federal mineral estate beneath non-federal surface ownership.

This planning process is considering amendments to 14 BLM and six Forest Service land use plans to amend management of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat in Utah and portions of Wyoming. The result of this planning process will be the potential amendment of land use plans in seven BLM Field Offices (Cedar City, Fillmore, Kanab, Price, Richfield, Salt Lake, and Vernal) and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, as well as plans associated with five national forests (Ashley, Fishlake, Manti-La Sal, Dixie, and Uinta-Wasatch-Cache). All actions analyzed in the Draft LUPA/Draft EIS would apply only to lands managed by the BLM and Forest Service.

As directed by BLM Planning Regulations, Alternative D has been identified in the Draft EIS as the preferred alternative. Identification of the preferred alternative does not indicate any commitments on the part of the BLM or Forest Service with regard to a final decision. In developing the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS, which is the next phase of the planning process, the decision maker may select various management actions from each of the alternatives analyzed in the Draft LUPA/Draft EIS for the purpose of creating a management strategy that best meets the needs of the resources and values in this area under the BLM and Forest Service multiple use and sustained yield mandates.

The BLM and Forest Service encourage the public to review and provide comments on the Draft LUPA/Draft EIS. Viewing the document electronically using the compact disk (CD) or on the project website ([http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/planning/SG\\_RMP\\_rev.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/planning/SG_RMP_rev.html)) is encouraged. Paper copies are available for public review at BLM and Forest Service offices throughout the planning area. Inquire at the front desk of an office to review copies to review in the office's public room.

Public comments will be accepted for ninety (90) calendar days following the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) publication of its Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*.

As a member of the public, your timely comments on the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Draft LUPA/Draft EIS will help formulate the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS. Comments are most useful that provide the BLM and Forest Service feedback concerning the adequacy and accuracy of the proposed alternatives, the analysis of their respective management decisions, and any new information that would help the BLM and Forest Service as they develop the plan. Your comments should be as specific as possible and include suggested changes, sources, methodologies and references to a section or page number. Comments containing only opinion or preferences will be considered and included as part of the decision-making process; however, they will not receive a formal response from the BLM or Forest Service.

Comments may be submitted electronically by e-mailto: [blm UT comments@blm.gov](mailto:blm_UT_comments@blm.gov).

Comments may also be submitted by mail to:

BLM/FS Greater Sage-Grouse EIS  
Attn: Quincy Bahr  
440 West 200 South, Suite 500  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1345

To facilitate analysis of comments and information submitted, we strongly encourage you to submit comments in an electronic format.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

A series of eight informational open houses will be held in November to answer questions you may have on the project. Specific open house locations and dates are still being determined, but will be announced by local media, the project website, and/or public mailings at least 15 days in advance of the open houses.

There are numerous values and concerns associated with the management of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat across the West, including energy development, development of transmission lines, livestock grazing, fire management, and recreation. We will continue to incorporate the most current information we have available as we prepare forthcoming

Greater Sage-Grouse planning documents. We remain committed to implementing the policies and conservation measures that will meet both agencies' multiple-use mandates, provide for the habitat needs to conserve the Greater Sage-Grouse in Utah, avoid the need to list under the Endangered Species Act, and minimize long-term regulatory burdens.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse LUPA. We appreciate the information and suggestions you contribute to the planning process.

Sincerely,



Juan Palma  
Utah State Director  
Bureau of Land Management



Nora Rasure  
Regional Forester  
U.S. Forest Service, Intermountain Region

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## **Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

**Responsible Agencies:** United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management (Lead Agency)

United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service

**Abstract:** This draft land use plan amendment and draft environmental impact statement (EIS) has been prepared by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) with input from 26 cooperating agencies. This document is considering amendments to 14 BLM and six Forest Service land use plans to address management of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat in Utah and portions of Wyoming. The draft EIS describes and analyzes five alternatives for managing Greater Sage-Grouse habitat on approximately 3.3 million acres of BLM-administered and National Forest System lands and approximately 0.7 million acres of BLM-administered subsurface federal mineral estate beneath non-federal surface ownership. Alternative A is a continuation of current management (No Action Alternative); use of public lands and resources would continue to be managed under the current BLM and USFS land use plans, as amended. Alternative B is based on management actions from the Sage-Grouse National Technical Team's *A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures*. Alternative C is based on management actions submitted by various groups during public scoping. Alternative D was developed by the agencies' interdisciplinary team to address local ecological site variability and address conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse in context with other competing human interests. Alternative E is based on the State of Utah's *Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-Grouse in Utah* and the State of Wyoming Governor's Executive Orders 2011-05 and 2013-3. Alternative D is the agencies' preferred alternative, though this does not constitute a final decision and there is no requirement that the preferred alternative identified in the draft EIS be selected as the agencies' decision in the Record of Decision. The alternatives present a range of management actions to achieve the goal of Greater Sage-Grouse conservation for the Utah BLM and Forest Service Intermountain Region. Major planning issues addressed include energy and minerals, lands and realty (including rights-of-way), wildfire, vegetation management (including invasive species and conifer encroachment), livestock grazing, recreation and travel management, and socioeconomics.

**Review Period:** Comments on the Utah Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Land Use Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement will be accepted for 90 calendar days following publication of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*.

**For further information, contact:**

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