

ATTACHMENT 6
AGENCY WILDLIFE MITIGATION PLAN

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Agency Wildlife Mitigation Plan for the West Tavaputs Plateau

The Price Field Office, in coordination with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR), has developed a Wildlife Mitigation Plan that emphasizes the importance of offsetting the effects of the full field development in its entirety. The agencies' plan gives priority to compensating for potential effects to greater sage-grouse, deer, raptors, and elk.

As part of this plan, BBC and other operators will be required to mitigate impacts to wildlife on a 4:1 acre ratio based on total potential long-term surface disturbance.

Under the plan, 30 percent of the total potential long-term surface disturbance (estimated to be approximately 685 acres) will be mitigated during the first 3 years of the development phase. As part of this initial effort, the following measures will be implemented:

- Habitat improvement and connectivity projects designed to remove encroaching pinyon and juniper (e.g., lop and scatter) and increase the sagebrush park size to benefit sage-grouse. (This will be implemented at a 4:1 ratio as indicated above.)
- Wet meadow/summer range enhancement projects designed to increase this type of habitat for sage-grouse brood survival. Up to six projects will be implemented. Acres enhanced will be counted under the habitat improvement tally at an equal or greater acreage value based on the qualitative benefits of the enhancement.
- The operators will contribute to UDWR for monitoring greater sage-grouse, whether the continued telemetry study or other, more aggressive means of monitoring, if necessary, including experimental designs.

The agency mitigation plan will also establish a mitigation oversight committee (MOC) to be led by the BLM, in coordination with UDWR, SITLA, other agencies, and the operators. The WTP MOC will include, or at least invite to participate, a representative from a local sage-grouse working group, any potential affected private landowners, and representatives from Carbon and Duchesne Counties.

The WTP MOC will evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of mitigation measures, provide direction on effective means of mitigating planned development activities, and develop adaptive strategies and projects to mitigate beyond the initial 30 percent commitment.

The WTP MOC will complete evaluations and make determinations on on-going and planned mitigation activities on an annual basis, in advance of considerations for winter activities (as is outlined in the ROD), and prepare a report on its findings. As appropriate, the WTP MOC will use information and principles from the USFWS, BLM, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts, and Castle Country Adaptive Resource Management Local Working Group to guide mitigation strategies for sage-grouse.

Adaptive strategies beyond the operators' initial commitment could include a broad menu of mitigation options. The relative value of the various options will be determined by the BLM in consultation with the WTP MOC such that their value can be applied toward the operators' 4:1 mitigation requirement. All mitigation commitments (i.e., the remaining 70%) under the Agency Wildlife Mitigation Plan will be initiated within one year of completion of drilling operations. Mitigation options which will be considered by the WTP MOC for implementation of the plan include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

- Additional habitat improvement and connectivity projects. A variety of methods could be used, targeting a range of vegetative communities and habitats, including wet meadow/summer range;
- Continued or more aggressive monitoring of greater sage-grouse, including experimental designs;
- Conversion of grazing allotments in and around Nine Mile Canyon from domestic sheep (this could provide for the reintroduction of bighorn sheep into Nine Mile Canyon);
- The purchase of conservation easements on private lands; and
- Management of private lands for the benefit of wildlife.

The WTPMOC will recognize, within the 4:1 parameter, mitigation activities on Federal, State, and private lands, including those which build upon or complement past commitments by operators to mitigate activities authorized under previous analyses and associated decisions. However, credit for previous project mitigation will not be allowed within the 4:1 parameter.