

Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Process

November 2011

The following important events have collectively led to the development of consistent implementation of sage-grouse habitat conservation measures throughout Wyoming.

On August 1, 2008, former Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal signed the first of what would become a short series of Wyoming Executive Orders (EOs) to establish the State of Wyoming's Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Strategy. The analysis leading up to the EO included a careful review of recommendations developed by the Sage-Grouse Implementation Team (SGIT). The group was formed at the direction of the governor and includes BLM, state agencies, energy industry, natural resource professionals including academia, conservation organizations, local governments, private citizens, and others. .

The strategy includes population management objectives within and outside "Sage-Grouse Core Areas." The Core Area Strategy in Wyoming has been clarified, refined and continued by current Wyoming Governor Matt Mead. Governor Mead signed his own Executive Order (EO 2011-5) June 2, 2011, to replace and refine EOs from the former Governor. The latest EO continues support of the State's Core Area Strategy for sage-grouse conservation.

All of the EOs of Governor Freudenthal and now Governor Mead, have identified core area objectives and each subsequent order has further refined Wyoming's strategy for long-term conservation, maintenance and on-going management of Greater sage-grouse populations and associated habitats within the state, regardless of land ownership pattern.

The process for developing the strategy relied heavily on the work of the SGIT, which played a critical role in ensuring necessary conservation measures were discussed among all interested parties. In addition, the group also discussed how these measures would be implemented while also securing economic and political support, and ultimately providing much broader support and buy-in for the conservation strategy itself.

In support of the State's strategy, on December 29, 2009, BLM Wyoming issued the Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Policy Instruction Memorandum (IM), WY IM 2010-012. The IM formally recognizes the state's authority to establish "core areas" for population management focus and the IM represents BLM's substantial effort to actively manage those habitats on the National System of Public Lands in support of the game bird population management objectives, as set by the State of Wyoming and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

The strategies and policies consider all pertinent scientific, peer-reviewed literature as well as balanced management of other natural resources present on the landscape and one of the greatest benefits of the Wyoming Strategy and the coordinated BLM Wyoming policy is that it provides consistent direction and guidance for BLM Wyoming district and field offices in considering and applying the appropriate strategic conservation measures and protections that support Wyoming State sage-grouse population management objectives.

For copies of the Executive Order and management guidelines, please see http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/wildlife_management/sagegrouse/index.asp.

