



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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To: District Managers and Deputy State Directors

From: State Director

Subject: Step-by-step Cooperative Strategy for Use of Web-based Density and Disturbance Calculation Tool (DDCT)

Program Area: All programs

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) transmits the workflow procedures for use of the web-based Wyoming Density and Disturbance Calculation Tool (DDCT) for Greater Sage-Grouse and guidance for its use in Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wyoming Field Offices (FO). This guidance supplements the flowchart included as WY IM No. 2012-019 Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Policy on BLM Wyoming administered public lands including Federal Mineral Estate, Attachment 4, and replaces the manual included as Attachment 5. The purposes of the web-based tool are to (1) assist FO specialists in calculating levels of disturbance within Greater Sage-Grouse Core Areas, as defined by the Wyoming Governor's Sage-Grouse Implementation Team, and (2) to maintain a central repository for all existing and proposed disturbances within the Core Areas. Specifically, this IM provides guidance on the workflow coordination between the technical review and the policy review for each DDCT project, the use of the web-based DDCT tool, and the accompanying most current Sage-Grouse Executive Order (SGEO) Worksheet (see <https://ddct.wygisc.org/Data/Sites/24/files/Worksheet.pdf> and https://ddct.wygisc.org/Data/Sites/24/files/worksheet_questions.pdf). The BLM Wyoming State Office will conduct periodic review of the implementation of Directives contained in this IM to determine their applicability and effectiveness and make changes as necessary.

Policy/Action: It is the policy of BLM Wyoming to manage Greater Sage-Grouse habitats in support of management objectives set by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD). The following procedures (Attachment 1 or most recent version that is located at <https://ddct.wygisc.org/ddct-procedure.aspx> or direct download at

https://ddct.wygisc.org/Data/Sites/24/files/DDCT_Procedures.pdf), worksheet (Attachment 2 or most recent version located at <https://ddct.wygisc.org/Data/Sites/24/files/Worksheet.pdf> and https://ddct.wygisc.org/Data/Sites/24/files/worksheet_questions.pdf), and workflow diagram (Attachment 4) are consistent with separately issued guidance for BLM WY IM No. 2012-019 and with guidelines and recommendations provided for in the Wyoming Governor’s Sage-Grouse Implementation Team’s Core Population Area Strategy and the most recent Wyoming Governor’s Executive Order (EO) 2011-5 (or subsequent direction).

It is the goal of BLM Wyoming to continue to work toward the long-term conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse habitats in Wyoming through coordination with partners, including the Governor’s Office of the State of Wyoming, the WGFD and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and to also utilize input from the Resource Advisory Council (RAC), Local Sage-Grouse Working Groups (LWGs), the BLM cooperators and stakeholders through a process that includes the immediate implementation of the following measures and statements.

Instructions for the use of the web-based DDCT (see also Attachment 4):

For any new activity or development proposal submitted to or proposed by a BLM Wyoming Field Office:

- 1) The Federal agency specialist determines whether the project is in a Greater Sage-Grouse Core or Connectivity Area.
 - a. If the project is located within a Core or Connectivity Area, is the project an activity that is listed as Exempt (“de minimus”) Activities” listed at <https://ddct.wygisc.org/ddct-cap-faqs.aspx>
 - i. If yes, then no DDCT is necessary and analysis of impacts will continue as provided for in the National Environmental Policy Act.
 - ii. If no, then:
 1. The specialist notifies the project lead that a DDCT will be required.
 2. The specialist notifies the Application and Data Steward at WyGISC (wygiscweb@uwyo.edu), from here on referred to as Data Steward, of the existence of the project.
 - b. If the project is not located within a Core or Connectivity Area, then no DDCT is necessary and analysis of impacts will continue as provided for in National Environmental Policy Act.

- 2) The project lead, working with the project proponent, determines who will complete the DDCT.
 - a. If it is determined that the BLM specialist will complete the DCCT, proceed to step 3.
 - b. If it is determined that the proponent/contractor will complete the DDCT, proceed to step 4.

- 3) The BLM specialist uses the DDCT process to determine whether or not the project proposal is consistent with guidelines contained in SGEO and WY IM No. 2012-019 or subsequent Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revisions/Amendments:
 - a. Obtain and review:
 - i. All proposed disturbance locations associated with the proposed action, including the best estimate of infrastructure location/needs.
 - ii. Disturbance areas typically associated with the proposed disturbances (i.e. ROW width, well pad size, etc.).
 - iii. Any reclaimed/suitable habitat areas (those that were determined to be or calculated as disturbed in previous DDCTs and are now reclaimed to suitable or trending toward suitable in cases of wildfire – see <https://ddct.wygisc.org/ddct-cap-faqs.aspx> - Wildfires within a DDCT, Suitable Sage-Grouse Habitat Definition, Vegetation Monitoring for Suitability Criteria, etc.).
 - iv. Any additional information that may be helpful to delineate proposed disturbances.
 - b. Register and/or access the Wyoming Density/Disturbance Calculation Tool (<https://ddct.wygisc.org>) to log project and obtain an assigned project number.
 - c. Within the web application, digitize or upload the proposed project. The tool will generate the project assessment area boundary (i.e., DDCT boundary).
 - d. Verify all existing disturbances are included and/or digitize any existing disturbances not yet accounted for within the project assessment area by digitizing disturbance using the web application or by uploading ArcGIS shapefiles.
 - i. If necessary conduct additional onsite visits. Make project adjustments in order to minimize/co-locate disturbances and/or address other project conflicts.

- ii. Using the web application, modify disturbances to reflect the final project proposal. This can be accomplished by either uploading only the changes that occurred or by uploading an entirely new file that replaces the original. If the proposed project size/shape/overall location changes, a new DDCT boundary will need to be generated and existing disturbances verified.
 - e. Complete the entire SGEO Worksheet, providing as much detail as possible. NOTE: This worksheet serves as the primary means of documentation of EO compliance and must contain information addressing every question.
 - f. Notify the Field Manager/Resource Advisor/Wyoming State Office, as necessary, if any potential EO compliance issues arise.
 - g. Submit the DDCT results for technical review and the completed worksheet to the Data Steward.
 - i. If the project proposal is incorrect (missing information, existing disturbance not digitized, etc.), the Data Steward will return the project to the specialist to correct and resubmit. The Data Steward will use Mapbook as a means to communicate general submission and/or correction needs via easily downloadable pdf maps.
 - h. Once the Data Steward determines the submissions is technically correct, he/she submits the Mapbook, final DDCT results, and completed worksheet to the WGFD Habitat Protection Program (HPP) for policy review.
 - i. WGFD HPP will coordinate with other state agencies and the Federal permitting agency as needed to resolve any EO compliance issues.
 - j. WGFD HPP will send a letter to the Federal agency and copy the response to the project proponent.
- 4) The project proponent / consultant uses the DDCT process to determine whether or not the project proposal is consistent with guidelines contained in SGEO and WY IM No. 2012-019 or subsequent RMP Revisions/Amendments:
- a. Register and/or access the Wyoming Density/Disturbance Calculation Tool (<https://ddct.wygisc.org>) to log project and obtain an assigned project number.
 - b. Using the web application, digitize or upload the proposed project. The tool will generate the project assessment area boundary (i.e., DDCT boundary).

- c. Within the web application or in ArcGIS, obtain current compiled existing disturbance data. Review the existing disturbance files. Verify all existing disturbances are included and/or digitize any existing disturbances not yet accounted for within the project assessment area as preliminary disturbance.
- d. The project proponent/consultant will notify the BLM that the preliminary DDCT process is complete.
- e. The BLM specialist notifies the Data Steward that the project should be moved from proponent /contractor ownership to BLM ownership.
- f. The BLM specialist reviews the preliminary DDCT, working with the proponent to resolve any discrepancies.
 - i. The BLM will conduct any necessary additional onsite visits and make project adjustments in order to minimize/co-locate disturbances and/or address other project conflicts.
 - ii. Using the web application, the BLM specialist will modify disturbances to reflect the final project proposal. This can be accomplished by either uploading only the changes that occurred or by uploading an entirely new file that replaces the original. If the proposed project size / shape / overall location changes, a new DDCT boundary will need to be generated and existing disturbances verified.
- g. The project proponent/consultant will complete the SGEO Worksheet, providing as much detail as possible and submit it to the BLM specialist. NOTE: This worksheet serves as the primary means of documentation of EO conformance and must contain information addressing every question.
- h. The BLM specialist will submit the DDCT results for technical review and the completed worksheet to the Data Steward.
- i. The Data Steward performs a technical review:
 - i. If the project proposal is incorrect, (missing information, existing disturbance not digitized, etc.) the Data Steward will return the project to the BLM specialist.
 - ii. The BLM specialist will work with the proponent to resolve the discrepancies and, once resolved, will resubmit it to the Data Steward. The Data Steward will use Mapbook as a means to communicate general submission and/or correction needs via easily downloadable pdf maps.

- j. Once the Data Steward determines the submission is technically correct, he/she submits the Mapbook, final DDCT results, and completed worksheet to the GFD Habitat Protection Program (HPP) for policy review.
- k. WGFD HPP will coordinate with other State agencies and the Federal permitting agency as needed to resolve any EO compliance issues.
- l. WGFD HPP will send a letter to the Federal agency and copy the response to the project proponent.

Monitoring Effectiveness: It is extremely important that the directives contained in this IM are followed as a monitoring tool for compliance with the most current EO and WY IM No. 2012-019 or subsequent RMP Revisions/Amendments. BLM Wyoming Field Offices are to establish additional monitoring protocols that will be incorporated into individual project approvals as appropriate and necessary.

Deviations from the Policy and Strategy: This statewide policy is intended to provide consistent use of the web-based DDCT for Greater Sage-Grouse habitat management on BLM administered public lands including Federal mineral estate in Wyoming and ensure that existing and proposed disturbances within Core Areas are compiled in one central, frequently updated, location. Because Wyoming is a diverse state, there may be occasional circumstances which could justify deviation from the policies stated herein. In all cases, prior to actions where deviations from policy may take place, FOs will coordinate with WGFD counterparts and advise the Deputy State Director for Resources Policy and Management (WY 930) and the Deputy State Director for Minerals and Lands (WY 920) through the District Office of their intent to take such actions. The purpose of such notification and interaction is to ensure State Office awareness of the number and type of such actions, and not to request advance WY BLM State Office approval for such actions.

Timeframe: Effective immediately.

Budget Impact: The effect on the budget should be minimal as this guidance helps provide a consistent approach across Field Offices to managing a Candidate species.

Background: Governor Matthew Mead of the State of Wyoming issued Executive Order 2011-5 on June 2, 2011. In February 2012, the WY BLM State Office issued revised instruction to the field through Instruction Memorandum (IM) WY-2012-019, which adopts the core strategy of the State and provides guidance to the field concerning the implementation of the core area conservation strategy on BLM public lands and mineral resources. Since that time, the WY BLM, in partnership with the WGFD, WyGIS, the Wyoming Sage-Grouse Implementation Team, and others, has worked in close coordination to address many questions and to resolve difficult issues related to the direction set forth in these documents.

Based upon these experiences, it has become necessary to establish a clear and consistent approach to BLM use of the web-based DDCT. This IM provides guidance and direction to BLM Wyoming Field Offices to maintain that consistent step-by-step approach for use of the web-based DDCT.

Manual or Handbook Sections Affected: No BLM manual or handbook sections are affected.

Coordination: This IM was coordinated among the BLM Wyoming Field Offices, the Wyoming Office of Governor Mead and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

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Signed by:
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4 Attachments:

- 1-DDCT Process (23 pp.)
- 2-Sage-Grouse Executive Order 2011-5 DDCT Worksheet (7 pp.)
- 3-Sage-Grouse Executive Order 2011-5 DDCT Worksheet Questions (3 pp.)
- 4-DDCT Workflow Diagram (3pp.)

Distribution

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