From:	Betsy Hildebrandt
To:	Dan Ashe
Cc:	Noreen Walsh; Gary Frazer
Subject:	Re: FYI
Date:	Wednesday, July 15, 2015 1:47:01 PM

Saw this. Very powerful and consistent with earlier pew polling.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 15, 2015, at 3:42 PM, Dan Ashe <d_m_ashe@fws.gov> wrote:

ENDANGERED SPECIES:
Poll shows bipartisan support in West for federal grouse plans
Scott Streater, E&E reporter
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A bipartisan poll shows voters in states with sage grouse habitat support sweeping federal plans to protect the bird across millions of acres of public land, even if doing so restricts some energy development.

The **poll** of 600 voters in all 11 Western states with sage grouse habitat -- California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming -- found that 61 percent of survey respondents expressed support for federal plans to protect the grouse and avoid the need to list the bird for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The poll -- conducted by Republican polling firm Public Opinion Strategies and Democratic polling firm Benenson Strategy Group -- found 58 percent of Republicans said they support the federal plans, while 71 percent of Democrats and 62 percent of independent voters said they support the plans.

"Support for the BLM/Forest Service sage grouse plans is substantial across party lines," Benenson Strategy pollster Danny Franklin said. "The data is clear that voters in rural Western counties where sage grouse live believe it's important to protect sage grouse habitat."

The poll, which was commissioned by the Pew Charitable Trusts, focused on voters in counties with known sage grouse habitat. It has a margin of error of 3.94 percent.

The new poll comes less than two months after grouse plans were unveiled by Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, who said at the time they represent an "amazing milestone" of collaborative planning by taking "a balanced and a targeted approach" to protect the bird while still allowing other uses like energy development and recreation to occur in grouse habitat.

Since then, the proposed plans have come under fire from states and special interest groups. More than 200 protests have been filed challenging all or parts of the federal plans that propose to amend 98 BLM and Forest Service land-use

plans to incorporate grouse protections designed to prevent an ESA listing. The Fish and Wildlife Service has until Sept. 30 to decide whether it will propose listing the bird for protection (***Greenwire***, July 2).

BLM says it's on track to finalize and implement the plans later this summer and before Fish and Wildlife's deadline to make a decision.

The oil and gas industry, ranching groups and at least six states, including Wyoming, which is home to the highest concentration of sage grouse, have filed administrative protests.

But when registered voters were asked during phone interviews conducted by the two polling firms between June 25-30, 3 out of 4 respondents answered that they "believe it is important to take action" to protect grouse habitat, according to a polling results memo.

When asked whether they support plans to protect sage grouse habitat "and 350 other species that depend upon this land," even though "there would be certain restrictions on development," 28 percent said they don't support the plans, according to the poll.

A majority of voters polled in each of the states indicated support for the federal plans, a poll summation states.

What's more, 60 percent of respondents answered that the proposed plans are either "fine as is" or could be changed "to include stronger protections" for the bird. A total of 25 percent responded that the plans should be changed "to allow for more energy development."

"The Bureau of Land Management has the backing it needs from residents of sage grouse counties to finalize plans that balance conservation and development across the interior West," said Ken Rait, Pew's public lands director. "Local residents favor strengthening rather than weakening these plans in order to most effectively protect important publicly owned natural areas and preserve the western way of life."

Click here to read an overview of the poll's key findings.

Email: **sstreater@eenews.net**Dan Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service