From:	BROWNSCOMBE Brett * GOV
To:	noreen_walsh@fws.gov
Cc:	DAMON Jamie * GOV; Jeff Everett; ken.e.mayer@gmail.com; matt_kales@fws.gov; michael_thabault@fws.gov; nicole_alt@fws.gov; paul_henson@fws.gov; WHITMAN Richard M * GOV; theresa_rabot@fws.gov
Subject:	RE: FWS Status Assessment
Date:	Tuesday, December 10, 2013 12:01:44 AM
Attachments:	Copy of Copy of assessment review matrix--Oregon resp to USFWS --DMD.xlsx

All—my apologies that the attachment did not open / appear in the email below. Here it is.

From: BROWNSCOMBE Brett * GOV
Sent: Wednesday, December 04, 2013 3:08 PM
To: noreen_walsh@fws.gov
Cc: michael_thabault@fws.gov; matt_kales@fws.gov; theresa_rabot@fws.gov; paul_henson@fws.gov; nicole_alt@fws.gov; ken.e.mayer@gmail.com
Subject: Fwd: FWS Status Assessment

Noreen--I wanted to get this to you as well. It is the same template / assessment that I sent you earlier but the contents that I typed in have been updated w/ the review of Dawn and Dave on our SageCon team. Here it is, straight up and unvarnished.
Regards, and see you in Las Vegas.
-Brett

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Dawn M Davis <dawn.m.davis@state.or.us>
> **Date:** December 2, 2013 2:48:21 PM PST
> **To:** BROWNSCOMBE Brett * GOV <brett.brownscombe@state.or.us>, David Budeau <david.a.budeau@state.or.us>, DAVIS Dawn M <dawn.m.davis@state.or.us>, RICKERSON Eric V <eric.v.rickerson@state.or.us>, "Ken Mayer (Ken.e.mayer@gmail.com)" <ken.e.mayer@gmail.com>
> **Cc:** DAMON Jamie * GOV <jamie.damon@state.or.us>, Theresa Burcsu <tburcsu@pdx.edu>
> **Subject: RE: FWS Status Assessment**
>
> Brett,
>
> Attached is the status assessment with contributions from myself and Dave Budeau, ODFWs Upland Game Bird Coordinator. I addressed my comments on the first population tab only, but you can incorporate them as you see fit in the other tabs. Overall I didn't find any major issues but believe the urban/exurban development ranking should be something less than 6.

Also, the Klamath population is all that remains of a population that once extended from northern California through southern Oregon. There are no PACs mapped for this population in Oregon because sage-grouse are thought to be extirpated in Oregon and we presently aren't including the Klamath population in the SageCon "all lands" plan.

Let me know if you need any additional info or have questions – thanks,

Dawn Davis, Ph.D.
Sage-Grouse Conservation Coordinator
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
237 S Hines Blvd
PO Box 8
Hines, Oregon 97738
Phone (541) 573-6582
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REVIEW OF STATE SAGE-GROUSE CONSERVATION PLANNING EFFORTS

State: Oregon
GSG Population: Northern Great Basin
Management Zone: IV--Snake R. Plains

Issue	Conservation Objective from COT Report	Conservation Measures from COT Report[1]	State Self-Assessment Ranking (U, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	Preliminary Assessment of Consistency with COT Report	
				Actions in Conservation Plans that address the COT Objective and Description of how those actions support the ranking	Other Actions that may address this COT objective
Sagebrush Removal / Elimination	Avoid sagebrush removal or manipulation in greater sage-grouse breeding or wintering habitats		4	Existing ODFW S.G. Conservation Strategy recommends no impacts within Core Areas (leks plus radius of 4 or 5.3 mi depending on high / med. or low lek densitities) and mitigation at no net loss with net benefit for impacts to sage-grouse habitat that occurin in Low Density Areas. Any deviation from this approach in Oregon's SageCon planning process will still involve an avoidance, minimization, and mitigation approach for anthropogenic disturbances -- with the planning process following that order. Disturbance allowance thresholds will be set in a scientifically based manner to address S.G. conservation (i.e., ensure population trends are stabilized and improving over time) and any future impacts that are allowed to exist in any Core area will be subject to a mitigation framework that ensures overall net benefits to S.Grouse across the population area. Fire and Invasive Species / non-anthropogenic disturbances make it difficult to fully ensure against further loss of sagebrush, and the SageCon planning process is directly addressing those priority threats.	Oregon Land Use Planning system. Has been successful in avoiding fragmentation of habitat. Also, BLM has just released its draft RMP revision effort for Oregon.
Agricultural Conversion	Avoid further loss of sagebrush habitat for agricultural activities (both animal and plant production) and prioritize restoration. In areas where taking agricultural lands out of production has benefited GSG, the programs supporting these actions should be targeted and continued (e.g., CRP/SAFE). Threat amelioration activities should, at a minimum, be prioritized within PACS, but should be considered in all greater sage-grouse habitats.		5	The COT rates this threat as "localized" for this population, and Oregon does not view the threat as significant for the portion of the population within Oregon. It is expected that the SageCon planing effort will prohibit future conversion of sagebrush habitat within Core. Oregon's Land Use Planning system does not currently regulate agriculture conversion, and the SageCon process is evaluating what mechanism to use to ensure the above approach is carried out.	
Fire	Retain and restore healthy native sagebrush communities within greater sage-grouse range (both within and outside PACs)	Restrict or contain fire within mormal range of rie activity, including size,and frequency	2	Oregon's existing network of Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPA's) provide localized equipment and human capacity that is particularly effective in catching fires while they are small. However, invasive weeds and other conditions have pushed fire beyond its "normal" range, size, and frequency. SageCon Fire subgroup is addressing pre-suppression actions to better contain fire, and measures to address invasive species and range health	BLM fire operations.
		Eliminate intentional fires in sagebrush habitats, including prescribed burning or breeding and winter habitats	U	not believed to be a significant problem in Oregon, but SageCon effort is evaluating this issue, including assessment of the soruce of fire starts, plus taking proactive measures to address it.	
		Design and implement resotoration of burned sagebursh habitats to allow for natural succession to healthy native sagebrush plant ccommunities	2	it is generally believed that post-fire restoration work can be better planned and implemented. SageCon effort is working on approaches to address this.	BLM post-fire efforts
		Implement monitoring programs for restoration activities	2	Monitoring exists and important research has been / is being conducted through the Aricultural Reserch Station in Burns as well as others. But it is generally believed more effort (and associated funding) is needed to better ensure restoration effectiveness.	
		Immediately supress fire in all sagebrush habitats	2	Same as first cell above--plus, SageCon is working to enhance RFPA capacity and effectivness (incl. better coordination with BLM), and pre-suppression actions (strategic mobilization of resources) will help.	

Pinyon-juniper Expansion / Conifers	Remove pinyon-juniper from areas of sagebrush that are most likely to support greater sage-grouse (post-removal) at a rate at least equal to the rate of p-j incursion		3	Juniper removal and associated habitat restoration efforts have been implemented across significant acreage associated with this population, and with good landowner engagement. SageCon plan is amassing data on actions taken to date and building on this effort. SageCon plan will prioritize and incentivize this activity. This includes prioritizing areas using Phase I-III data--reducing invasion in key areas / phases and preventing further movement into Phase III.	NRCS SGI; Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board investments; Oregon Solutions Juniper Utilization effort
Non-native, Invasive Plant Species - Weeds/Annual Grasses	Maintain and restore healthy, native sagebrush communities (both within and outside PACs)	Retain all remaining large intact sagebrush patches, particularly at low elevations	2	SageCon plan prioritizes this and mechanisms exist to deal with anthropomorphic disturbance threats (development, agricultural conversion, urbanization, etc.). The linkage between fire and weed invasion, however, make achieving this objective difficult. SageCon fire & invasives workgroup is in the process of further addressing this in the plan.	
		Reduce or eliminate disturbances that promote the spread of invasive species	3	Same as above--additional note is work being done to address transportation / road and recreation-related disturbance.	CCA & CCAA's related to livestock grazing; BLM RMP Revision
		Monitor and control invasive vegetation post-wildfire for at least three years	2	It is generally believed that some monitoring and control occurs but that the effort lacks the capacity / resoruces, duration, and scale to match the scope of the need.	
		Require best management practices for construction projects in and adjacent to sagebrush habitrats to prevent invasion	U	will be further assessing whether such BMP's are in place for the limited construction activity that does exist in habitat related to this activity.	
		Restore alterede ecosystems such that non-native invasive plants are reducet to levels that do not put the area at risk of conversion if a catastrophic event wre to	3	Positive resotration work related to habitat for this population has occurred and is ongoing with state, private and federal dollars but it is generally believed that the capacity, scale, and prioritization related to shis work can be inproved. SageCon plan is further addressing this.	
Energy Development	Energy development should be designed to insure that it will not impinge upon stable or increasing greater sage-grouse population trends	Avoid energy development in PACs	3	The COT rates this threat as "localized" for this population. Existing ODFW S.G. Conservation Strategy recomends no impacts within Core Areas (leks plus radius of 4 or 5.3 mi depending on high / med. or low lek densitities). Any deviation from this approach in Oregon's SageCon planning process will still involve an avoidance, minimization, and mitigation approach for anthropogenic disturbances -- with the planning process following that order. Disturbance allowance thresholds will be set in a scientifically based manner to address S.G. conservation (i.e., ensure population trends are stabilized and improving over time) and any future impacts that are allowed to exist in any Core area will be subject to a mitigation framework that ensures overall net benefits to S.Grouse across the population area. Fire and Invasive Species / non-anthropogenic disturbances make it	Under Oregon's land-use system, 98% of land identified as S.G. habitat in Central and Eastern OR is designated as "resource land"--devoted to farm, ranch, or forest uses, with strict provisions for uses not related to these three uses and some overlay for wildlife in certain counties. Also, BLM has just released its draft RMP revision effort for Oregon. State is reviewing and will work to ensure consistency w/ COT objectives and consistency w/ SageCon plan effort
		If avoidance is not possible within PACs development whould only occur in non-habitat areas (including appurtenant structures), with an adequate buffer that is sufficient to preclude impacts to sage-grouse habitats from noise and other human activities.	3	Same as above--plus note that Oregon approach does address indicrect impacts (i.e., noise). The ODFW Mitigation Framework for Sage-Grouse Habitats recommends use of noise propagation models to identify habitat are impacted as defined by noise levels >40 dbA. In addition, the existing ODFW S.G. Conservation Strategy recommends that construction and maintenance associated with development activities be conducted outside of the period from 1 March to 30 June in sage-grouse habitat. If this time period cannot be avoided then activites should be restricted from 1 hr after sunset to 2 hrs after sunrise.	
		If development must occur in sage-grouse habitats due to existing rights and lack of reasonable alternative avoidance measures the development should occur in the lease suitable habitat for sage-grouse and be designed to ensure, at a minimum, that there are no detectable declines in sage-grouse population trends.	3	Same as above	

Mining	Maintain stable to increasing greater sage-grouse populations and no net loss of greater sage-grouse habitats in areas affected by mining		3	COT identifies mining as a "localized" threat for this population. Based on the geologic nature of Oregon, mining of liquid resources (oil, gas, etc.) is not viewed as a current or looming threat. Precioius metals, uranium, sand/gravel are the more common mining activities in Oregon. Mining is addressed within the same framework described above for Energy Development and Sagebrush Elimination / Removal.	Under Oregon's land-use system, 98% of land identified as S.G. habitat in Central and Eastern OR is designated as "resource land"--devoted to farm, ranch, or forest uses, with strict provisions for uses not related to these three uses and some overlay for wildlife in certain counties. Also, BLM has just released its draft RMP revision effort for Oregon. State is reviewing and will work to ensure
Infrastructure	Avoid development of infrastructure within PACs	No new development of infrastructure corridors within PACs. Designated, but not yet developed infrastructure corridors should be re-located outside of PACs unless it can be demonstrated that these coridors will have no impacts on the maintenance of neutral or positive sage-grouse poulation trends and habitats.	3	Infrastructure development will subject to the same approach as Energy, Mining, Sagebrush Removal / Elimination.	same as above
		New infrastructure should be avoided where individaul state plans have identified key connectivcity corridors outside of PACs.	3	SageCon planning effort will build upon underlying ODFW S.G. Conservation Strategy's understanding of connectivity corridor locations, and adaptive management will be used to address this issue as future information is developped w/ respect to understanding of S.G. connectivity issues.	
Grazing	Conduct grazing management for all ungulates in a manner consistent with local ecological conditions that maintains of restores healthy sagebrush shrub and native perennial grass and forb communities and conserves the essential habitat components for greater sage-grouse (shrub and nesting cover). Areas which do not currently meet this standard should be managed to restore these components. Adequate monitoring of grazing strategies and their results, with necessary changes in strategies, is essential to ensuring that desired ecological conditions and greater sage-grouse response are achieved. (PFC; for riparian areas) or Rangeland Health Standards (RHS; uplands).		3	SageCon planning effort intends to incorporate CCA and CCAA's entered into betw/ USFWS, BLM, and local SWCD and livestock operators. Efforts are ongoing to sign individual operators up under the CCAA, and expand CCAA to other Oregon sage grouse counties. In addition, Oregon Department of State Lands is pursuing CCAA for state lands within range of SG.	BLM has just released its draft RMP revision effort for Oregon. State is reviewing and will work to ensure consistency w/ COT objectives and consistency w/ SageCon plan effort.
Free-Roaming Equid Management	Protect sage-grouse from the negative influences of grazing by free roaming equids.	Develop, implement, and enforce adequate regulatory mechanisms to protect sage-grouse habitat from negative influences of grazing by free-roaming equids.	2	To be addressed in SageCon plan, and will work for consistency w/ BLM RMP's.	

		Manage free-roaming equids at levels that allow native sagebrush vegettative comminities to minimally achieve Proper Functioning Condition (riparian areas) or Rangeland Health Standards (upland areas). Similar measures should be implemented on non-federal land surfaces.	2		
Recreation	In areas subjected to recreational activities, maintain healthy native sagebrush communities based on local ecological conditions and with consideration of drought conditions, and manage direct and indirect human disturbance (including noise) to avoid interruption of normal greater sage-grouse behavior. Consider application in all sagebrush habitats (within and outside PACs).		3	Recreational activity has been clustered, and where it is not Oregon will be working with BLM to address cross-country travel issues. SageCon plan effort is in the midst of further assessign this issue.	BLM RMP Revision
Ex-Urban Development / Urbanization	Limit urban and exurban development in greater sage-grouse habitats and maintain intact native sagebrush communities		6	COT Report identifies this threat as present and widspread for this population. In Oregon, we do not believe that is the case. Oregon's system of Land Use Planning addresses this issue, and the SageCon planning effort will take any necessary steps to ensure this threat remains addressed. In Oregon, urban activities are required to be concentrated within legally defined, formalized "urban growth boundaries" tied to local and regional population centers. These centers are located outside SG habitat.	

The following categories were not identified in Table 2 of the COT report, but were identified in the text of the report itself. Please provide any information, including rankings, which address these categories.

Range Management Structures	Avoid or reduce the impact of range management structures on greater sage-grouse		3		From 2010-2012, no new fences were installed through NRCS-SGI in Oregon. Approximately 10.6 miles of fences have been marked with diverters to improve visibility of fences by sage-grouse during
PACs	Retain sage-grouse habitats within PACs *(pertains to PAC designation)*	If PACs are lost to catastrophic events, implement appropriate restoration efforts		SageCon plan to be consistent with this objective and others in the cells below.	
		Restore and rehabilitate degraded sage-grouse habitat within PACS.			
		Identify areas and habitats outside of PACs which may be necessary to maintain viability of sage-grouse. If development or vegetation manipulation activities outside of PACs are proposed, the project proponent should work with federal, state or local agencies and interested stakeholders to ensure consistency with sage-grouse habitat needs			

	Re-evaluate the status of PACs and adjacent sage-grouse habitat at least once every 5-years, or when important new information becomes available.			
	Actively pursue opportunities to increase occupancy and connectivity between PACs.			
	Maintain or improve existing habitat conditions in areas adjacent to burned habitat.			

[1] Not all Conservation Objectives in the COT report identified Conservation Measures