From:	Iverson, Chris -FS
To:	Noreen Walsh
Subject:	Re: grazing language in fact sheet
Date:	Wednesday, April 29, 2015 6:19:42 AM
Attachments:	Forest Service Shield.png USDA Logo.png Forest Service Twitter.png USDA Facebook.png

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When was this FWS position paper written? No date but seems some time ago?

Also Julie and I were working on a more balanced presentation last nite -she is agreeable. I'll send what we end up with.

Sent from my iPad

On Apr 28, 2015, at 8:23 PM, "Noreen Walsh" <noreen_walsh@fws.gov> wrote:

> Thanks for sharing Chris
>
> Noreen Walsh
> Regional Director
> Mountain-Prairie Region
> U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
>
> On Apr 28, 2015, at 8:01 PM, Iverson, Chris -FS <civerson@fs.fed.us> wrote:
>
>> FYI please do not share - some are fearful of the grazing issue and are spinning half truths.
>>
>> Sent from my iPhone
>> Chris Iverson
>>
>> Begin forwarded message:
>>
>> **From:** "Iverson, Chris -FS" <civerson@fs.fed.us>
>> **Date:** April 28, 2015 at 7:45:31 PM MDT
>> **To:** "GroganStewart, Julie - Washington, DC" <Julie.GroganStewart@wdc.usda.gov>
>> **Subject: RE: grazing language in fact sheet**
>>
>> Julie - Thanks for sending the FWS documents – a fairly balanced treatment. I note that you cut out the yellow statement below to suggest that any adverse effects of grazing are from historical practices and then promote the positive aspects of grazing as a tool. OK. But you did not copy and acknowledge the next sentence that states:
>>
>> ***Grazing of various intensities can degrade habitat conditions and***

exacerbate sage-grouse nest predation and nest abandonment; modify vegetation structure and plant species composition in ways that decrease food and cover; increase the spread of nonnative plant species; and aggravate fire conditions (Reisner et al. 2013; Boyd et al. 2014a,b; Chambers et al. 2014a,b).

I think we need to present a balanced perspective of what the FWS position states.

Either add the sentence you chose not to copy : ***Grazing of various intensities can degrade habitat conditions and exacerbate sage-grouse nest predation and nest abandonment; modify vegetation structure and plant species composition in ways that decrease food and cover; increase the spread of nonnative plant species; and aggravate fire conditions (Reisner et al. 2013; Boyd et al. 2014a,b; Chambers et al. 2014a,b).***

Or alternatively lets keep what you proposed but add a statement the poses a more positive flavor but indirectly acknowledges the threat some grazing may pose…and that we can manage for BOTH grazing and sage-grouse habitat.

Livestock grazing and sage-grouse conservation are compatible when sustainable grazing practices are employed that provide essential sage-grouse habitats.

This is the essence of SGI – to qualify for Farm Bill funds – private landowners need to employ sustainable grazing practices that promote sage-grouse habitat.

Finally
I (and many in FS) cared little for the term improper. The term is used liberally in the FWS COT report.

Here is what the FWS listing decision in 2010 Fed. Reg. summarized about grazing:
Summary: Grazing
Livestock management and domestic grazing can seriously degrade sagegrouse habitat. Grazing can adversely impact nesting and brood-rearing habitat by decreasing vegetation concealment from predators. Grazing also has been shown to compact soils, decrease herbaceous abundance, increase erosion, and increase the probability of invasion of exotic plant species. Infrastructure of various types is present throughout the most of range of the greater sage-grouse, as is livestock grazing, but the degree of impact varies depending on grazing management practices and local

ecological conditions. For grazing, the regulatory mechanisms available to the BLM and USFS are adequate to protect sage-grouse habitats; however, the application of these mechanisms varies widely across the landscape. In some areas, rangelands are not meeting the habitat standards necessary for sage-grouse, and that contributes to threats to the species.

Can we discuss early tomorrow.

Chris Iverson
Deputy Regional Forester

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Intermountain Region

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Caring for the land and serving people

From: GroganStewart, Julie - Washington, DC
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2015 2:22 PM
To: Kelly, Katherine; sarah greenberger; James Lyons
Cc: Iverson, Chris -FS
Subject: RE: grazing language in fact sheet

Proposed edits from USDA to acknowledge potential negative impacts from grazing, while also acknowledging positive benefits. This language is taken from page 2 of the FWS memo sent out last week on grazing. It does a great job of talking about grazing and I'd recommend we take any additional language that folks would like to see, if any, from this memo.

Livestock Grazing – Livestock grazing is the most widespread type of land use across the sagebrush landscape. Historic grazing has in some instances altered sagebrush ecosystems during the previous 150 years and in some places affected sage-grouse habitat conditions. Many of the grazing-associated problems today are a legacy of these past impacts. On the positive side, grazing can improve habitat and food conditions in certain habitats at certain times and under certain conditions. Grazing will continue under existing permits. ~~However, improper grazing, as determined by local ecological conditions, may have negative impacts on sage-grouse seasonal habitats and can be a threat to sagebrush habitat.~~ During grazing permit renewals and modifications on lands within sage-grouse habitat, the BLM will incorporate locally developed management objectives for sage-grouse habitat and rangeland health standards consistent with local ecological conditions. The BLM and USFS will prioritize review and

processing of grazing permits in Sagebrush Focal Areas, followed by Priority Habitat Management Areas, with a focus on lands containing riparian areas and wet meadows.

Julie Grogan-Stewart (formerly Grogan-Brown)
Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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julie.groganstewart@wdc.usda.gov
Note the new email address

From: Kelly, Katherine [mailto:kate_kelly@ios.doi.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2015 10:31 AM
To: sarah greenberger; James Lyons; Iverson, Chris -FS; GroganStewart, Julie - Washington, DC
Subject: Re: grazing language in fact sheet

This version reflects additional edits from Jim Lyons.

Livestock Grazing – Livestock grazing is the most widespread type of land use across the sagebrush landscape. Grazing will continue under existing permits. However, improper grazing, as determined by local ecological conditions, may have negative impacts on sage-grouse seasonal habitats and can be a threat to sagebrush habitat. During grazing permit renewals and modifications on lands within sage-grouse habitat, the BLM will incorporate locally developed management objectives for sage-grouse habitat and rangeland health standards consistent with local ecological conditions. The BLM and USFS will prioritize review and processing of grazing permits in Sagebrush Focal Areas, followed by Priority Habitat Management Areas, with a focus on lands containing riparian areas and wet meadows.

On Mon, Apr 27, 2015 at 6:09 PM, Kelly, Katherine <kate_kelly@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

> Hi folks -
>
> I understand there's some interested to amend the grazing paragraph in the fact sheet. I've done so below and in the attached (redline).
>
> Let me know if this makes sense, or if there's additional tweaks needed.

- **Livestock Grazing** – Grazing will continue under existing permits. Improper grazing has been identified as a threat to sagebrush habitat. During grazing permit renewals and modifications on lands within sage-grouse habitat, the BLM will incorporate locally developed management objectives for sage-grouse habitat and rangeland health standards. The BLM and USFS will prioritize review and processing of grazing permits in Sagebrush Focal Areas, followed by Priority Habitat Management Areas, with a focus on lands containing riparian areas and wet meadows.

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