From:	Noreen Walsh
To:	Matt Kales
Subject:	close hold
Date:	Friday, March 27, 2015 10:37:26 AM
Attachments:	Implemention March 2015 WGA SG Task Force Meeting- Denver (2).pptx Task Force Rollout Jan 2015 1.16.pptx

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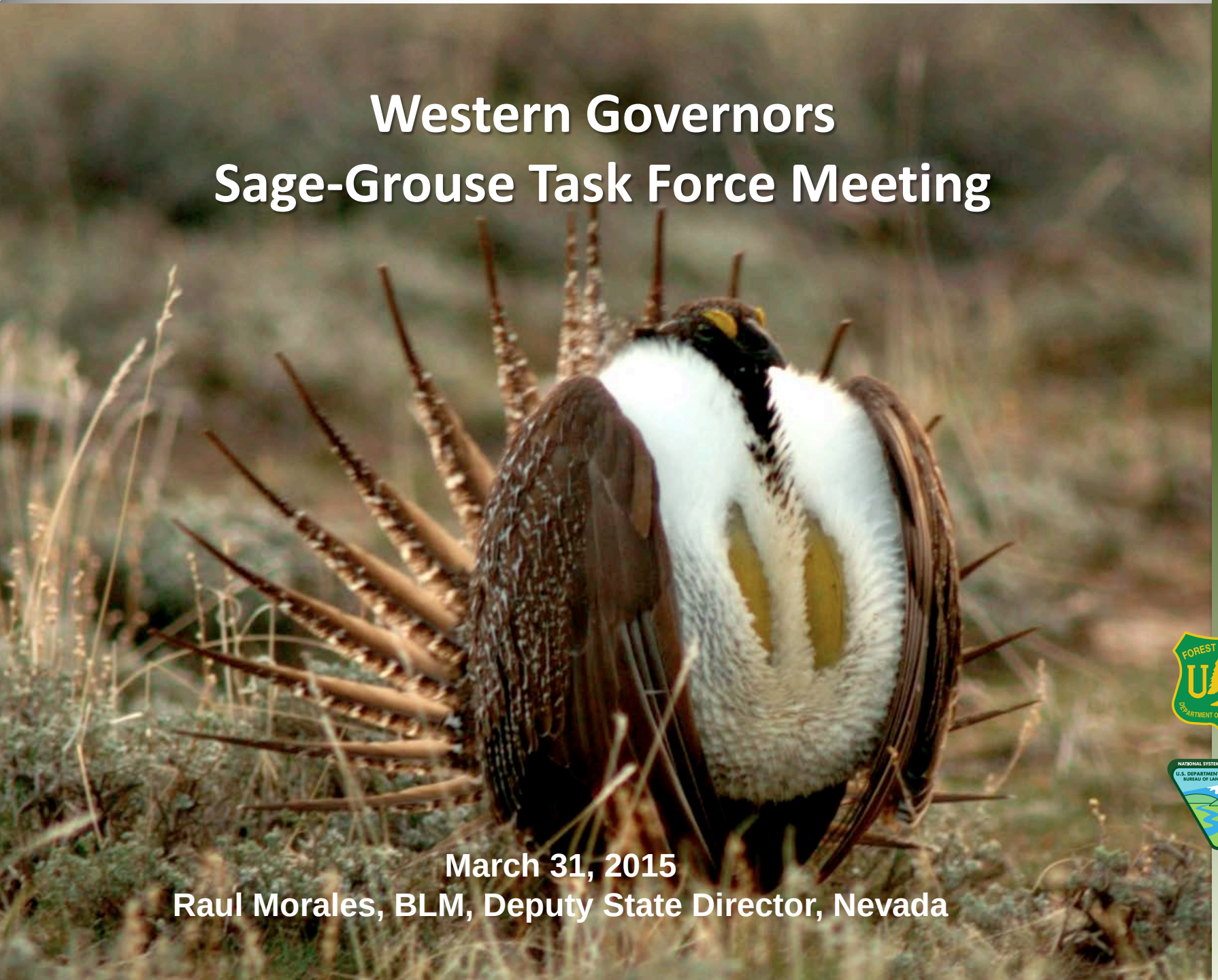


Western Governors Sage-Grouse Task Force Meeting

March 31, 2015

Raul Morales, BLM, Deputy State Director, Nevada

BLM - FS

Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategy

Have we had enough of Planning yet?

Now it is time to get ready for plan implementation.

Plan Implementation

We are beginning to focus on three implementation issues:

- Fostering a shared understanding of plan implementation workloads
- Developing the capacity to implement the plans
- Organizing ourselves to report on progress, address new science, and resolve implementation issues

Implementation Workloads

- Drafting an Implementation Guide focusing on 6 major plan implementation workloads

- Developing associated training and technical assistance

Six Major Workloads

- Implementing vegetation treatments to protect and restore habitat (i.e. FIAT)
- Managing livestock grazing, OHVs, and WH&Bs
- Managing energy and mineral development and other permitted disturbances
- Developing and implementing mitigation strategies
- Monitoring and reporting on plan implementation and effectiveness at multiple scales
- Maintaining and amending the plans

Potential Capacity Issues

There are significant capacity issues associated with most of these workloads

- Partnerships
- Funding for on-the-ground projects
- Data management
- Contracting
- Staffing

Potential Coordination Issues

- Reporting on progress at multiple scales
- Addressing new science
- Resolving “consistency” and other policy issues associated with plan implementation
- Engaging stakeholders

Coordination Issues

While we are interested in your ideas about workload and capacity, today we would like to focus on potential coordination issues.

We've identified 4 potential coordination issues. Do you agree with them? Are there others you think will arise?

What are potential next steps to address coordination issues?

Questions/Discussion

Status Update on BLM Land Use Plans for Greater Sage-Grouse

January 16, 2014
Western Governors Association
Sage Grouse Task Force

BLM's Greater Sage-Grouse Planning and Conservation Strategy

Where we are following:

- October Task Force Meeting
- Individual State Meetings
- New Information
  - USFWS Highly Important Landscapes
  - USGS Buffer Report

➢ Direction for BLM Proposed Plans

Three-Legged Stool Approach

- Strong Federal Plans
- Strong State Plans
- Effective Strategy to Reduce the Risk of Fire to Sage-Grouse

An Unprecedented Joint Effort

2 Regions

Great Basin
Rocky Mountain

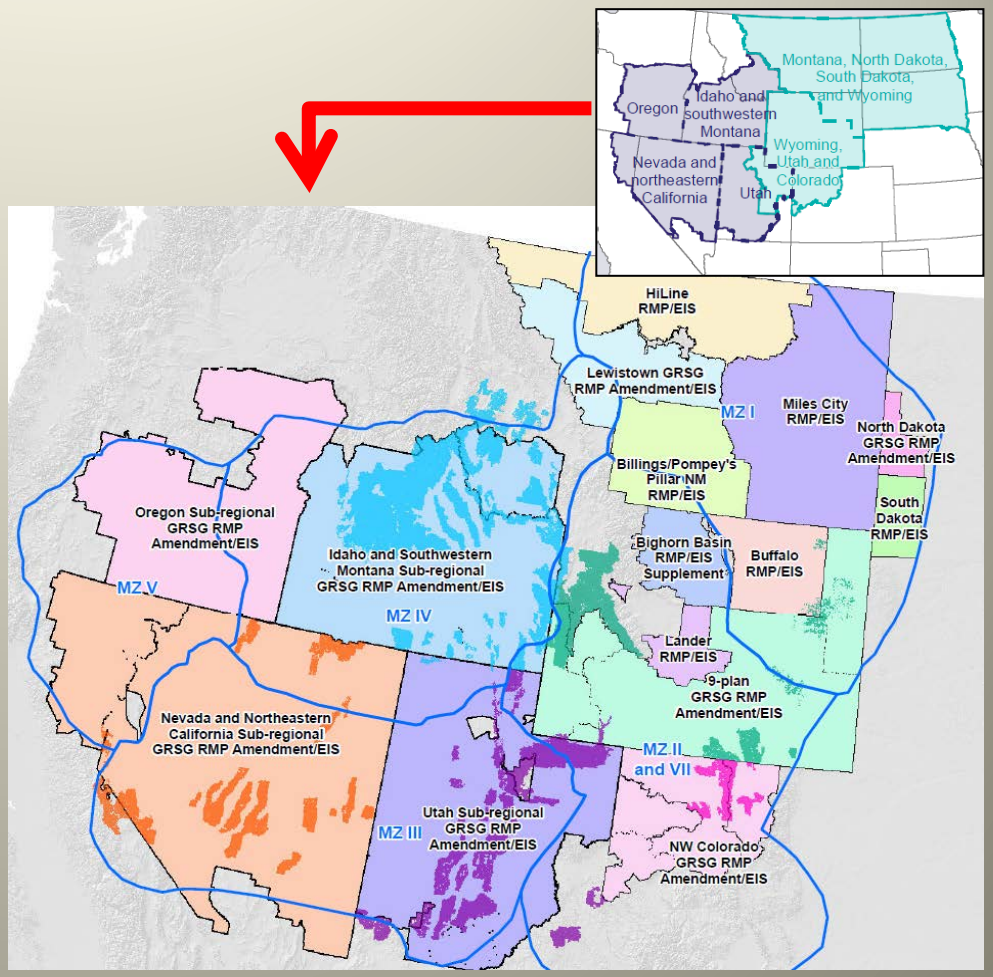
15 Sub-regions/EISs

Great Basin (All Amendments)
Oregon, Nevada/NE California, Idaho/SW Montana, and Utah

Rocky Mountain (Revisions & Amendments)
NW Colorado, WY 9 Plan, Lander Revision (WY), Bighorn Basin Revision (WY), Buffalo Revision (WY), Billings/Pompey's Pillar NM Revision (MT), Lewistown Amendment (MT), HiLine Revision (MT), Miles City Revision (MT), South Dakota Revision, North Dakota Amendment

98 LUPs Being Amended (includes BLM and FS)

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Management Zones outlined in Blue



Status of Land Use Plans

Milestone	Date
✓ All draft EISs published/public comment periods closed	Spring 2014
✓ Administrative draft proposed plans in development	June 2014
✓ Draft plan data converted to geospatial displays in order to permit review of conservation strategies in response to identified threats for each PAC/population	July 2014
✓ BLM/FS planning teams and FWS review plans for adequacy and cumulative conservation response to threats in each PAC	Aug/Sept 2014
✓ States join BLM/FS planning teams and FWS to review plans and combined conservation effort in response to PAC threats	October 2014
Land use plans revised in response to plan reviews	**Winter 2014/15**
Proposed land use plan revisions / final EISs published. Protest resolution and governor consistency reviews	**Late Spring 2015**
Records of Decision are signed	**Late Summer 2015**

Components of a Range-wide Strategy for the Conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse and the Continued Economic Development in Western Sagebrush Landscapes

- Advance the conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse and sagebrush ecosystem health
- Address the specific threats to remaining Greater Sage-Grouse populations identified in the Conservation Objectives Team (COT) report
- Continue to manage public lands for multiple-use and sustained yield of all the goods and services essential to the economic well-being of western states and communities

Key Elements

- Limit or eliminate new surface disturbance in sage-grouse priority habitat and minimizing additional disturbance in general habitat
- Improving Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Condition
- Reduce the threat of rangeland fire to GRSG in the Great Basin by placing added priority on the prevention, suppression and restoration of sagebrush landscapes threatened by rangeland fire through improved federal-state-local collaboration and coordination

Key Elements

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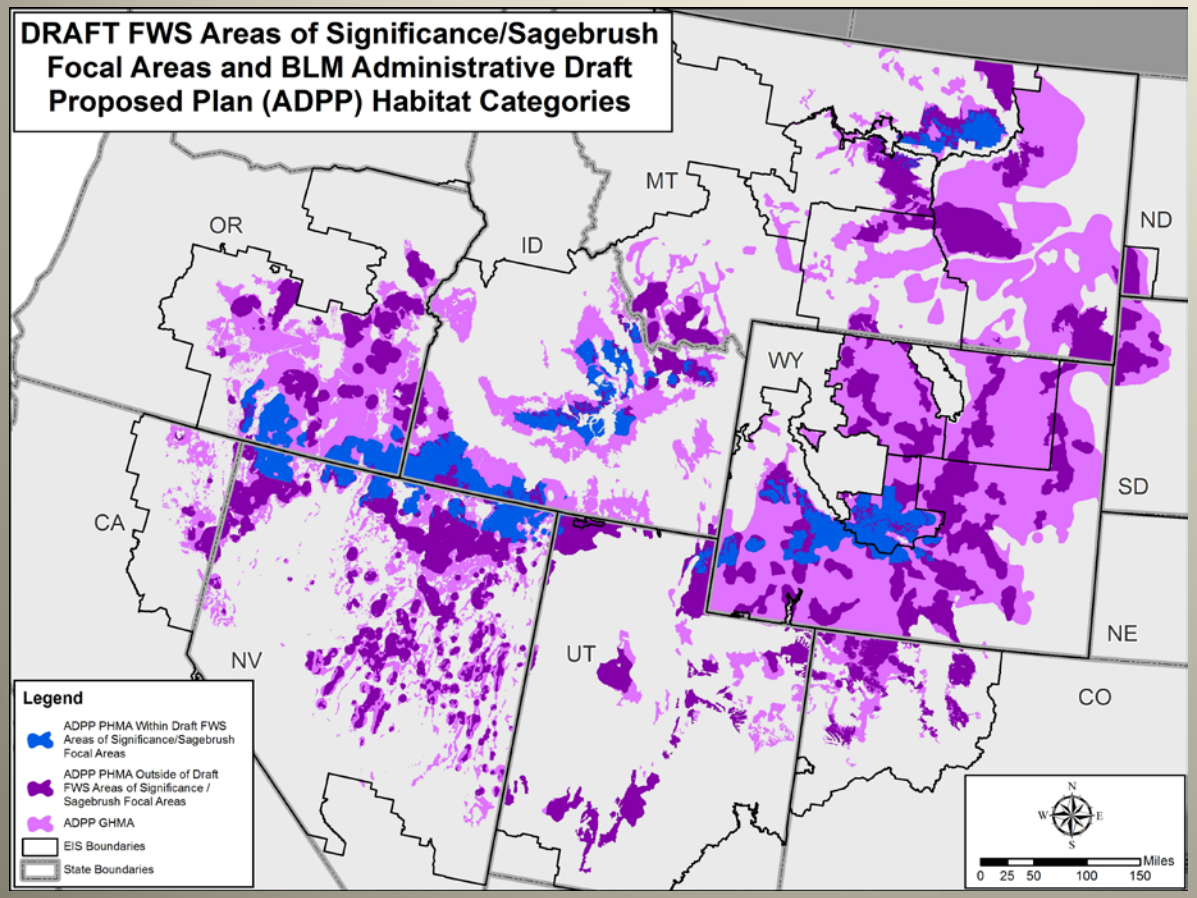
The BLM Multi-Layered Approach



Three key components to create a framework to conserve sage-grouse throughout its lifecycle:

16 million acres of Sagebrush Focal Areas

43 million acres of PHMA

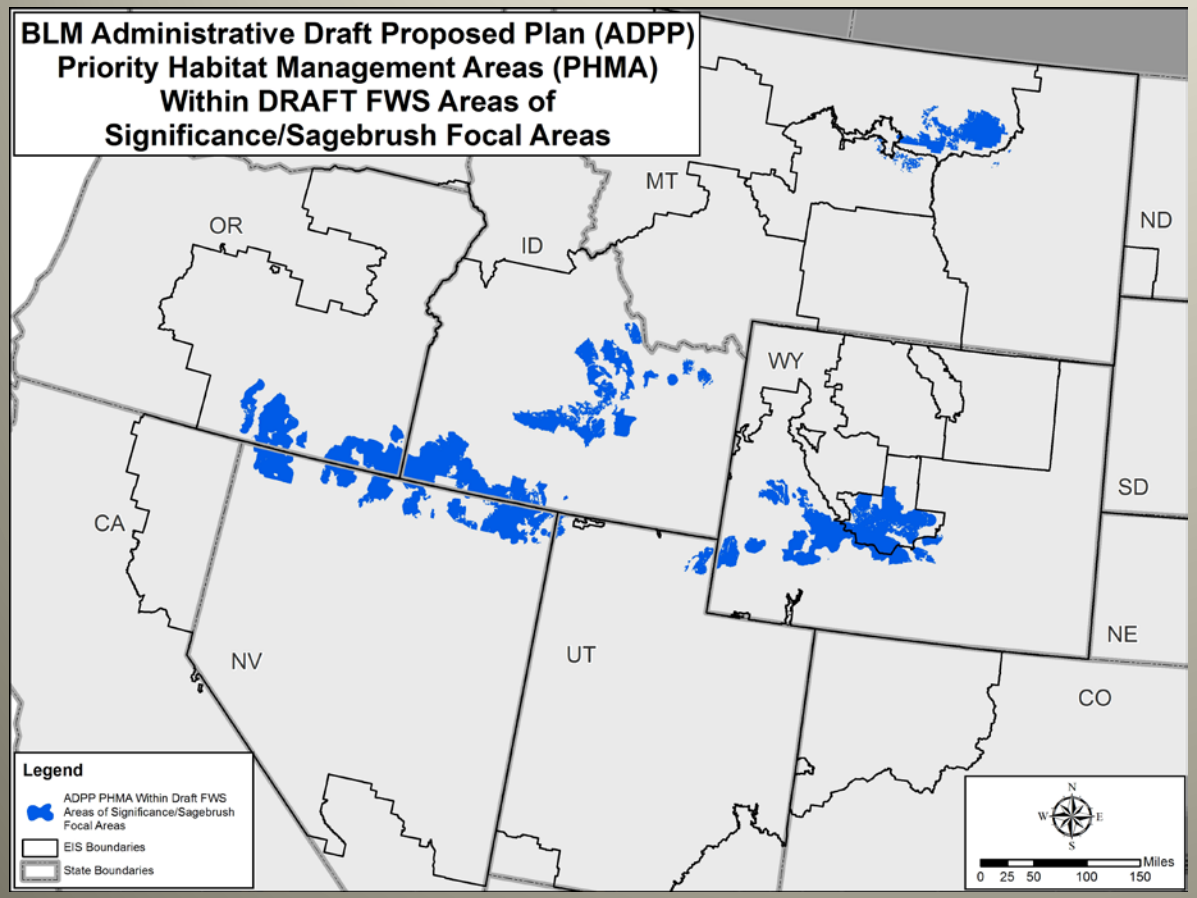
- Excluding activities, limiting disturbance and restricting surface occupancy

23 millions acres of GHMA

- Restricting and avoiding development

Sagebrush Focal Areas in PHMA

Designate **Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFA)**, consisting of Federally-managed PHMA within the Highly Important Landscapes mapped by FWS

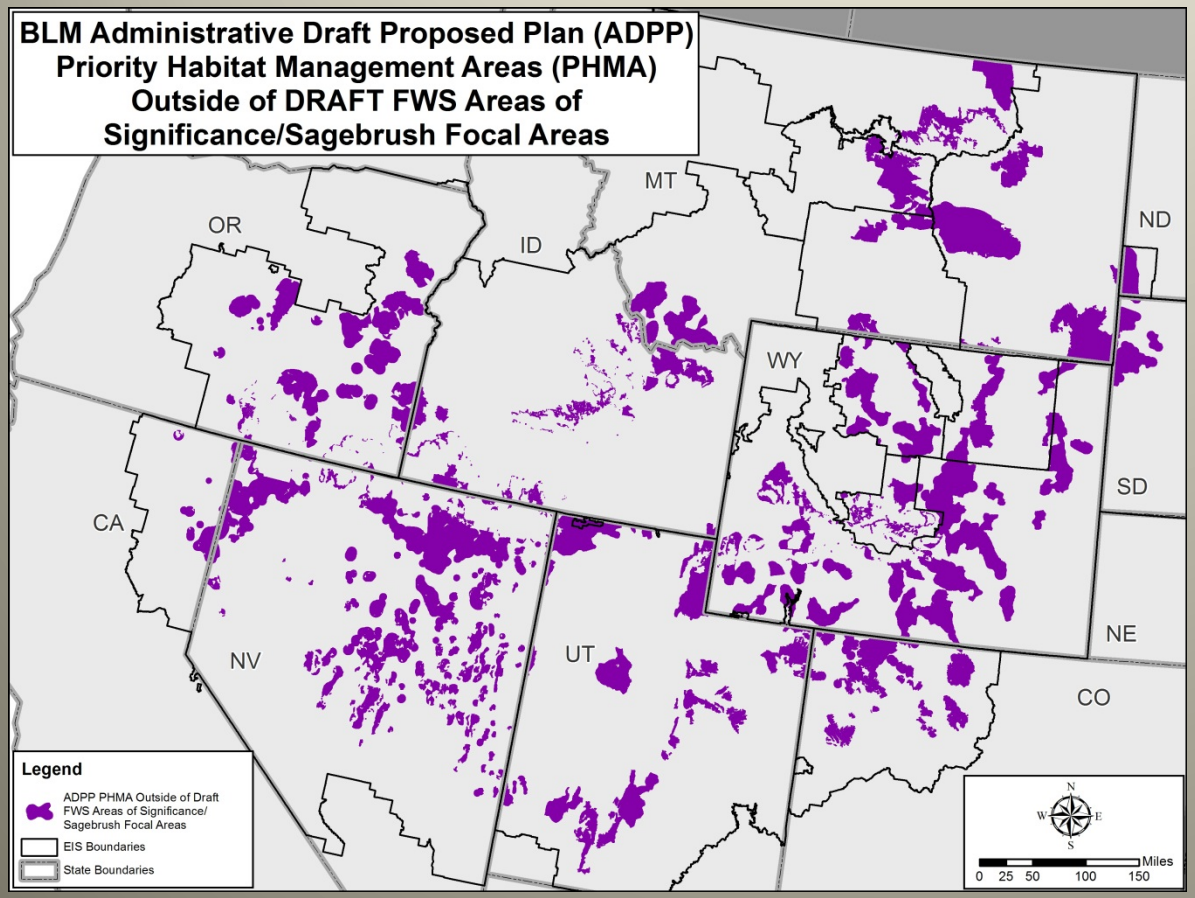


Limit or eliminate future surface disturbance, subject to valid existing rights by:

- Addressing the threat of future mineral development
- Controlling future oil and gas leasing with a high degree of certainty

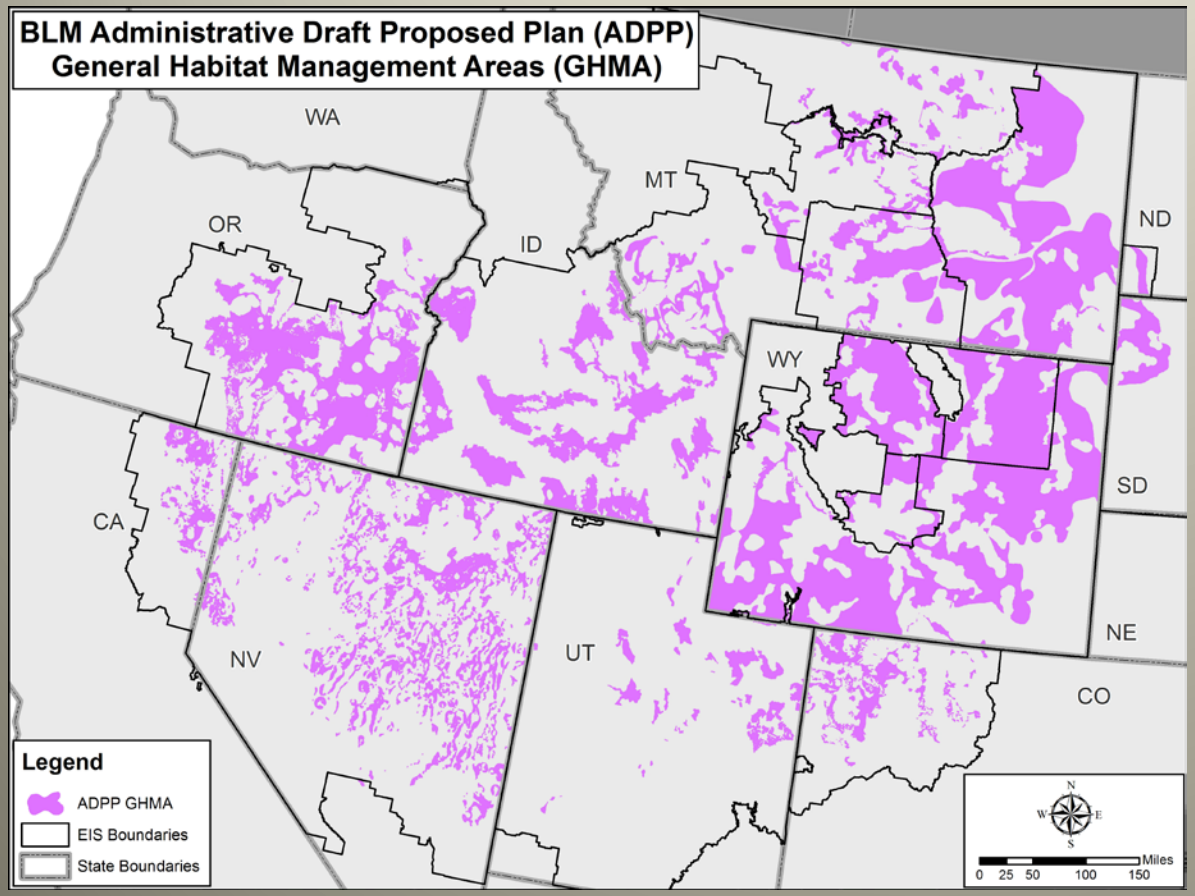
Protecting Remaining Primary Habitat

Limit or eliminate new surface disturbance in sage-grouse priority habitat



- Limit surface disturbance through highly protective allocations
- Allow exceptions ONLY if they provide a benefit to the species

Minimizing Disturbance in General Habitat



- Avoid conflict with GRSG
- Require moderate stipulations for oil and gas development

Focusing Disturbance Away From Habitats

"Smart from the Start" Strategy – prioritize future oil and gas leasing and development outside of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat

Minimizing Impacts on Leks - apply the lek buffer-distances identified in the USGS Report *Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage-Grouse – A Review* or protections of equal or greater conservation value during project implementation to ensure protection to leks

Limiting Disturbance in Priority Habitat

- Disturbance cap (PHMA only): in most areas, 3% disturbance at the Biologically Significant Unit (BSU) and project scale
- Density cap (PHMA only): An average of 1 facility per 640 acres

Key Elements

- Limit or eliminate new surface disturbance in sage-grouse priority habitat and minimizing additional disturbance in general habitat
- **Improve Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Condition**
- Reduce the threat of rangeland fire to GRSG in the Great Basin by placing added priority on the prevention, suppression and restoration of sagebrush landscapes threatened by rangeland fire through improved federal-state-local collaboration and coordination

Mitigation

Consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, **the BLM will require and assure mitigation that provides a net conservation gain to the species** including accounting for any uncertainty associated with the effectiveness of such mitigation, by avoiding, minimizing, and compensating for impacts by applying beneficial mitigation actions

Vegetation Objectives

Establishing GRSG habitat objectives that meet the applicable land health standard in sage-grouse habitats and placing priority on monitoring grazing allotments where they matter most (e.g., Sagebrush Focal Areas, riparian areas and wet meadows)

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Requires coordinated monitoring and evaluation of:
  - changes in populations (states)
  - changes in habitat condition
  - Effectiveness of mitigation efforts
- Ensures that conservation objectives are achieved through voluntary actions at the local level and required actions in RMPs

Adaptive Management

When a hard trigger is hit in a BSU, the designated response will be put in place. If a hard trigger is hit within in a PAC that crosses state boundaries, WAFWA MZ GRSG Conservation Team will meet to discuss cause and potential responses.

Key Elements

- Limit or eliminating new surface disturbance in sage-grouse priority habitat and minimizing additional disturbance in general habitat
- Improve Habitat Condition
- **Reduce the threat of rangeland fire to GRSG in the Great Basin by placing added priority on the prevention, suppression and restoration of sagebrush landscapes threatened by rangeland fire through improved federal-state-local collaboration and coordination**

A Strategic, Coordinated Approach to Rangeland Fire in the Great Basin

- Identified as the most significant threat to sage grouse and sagebrush in the Great Basin
- Secretarial Order 3336 will reduce the threat by placing added priority on the prevention, suppression and restoration of sagebrush landscapes threatened by rangeland fire through improved federal-state-local collaboration and coordination

Rangeland Fire

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

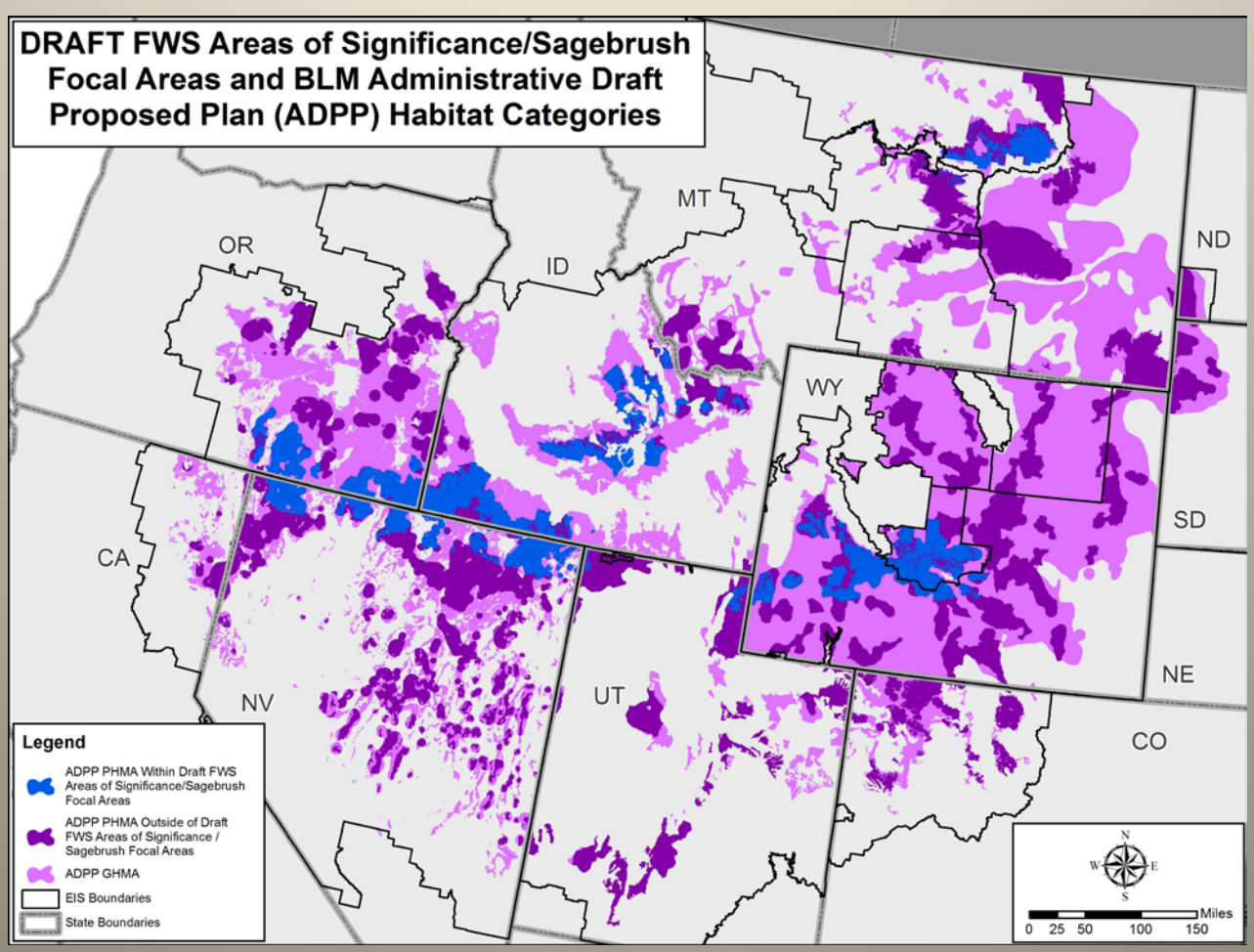
ORDER NO. 3336

Subject: Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management and Restoration

Sec. 1 **Purpose**. This Order sets forth enhanced policies and strategies for preventing and suppressing rangeland fire and for restoring sagebrush landscapes impacted by fire across the West. These actions are essential for conserving habitat for the greater sage-grouse as well as other wildlife species and economic activity, such as ranching and recreation, associated with the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem in the Great Basin region. This effort will build upon the experience and success of addressing rangeland fire, and broader wildland fire prevention, suppression and restoration efforts to date, including the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, and ensure improved coordination with local, state, tribal, and regional efforts to address the threat of rangeland fire at a landscape-level.

Sec. 2 **Background**. The Department of the Interior is entrusted with overseeing the management of Federal lands for the benefit of current and future generations as well as the protection and recovery of imperiled species of flora and fauna and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Rangeland fires in the Great Basin of the Western United States have increased in size and intensity in recent years. The accelerated invasion of non-native annual grasses, in particular cheatgrass and medusahead rye, and the spread of pinyon-juniper across the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem, along with drought and the effects of climate change, have created conditions that have led to the increased threat of rangeland fires to the sagebrush landscape and the more than 350 species of plants and animals, such as mule deer and pronghorn antelope, that rely on this critically important ecosystem. As a result, the increasing frequency and intensity of rangeland fire also poses a significant threat to ranchers, livestock managers, sportsmen, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts

When they are finalized, the overlapping and reinforcing mechanisms in the EISs will work in concert to conserve sage-grouse habitat



Questions

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT