From:	Sarah_Fierce@fws.gov
To:	Michael_Thabault@fws.gov
Cc:	Bridget_Fahey@fws.gov; Justin_Shoemaker@fws.gov; Nicole_Alt@fws.gov
Subject:	Re: Greater sage-grouse CNOR information request letters
Date:	Thursday, November 15, 2012 11:53:39 AM
Attachments:	2012 DRAFT SG data request for CNOR 11_13_12 .docx

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I spoke with Lynn, and we've moved some things around to create a separate section on conservation actions in the attachment. Let me know if this will work.

(See attached file: 2012 DRAFT SG data request for CNOR 11_13_12 .docx)

Sarah Fierce
Listing Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
134 Union Blvd., Lakewood, CO 80228
303-236-4388
sarah_fierce@fws.gov

Michael Thabault/R6/FWS/DOI

Michael Thabault/R6/FWS/DOI

11/15/2012 10:01 AM

To Sarah Fierce/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS
cc Bridget Fahey/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS, Justin Shoemaker/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS, Nicole Alt/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS
Subject Re: Greater sage-grouse CNOR information request letters

I see one thing I would like right off the bat. I notice voluntary mechanisms are peripherally referred to in the Reg Mechs section. I would like a specific section in the attachment that requests past, ongoing, and future conservation actions and an assessment of their efficacy and long-term sustainability. We should make specific reference to the fact that aggregation of these assessments would be most useful. (ie oil and gas industry says they don't get recognition when they send in comments. We have asserted many comments from individual companies is not as useful as an industry roll up, as an example)

Michael Thabault
Assistant Regional Director - Ecological Services
Mountain Prairie Region
303-236-4252

Sarah Fierce/R6/FWS/DOI

Sarah Fierce/R6/FWS/DOI

To Michael Thabault/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS
cc Bridget Fahey/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS, Justin Shoemaker/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS

11/15/2012 09:44 AM

Subject Greater sage-grouse CNOR information request letters

Mike,

Below are the draft letters that the Wyoming FO is planning to send out requesting information on greater sage-grouse for next year's CNOR. I heard that you were interested in reviewing these before they went out this year.

There is a formal cover letter to go to higher-level officials, a less-formal email to go to staff-level contacts, and an attachment outlining the data being requested. Lynn is aiming to get these sent out before Thanksgiving, so she's hoping to get any feedback you may have soon.

Sarah Fierce
Listing Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
134 Union Blvd., Lakewood, CO 80228
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----- Forwarded by Sarah Fierce/R6/FWS/DOI on 11/15/2012 08:23 AM -----

Lynn Gemlo/R6/FWS/DOI

11/14/2012 04:35 PM

To Sarah Fierce/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS, Justin Shoemaker/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS

cc

Subject

Here are my final versions of the cover letter, email, and data call request. Thanks for you review. Please forward to Mike T. for his review if that is how we should do that. I do need his comments if any, pretty quickly. [attachment "DRAFT cover letter_CNOR_4pm on 11_14_12.docx" deleted by Sarah Fierce/R6/FWS/DOI] [attachment "DRAFT sample email data call_4pm on 11_14_2012.doc" deleted by Sarah Fierce/R6/FWS/DOI] [attachment "2012 DRAFT SG data request for CNOR 11_13_12 .docx" deleted by Sarah Fierce/R6/FWS/DOI]

Lynn Gemlo
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Wyoming Ecological Services Field Office
5353 Yellowstone Rd., Suite 308A
Cheyenne, WY 82009
phone: 307-772-2374, fax: 307-772-2358
lynn_gemlo@fws.gov

Data Request for the Annual Review of the Greater Sage-Grouse Candidate Status

The following is an outline of items for which we are requesting information. As part of this annual review, the Service is soliciting new information regarding changes in the status of the greater sage-grouse, its habitats, or scientific understanding of the species and its habitats, and any conservation efforts. ~~With regards to conservation efforts, please provide information on the known effectiveness of ongoing conservation efforts and known effectiveness of new conservation efforts. In addition, provide information on any conservation efforts previously reported that are discontinued and conservation efforts planned that have a high certainty of implementation.~~ This will greatly assist us in our analysis of how conservation efforts have removed or reduced threats to the species. Send any geospatial information you can share.

Your information sent in for this annual review will assist us in evaluating the species' status to determine if any further listing action should be taken based on scientific data.

We understand that not every responder will need to address every issue or have knowledge of some issues in their locale. Provide the information that is applicable to your area of jurisdiction. We are requesting information you may have collected between **January 2012** and **December 2012**. **Please submit all information by February 1, 2013, to the following address or by e-mail:**

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Attention: Lynn Gemlo, Listing Coordinator
5353 Yellowstone Road, Suite 308A
Cheyenne, WY 82009
Phone Number: (307) 772-2374, Extension 228
E-Mail: lynn_gemlo@fws.gov

Data Request:

A. Population status, trends and numbers: This section is primarily directed towards State and Provincial agencies for response.

1. What are the population trends for your State or Province? If describing by population, use the population descriptions identified in the 2006 WAFWA Conservation Strategy.
    a. Is the trend expected given weather conditions and population cycling?
2. Has there been any significant change in the populations in your State or Province (more than normal annual fluctuations)?
    a. If yes, do you know the cause of the population change? Describe.

B. Habitat status and trends: To the extent possible, for each item listed below, identify occurrence in occupied (at least during one season) or unoccupied habitats, sagebrush habitats that are essential for long-term species persistence (e.g. connectivity corridors), provide locations, populations affected, acreage affected and geospatial data if available.

1. Identify areas of sagebrush lost due to permanent conversion (e.g. agricultural lands, subdivisions). In addition to the information requested above, identify the stage of loss (e.g. proposed, in NEPA review, completed).
    a. Identify proposed areas of conversions that have a high certainty of occurrence.
2. Identify areas that will be converted in association with Farm Bill Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP).
3. For areas where CRP has/is providing habitat for sage-grouse, have there been areas where the lands have been put back into production, resulting in a loss of habitat? If so, estimate the number of acres potentially lost.
4. Provide acres of occupied sagebrush habitats that were lost to fire (either wild or prescribed fires). ***2012 was a particularly bad wildfire year. Provide specifics as to the loss of suitable sagebrush habitats, where fires occurred and impacts to sage-grouse.***
5. Provide expansion information of conifers or cheatgrass into sagebrush.
6. Identify incursion of other invasive species that affects habitat quality and utility for sage-grouse. Identify the invasive species.
7. Provide information on proposed energy developments within occupied sagebrush habitats. In addition, identify the type (oil, gas, wind, solar, hydropower, geothermal, uranium, etc.) and stage of development, well/turbine/development density, and life of project.
8. Provide information regarding new, proposed, or expanded mining activities in sagebrush habitats.
9. Identify transmission corridors for energy transmission in sagebrush habitats. Include status (e.g. NEPA completed, under construction, proposed), and any efforts to minimize impacts to sage-grouse and sagebrush.
10. Grazing impacts – Any significant changes that affect habitat abundance and quality? We are particularly interested in sagebrush treatments that either remove sagebrush habitats or alter their ability to provide current seasonal habitats (e.g. converting winter habitat to more open canopies that may support brood-rearing).
    a. Include treatments conducted for the benefit of wild ungulates.
    b. Identify any changes in wild equid status.
11. Identify any known losses of habitat connectivity, both within and between populations.

C. Changes in Regulatory Mechanisms: Regulatory mechanisms are those that are enforceable by state or provincial statute, federal land management documents, etc. They do

not include voluntary efforts; however, provide information on any voluntary efforts that may be affecting sage-grouse and sagebrush habitats. If these efforts have not yet been implemented, or not yet shown to be effective, identify those projects within the conservation efforts database.

1. Identify the status of BLM RMP revisions that will affect sage-grouse or sagebrush (either positive or negative), if any.
2. Identify any changes in the status of regulatory mechanisms that will affect sage-grouse or sagebrush (positive or negative) on other Federal lands (e.g. FS, NPS, military lands).
3. Identify any new regulatory mechanisms that minimize impacts from fire, invasives, energy development, etc. If new regulatory mechanisms are being considered, you should also identify those, along with the certainty of application.
4. Any new State, Provincial, or other local (e.g. county) efforts to address threats?

D. Conservation Actions: An aggregation of these assessments by industry, sector, or region is more useful than many individual comments (e.g. from individual companies). This will greatly assist us in our analysis of how conservation efforts have removed or reduced threats to the species.

1. Identify past, ongoing, and future conservation actions.
2. Provide an assessment of the known effectiveness and long-term sustainability of ongoing conservation efforts and of new conservation efforts.
3. Provide information on any conservation efforts previously reported that are discontinued and conservation efforts planned that have a high certainty of implementation.

~~D.~~**E.** **Hunting and other uses:** (Identify state or province)

1. Have there been any changes to hunting regulations for sage-grouse? If so, identify the reason behind the change, and if applicable, any results.
2. Have there been any changes in recreational impacts (positive or negative) or in religious use of sage-grouse?
3. Identify current research projects on sage-grouse in your State or Province, and whether or not the project includes bird capture or collaring.

~~E.~~**F.** **Disease and Predation**: (Provide locations where appropriate)

1. Report any West Nile virus outbreaks in 2012, where outbreaks occurred, and impacts to sage-grouse.
2. Are you aware of any new diseases/parasites that have population-level effects?

3. Do you have any data that suggests that predators may be limiting sage-grouse in any part of the range, independent of habitat conditions?
4. Do you have data that supports increases in predator populations that are affecting sage-grouse as the result of habitat alterations?

~~F.~~G. Other Factors:

1. Do you have any new information regarding negative effects of pesticides, contaminants, recreational activities or other human disturbance, drought and other climatic conditions on the greater sage-grouse?
2. Report any new information on the impacts of climate change on sage-grouse or their habitats.

~~G~~H. Literature:

1. Identify any pertinent literature you feel is important for our review. In addition to citations, if you have cited any literature above, provide the page numbers of the actual citation.

~~H~~I. Contact person(s):

Provide contact(s) information concerning data collection in case questions arise after the data has been reviewed.