From: Tom Remington
To: Doherty, Kevin; Steve Torbit
Subject: Re: Lek data request on letterhead
Date: Thursday, May 22, 2014 10:41:17 AM
Attachments: Lek request on letterhead- ter edits.doc

Kevin and Steve,

Attached are my thoughts. In addition I think the letter should acknowledge that there are efforts out there to delay the listing decision for 1 to 10 years, but that the FWS must move forward regardless. Indicate somehow that the data request now doesn't preclude a delay if Congress acts. We should find some time to talk tomorrow, maybe grab San. There are some contentious aspects to the request we should discuss. I'm available after 11 until 3.

Tom

From: Doherty, Kevin
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2014 8:51 AM
To: Steve Torbit, Tom Remington

ATTACHMENT!

On Thu, May 22, 2014 at 8:51 AM, Doherty, Kevin <kevin_doherty@fws.gov> wrote:

> Steve and Tom,
>
> Here you go. We had a little confusion on the order of operations as this has been done for a while. Please let me know your suggestions and I will make them. Steve or I can then send to Noreen.
>
> Cheers
> Kevin
>
> --
>
> Kevin Doherty, PhD
>
> Spatial Ecologist
>
> United States Fish & Wildlife Service
>
> (303) 921-0524
> kevin_doherty@fws.gov

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Kevin Doherty, PhD

Spatial Ecologist

United States Fish & Wildlife Service

(303) 921-0524
kevin_doherty@fws.gov

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mountain-Prairie Region

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FWS/R6/SA/DCN here

MAILING ADDRESS:
Post Office Box 25486
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225-0486

STREET LOCATION:
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-1807

Memorandum

To: State-Wildlife Agencies Managing Greater Sage-grouse Populations

From: Regional Director, Region 6

Subject: **Range-wide Assessment of the Beneficial Conservation Actions and Major Threats to Sage-grouse Populations**

Project Synopsis:

The USFWS is currently assessing the status of the Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*; hereafter grouse) under the Endangered Species Act. Part of the status assessment includes quantifying the degree to which various conservation threats may impact grouse populations ~~exposure to major threats~~ across their range. Numerous on-going efforts have contributed substantial information to the management of grouse populations, but they have been regional in scope and often~~typically~~ focused on only one or a few conservation threats ~~(e.g., energy development in Wyoming)~~. Consequently, the USFWS has a need to better understand the effects of multiple conservation threats on grouse populations range-wide~~, and have this conducted in a consistent, repeatable, and scientifically rigorous fashion.~~

The listing of the Greater Sage-Grouse as a candidate species in 2010 has also resulted in expenditure of substantial conservation funds for proactive management efforts. In conjunction with State and other Federal partners, the USFWS has designed a conservation efforts database to identify and track proactive conservation measures for grouse. The USFWS seeks to roll-up the benefits of these efforts into a range-wide framework and asses how these conservation efforts abate threats. Understanding the juxtaposition of conservation actions and grouse populations is critical to quantifying benefits to grouse.

Information on how grouse populations overlap with both beneficial conservation actions and threats is needed to effectively evaluate status of grouse populations. Sage-grouse lek data, collected and managed by States are the most consistent and extensive data set on grouse, thus are crucial to our evaluation.

Our objectives are four-fold:

1) Build a spatially explicit model(s) of sage-grouse populations across the range to consistently and rigorously evaluate spatially explicit risks.

Comment [TER1]: Suggest personalizing this by listing the names of the Directors, also don't want this pushed off to section heads.

Comment [TER2]: I wouldn't give an example, just gives them something to obsess about.

Comment [TER3]: Goes without saying, and saying sort of implies other efforts were not scientific or rigorous.

2) Evaluate the juxtaposition of beneficial conservation actions to sage-grouse populations.

3) TNC and USDA-SGI are starting the process to build statistical models to examine the relationships between certain risks and lek occupancy. We believe that components of their analyses may be helpful to the grouse status assessment and we would like to be able to work directly with TNC and USDA-SGI Initiative leads. Having access to lek data would help communication between our efforts.

4) Be able to share lek/population models with USGS scientist who are contracted with the USFWS to facilitate and design a structured decision making process to aid in the grouse status determination.

Sincerely,

Noreen Walsh
Director USFWS Region 6

Data request details:

We are requesting the exact data that has already been bundled for The Nature Conservancy and SGI. We fully respect data sharing agreements between TNC, SGI, and the State and do not want to jeopardize or strain any relationships between these groups. Thus, we are requesting to be able to get the data from the State who has collected and housed the data. We are requesting "within-year multiple-visit count" data from all states within greater sage-grouse range within the following format:

1) Lek id
2) Coordinates in either UTM or Lat/Long
a. Include zone if UTM
b. Include spatial reference system (projection datum)
3) Are coordinates of lek or location of observer?
4) Date of count
5) Total count
    a. Please ensure that *zero entry means lek was visited but no birds were detected*!
6) Method of count (ground, aerial)
7) Is the count for a lek complex (True/False)?
    a. Please do not aggregate data for lek complexes; however if data were already collected per complex, please indicate so.

If available in current state databases, optional attributes that can greatly aid in modeling effort are:
1) Time of highest count and/or survey start and end times
2) Highest count of male, females, and unknown birds
3) Whether lek is monitored annually
4) Sky conditions

Comment [TER4]: At the least this needs to be rewritten as an objective. The three of us should discuss this, because now you are sharing their lek data and that brings up a whole different set of issues. At least needs to reflect that TNC already has permission to use lek data, and whether this is an expansion of that initial request or not.

Comment [TER5]: We need to discuss. This may be a death blow.

Comment [TER6]: This needs to be appended, on a different sheet and referred to in the letter. May not be necessary or helpful.

5) Precipitation
6) Wind and temperature
    a. If data available please indicate whether measured or estimated
7) Ground snow cover (clear, patchy snow, completely covered with snow)
8) Observer name or unique id
9) Any additional attributes that can affect lek attendance and/or probability of detection

For additional questions or details please contact:

Kevin Doherty
Spatial Ecologist
United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Denver Colorado
kevin_doherty@fws.gov
(303) 921-0524