**From:** Tom Remington
**To:** Doherty, Kevin; San Stiver; Steve Torbit
**Subject:** Re: Lek letter edits
**Date:** Saturday, May 31, 2014 11:23:17 AM
**Attachments:** Lek request on letterhead final- ter edits.doc

---

Sorry, was gone fishing. It is pretty good, although I made some edits to improve tone a bit, and the one bullet item needs clarification per the comment I inserted. Thanks.

Tom

---

**From:** Doherty, Kevin
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 27, 2014 11:06 AMSorry
**To:** Tom Remington, San Stiver, Steve Torbit

Gents,
Please take one last look at the letter which reflects the changes based upon our Friday call. Thank you for your input!

Cheers
Kevin

--

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~~[PERSONALIZE TO EACH DIRECTOR]

From: Noreen Walsh, Regional Director, USFWS ~~Region 6~~Mountain Prairie Region

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

**Formatted:** Font: Bold, Highlight

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

**Formatted:** Font: Bold, Highlight

**Formatted:** Font: Bold, Highlight

**Project Synopsis:**

The USFWS is currently assessing the status of the Greater Sage-Grouse under the Endangered Species Act. Part of the status assessment includes quantifying the degree to which various conservation threats may impact grouse populations 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 focused on only one or a few conservation threats. Consequently, the USFWS has a need to better understand the effects of multiple conservation threats on grouse populations range-wide.

Concern for Greater Sage-Grouse has 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.

We have four specific objectives to support the status assessment for Sage-grouse~~Our objectives are four-fold:~~:

**Formatted:** Not Highlight

**Formatted:** Not Highlight

~~1)~~ Build a spatially explicit model(s) of sage-grouse populations across the range to consistently and ~~rigorously~~rigorously evaluate spatially explicit threats ~~These analyses will support the overall listing decision by the USFWS.~~

**Formatted:** Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, … + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0.25" + Indent at: 0.5"

1.
~~2)~~2. Update the analysis of Sage-grouse population trends conducted by ~~similar to the~~ WAFWA in ~~analyses conducted on~~ 2007~~ data~~.
3. ~~3)~~ Evaluate the juxtaposition of beneficial conservation actions to sage-grouse populations.

4. Develop a better track record of conservation actions derived through federal land use plans.

~~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. If you have concerns please contact me directly. Further, i~~I understand and appreciate state sensitivity over sharing lek data. If storing lek data on a federal computer is a concern for your state and would preclude data sharing, we are setting up a process that could house the state lek data on a non-government server at *sciencebase.org*. Access to this data would be controlled by passwords administered by individual State~~'~~s that upload lek data.

Thank you for considering this request. It is important that we begin these analyses relatively quickly so that they can be completed in time to inform our listing decision. If you have questions or concerns please contact me directly, or if they are of a technical nature relative to data transfer or security please contact Kevin Doherty at (303) 921-0524 or at kevin_doherty@fws.gov. It would be most helpful if you could ~~Please~~ let me know your decision by June 30th.

Sincerely,

~~Noreen Walsh~~
Noreen Walsh
Regional Director
Mountain-Prairie Region
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
~~Director USFWS Region 6~~
Noreen_Walsh@fws.gov
(303) 236-7920

If you have technical questions please contact:
Kevin Doherty

**Comment [TER2]:** "Develop a better track record" is ambiguous, and sounds more like the intent is to improve conservation actions in federal land use plans than to better evaluate the impact of conservation actions which I believe was the intent.

**Formatted:** Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, … + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0.25" + Indent at: 0.5"

**Comment [TER3]:** 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 [TER4]:** We need to discuss. This may be a death blow.

**Formatted:** Font: Italic

**Formatted:** Font: Not Bold

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

**Formatted:** Font: Not Bold

~~**Data request details:**~~

**Comment [TER5]:** This needs to be appended, on a different sheet and referred to in the letter. May not be necessary or helpful.

~~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:~~

**Formatted:** Space After: 0 pt

~~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~~
~~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~~

4

**Formatted:** Don't adjust space between Latin and Asian text, Don't adjust space between Asian text and numbers