From: Frazer, Gary
To: Rhea Suh
Subject: Re: NTT Sage Grouse
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2014 4:35:47 PM

Rhea -- Sorry for the delay. One of those wall-to-wall days, which I'm sure you have all the time too.

The NTT report was developed by a team of state, USGS ,FWS, and BLM sage-grouse experts. It was designed to translate the best scientific information available, plus the professional judgement of the sage-grouse experts on the team, into guidance to inform BLM planning efforts to conserve the bird. Accordingly, it is not the typical scientific paper that would be published in a peer- reviewed scientific journal. So some people take shots on that front.

But because it was produced to provide practical guidance to land managers, it also applies expert judgment to fill gaps in the scientific information on some things that are needed for land management planning, like development caps. Sage-grouse were found to warrant listing largely because of habitat loss and fragmentation. Knowing how much surface disturbance can be accommodated without causing further habitat loss and fragmentation is a critical need of land managers, but for which no existing scientific studies are specifically on point. So the NTT report evaluated the relevant scientific information and applied expert judgment to recommend a 3% disturbance cap. That was a conservative recommendation, purposely protective of the species. Some people criticize that kind of technical guidance as "not supported by the science".

Folks who don't like an outcome can always attack the "science", insisting upon perfect knowledge before taking action. My understanding is that's much of what's happening here.

Hope this helps. Let me know if there's more I can do. Michael Bean and Jim Lyons would also have good insight on this, I'm sure. -- Gary

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On Tue, Mar 25, 2014 at 8:35 AM, Rhea Suh <rhea_suh@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

> Gary:
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> I've been asked Qs on the National Technical Team report on Sage Grouse and I'm now reviewing the doc to try to understand the criticism. Is it that the report wasn't developed with state participation or is it that the science in the report is not deemed sound? Or perhaps both... No urgency.
>
> Any thoughts you might have are welcome. Thx!

Rhea Suh

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