From:	Deibert, Pat
To:	The Madisonian
Cc:	Jodi Bush; Leith Edgar
Subject:	Re: Montana Sage Grouse
Date:	Monday, September 09, 2013 5:26:08 PM

Hello Faith -

I've tried to answer most of your questions below in italics. However, some of these questions may more appropriately be answered by other folks - like NRCS for the Sage-grouse Initiative (its their program), and the State of Montana (responsible for the state plan).

Please feel free to contact me if you have additional questions!

Pat

Who is working on this plan? - *This plan will be a product of the State of Montana. The Governor has created a sagebrush council composed of government and state officials, and representatives from industry (including livestock) and environmental organizations. The meetings are open to the public.*

What is the purpose of the sage grouse initiative? - T*he Sage-Grouse Initiative is a NRCS program focused on conserving sage-grouse and maintaining healthy, viable working ranches. To date, they have spent millions implementing a wide variety of conservation actions on private lands for that purpose. I encourage you to check out their web page: www.sagegrouseinitiative.com*

When is the deadline to have a plan or is it ongoing? - *I believe the deadline for the state plan is January, 2014.*

Where do sage grouse live in the U.S. and what is there habitat like? *Sage-grouse currently have a range covering 11 western states and 2 Canadian provinces. They are dependent on sagebrush, but will also use grasslands and occasionally irrigated croplands (depending on location and type).*

Why are they important to protect? *The condition of sage-grouse is indicative of the ecosystem on which they depend. The sagebrush ecosystem is actually incredibly diverse and complex and loss of a key component such as sage-grouse will increase the instability of the system itself. Sagebrush supports many species, and human activities, such as properly managed grazing, other species of wildlife (valuable for hunting and other enjoyment - such as viewing), and recreation. Conservation plans for sage-grouse are being developed to help preclude the potential listing of the greater sage-grouse. Please visit our web page at http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/birds/sagegrouse/ for a complete review of the specie's habitat needs and conservation status.*

How can others become involved or learn more? *The aforementioned web pages are great sources of information. In order to get involved with the Montana state plan I would refer you to either Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, or perhaps Representative Shaw (a member of the MT sagebrush council) can provide more information on becoming involved.*

On Fri, Sep 6, 2013 at 11:46 AM, The Madisonian <news@madisoniannews.com> wrote:

> Pat,
> Ray Shaw recently got in touch with me about the sage grouse council he is on and said you

> might have some good information as well.
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> Who is working on this plan?
> What is the purpose of the sage grouse initiative?
> When is the deadline to have a plan or is it ongoing?
> Where do sage grouse live in the U.S. and what is there habitat like?
> Why are they important to protect?
> How can others become involved or learn more?
>
> Any other information you can provide is appreciated. Thank you for your time and assistance.
>
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