From:	Larson, Scott
To:	Matt Kales; jesse_delia@fws.gov
Cc:	Terry Quesinberry
Subject:	Re: Please read: status of state sage-grouse planning efforts
Date:	Wednesday, May 01, 2013 12:19:31 PM
Attachments:	Sage-grouse Status Planning Efforts (April 2013) svl edits5.1.13.docx
Importance:	High

Matt/Jesse,

My responses in track changes mode.

Thank You
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On Tue, Apr 30, 2013 at 11:54 AM, Matt Kales <matt_kales@fws.gov> wrote:

> Folks,
>
> I hope this finds everyone well. Noreen is at the Directorate meeting this week and asked we provide Directorate members with an update on sage-grouse conservation efforts. We are working here in Denver to revise the regular, periodic update that's been used for this purpose and need your input on the subject item. I've attached the latest version of the status document Jesse built previously; please review, populate it accordingly with any changes or new information affecting your state, and send the document back to Jesse, who will compile it into one current version (which he'll then put up on the SG SharePoint site).
>
> Noreen has asked for the update NLT Thursday morning, so Jesse and I would be grateful if you would please respond by **1200 MDT tomorrow (5/1)** so we have time to turn the information around.
>
> Thanks in advance for your/staff's time on this item, and please let me know if you have questions or need more information.

Regards,

Matt

Matt Kales, Acting

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Status of State, BLM, and other Planning Efforts

Updated 4.29.13

Below is a summary of State planning efforts, BLM and Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plans, and other local conservation efforts. This summary is meant to inform ongoing internal discussions to facilitate effective communication and targeting of resources and management attention. This document is NOT a decision document and should NOT be cited. It is PREDECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE. It is our best assessment of the situation as of the date of the document and our assessment is subject to change as plans change or as we receive new information.

Table 1. Summary of State Planning Efforts

Region	State	Plan Status	State Plan[1]	Communication[1]	Request for Concurrence Pending?
1	Idaho	**Complete**	**E ↑**	**A**	**N (responded to recent request with partial "concurrence" for purposes of BLM's IM)**
	Oregon	**Complete**	**B ↑**	**A**	**N**
	Washington	**Considering Revision**	**B ↑**		
6	Colorado	**Complete**	**E**		
	Montana	**Considering Revision**	**E ↑**	**B**	**N**
	North Dakota	**In Revision**	**E**		
	South Dakota	**In Revision**	**D~~F~~**	**B**	**N**
	Utah	**Complete**	**E**		**Y**
8	Wyoming	**Complete**	**A**		
	California	**No Plan**	**G**		
	Nevada	**Considering Revision**	**D**		

[1]See Appendix for categories and criteria.

BLM USFS GRSG Planning Strategy Subregion/EIS Boundaries

Forest Service unit colors correspond to the region they will be analyzed within.

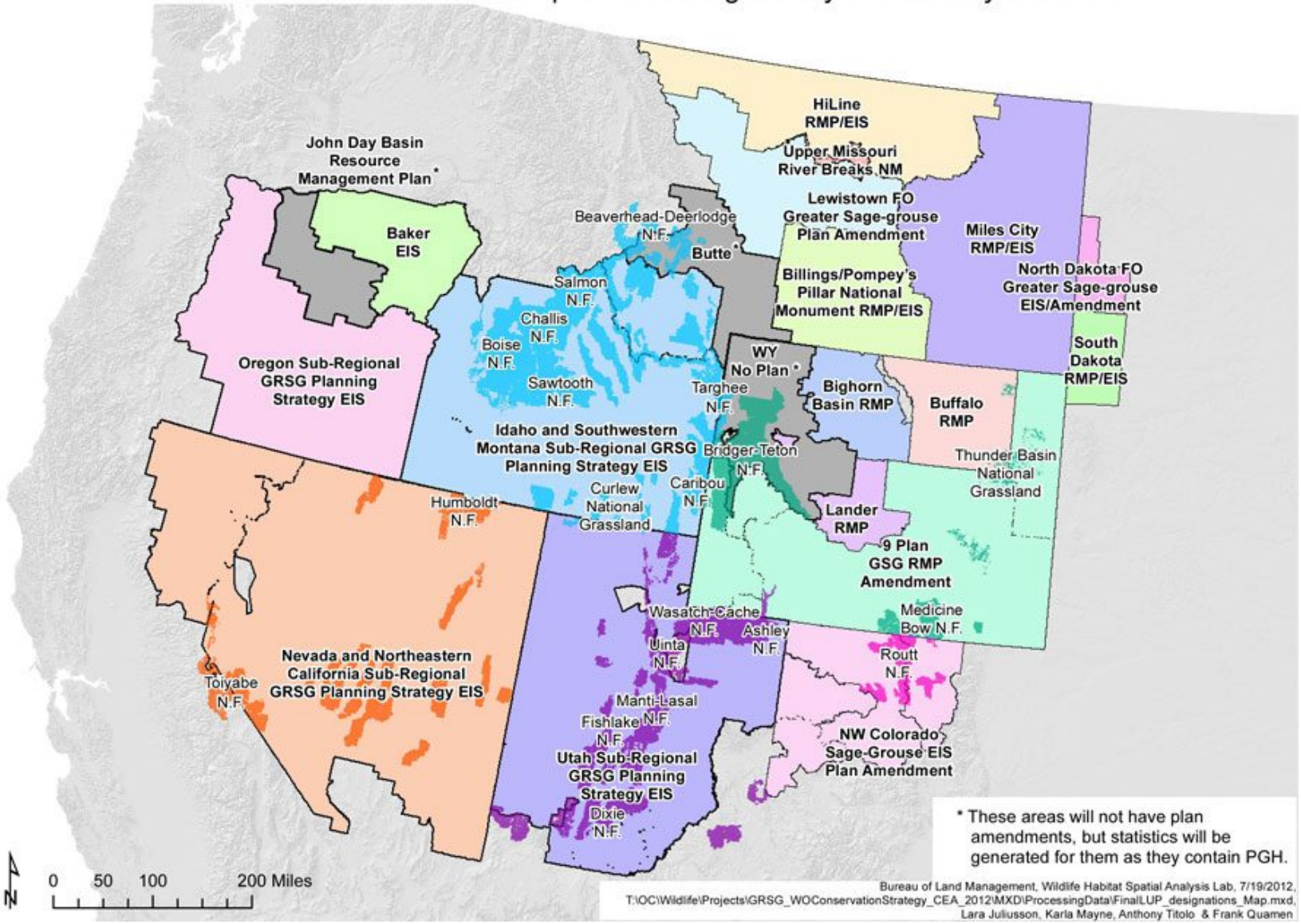

Table 2. Summary of BLM/FS Planning Efforts (green cells indicate phases that are complete; yellow cells indicate phases that are expected to be complete in the next 2 months).

Region	State	Planning Area	Draft	Proposed	ROD	Plan Assessment[1]	Communication[1]
1	Idaho	Idaho and SW Montana Subregion	**Sept. 2013**	**March 2014**	**Summer 2014**	**C**	**A**
	Oregon	Oregon Subregion (including Baker EIS revision)	**Sept. 2013**	**March 2014**	**Summer 2014**	**C↑**	**A**
	Washington	Washington					
6	Colorado	NW Colorado	**July 2013**	**February 2014**	**Summer 2014**		
	Montana	HiLine	**3/23/13**	**October 2013**	**Spring 2014**	**C↑**	**C↑**
		Lewistown	**July 2013**	**February 2014**	**Fall 2014**	**D↑**	**C↑**
		Billings/Pompey's Pillar NM	**3/31/13**	**September 2013**	**Spring 2014**	**C↑**	**C↑**
		Miles City	**3/8/13**	**October 2013**	**Spring 2014**	**C↑**	**C↑**
	North Dakota	North Dakota	**July 2013**	**February 2014**	**Fall 2014**		
	South Dakota	South Dakota	**May 2013**	**October 2013**	**Spring 2014**	**D↑**	**B**
	Utah	Utah Subregion	**Sept. 2013**	**March 2014**	**Summer 2014**		

Region	State	Planning Area	Draft	Proposed	ROD	Plan Assessment[1]	Communication[1]
	Wyoming	Bighorn Basin (Supplement)	**June 2013**	**February 2014**	**July 2014**		
		Buffalo	**May 2013**	**March 2014**	**Summer 2014**		
		Lander	**9/9/11**	**2/22/13**	**June 2013**		
		9 Plan	**Sept. 2013**	**April 2014**	**Summer 2014**		
8	California/ Nevada	Nevada and NE California Subregion	**Sept. 2013**	**March 2014**	**Summer 2014**		

[1]See Appendix for categories and criteria.

State-by-State Narratives

Region 1

Idaho

- **State Plan:** The State developed a draft alternative for BLM process with FO. FO does not believe it to be adequate. State knew there was work to do. By end of August, gave a product to BLM without FWS endorsement. State wants to know what FWS wants. Entered into red light/green light process. Nothing in writing, all verbal. Most recently, the Governor's office contacted the Service for meeting. FWS would like to find a way to make the State Plan into something BLM can use, but there may not be time.
- **BLM RMP revisions:** BLM developed a draft alternative with FO. Relationship with BLM has been strong. BLM has good leadership and they are pro-active. BLM has been pressured by state to use its plan as preferred alternative. BLM has said they do not want to include a preferred alternative in draft documents.
- **NRCS & other efforts:** Good relationship with NRCS and they are targeting their dollars towards conservation

Oregon

- **State Plan**: There is a 2011 State Plan which FWS supported (but noted the lack of regulatory mechanisms); if implemented, it would go a long way to reduce threats in Oregon. Voluntary and recommendations only. The State plans to develop an implementation strategy – expected in January 2014. The Governor created workgroups staffed by State, USFWS, and other feds and NGOs
- **BLM RMP revisions:** FO task is to provide increased guidance, direction, and participation to BLM RMP and Oregon effort
- **NRCS & other efforts:** Unknown. NRCS not interested in having FWS present for landowner conversations. FWS however wants to ensure the efforts are being implemented.

Washington

- **State Plan**: The state plan is generally good but needs updating. Coordination has been good. FO expects to see draft of State plan in a few weeks.
- **BLM RMP revisions:** BLM has a limited portion of habitat, so BLM-Washington revisions are not sage-grouse-centric, just general updates. The challenge for management is that most of the land has not been occupied by GrSG. Just in the last year or two, birds are moving into the habitat. So there is a reluctance to be particularly conservative in areas not yet occupied. State is at the table with BLM, but FWS hasn't seen product yet. Washington is actually not part of the larger National effort.
- **NRCS:** A lot of effort including incorporating significant private acreage into sage-grouse management.

Region 6

Colorado

- **State Plan:** There is a state conservation plan (2008), signed by federal agencies also. Not regulatory, but includes a developed conservation strategy, it identifies risk factors and BMPs to minimize effects of those activities, identifies key parties to carry out BMPs and gives costs. However, it is purely advisory. The State is compiling information regarding implementation and the FO has the information in draft to review and provide comments. Colorado is listening to FWS and trying to determine whether the existing policies are addressing threats to the species.
  Industry is pulling together a list of voluntary measures it has implemented to help inform the State Plan revision.
- **BLM RMPs revisions:** BLM has not selected a preferred alternative and has asked for input from other agencies to select a preferred (in next month). Colorado alternative conveys most of our priorities, but not all.
- **NRCS:** has done some work in CO and Colorado Cattleman's Association is interested in mitigation banking.

Montana

- **State Plan:** There is an existing 2005 State Plan which does not include regulatory protection. FWS has communicated this to the State. New governor is looking at issuing an Executive Order to start a task force for state plan revision. Looking to start next month. Pressure from Farm Bureau, Ag. Community to move the needle on listing. The Service has been asked to be at table.
- **BLM RMP revisions**: The Service has been very involved in BLM's process so far, although involvement comes at last moment. The Service needs adequate lead time to provide quality input and has communicated this to BLM. Three public DRMP/DEISs are currently under 90-day review, although BLM is concurrently revising the effects analysis for all of these documents.
- **NRCS & other efforts**: The NRCS is working with partners. Good coordination and progress.

North Dakota:

- **State Plan:** State Plan revisions began last month. ND is seeking Section 6 funding for translocations from MT to ND. Purpose of the translocations is unclear. Oil industry is willing to help. Similar to SD, ND has a hunting season, although it is currently closed.
- **BLM RMP revisions**: There are State concerns with lack of specificity and lack of current science in BLM revisions. The Service has been at the table, but the current statuses of the revisions are unclear. BLM in North Dakota is reluctant to give specifics on what will be done to conserve the species.

- **NRCS & other efforts**: unknown.

South Dakota:

- **State Plan:** The State is working on a plan, but FWS has not yet seen the entire document. So far, it does not present a regulatory framework.
- **BLM RMP revisions:** BLM has expressed to the Service that it will be key to ensure that all Service-preferred protection measures are represented in the various alternatives so that BLM can pick and choose from them when they sign the ROD. The implication is that there will not be one alternative in the NEPA document that includes all FWS desired measures for GrSG. FO has reviewed drafts of the BLM planning revisions.
- **NRCS & other efforts**: Initiatives are on the ground and moving. FWS feels good about their progress. The practices are focused on the correct areas for the most part.

Utah

- **State Plan:** The FO has been coordinating with the State, but current Plan is not adequate and does not meet many of the COT recommendations. This has been communicated to the State, but State thinks we are in line with them. State has mostly moved Plan forward on their own without incorporating meaningful FWS input. The State is interested in FWS endorsement for use in BLM process as an alternative, but we aren't there. The State is presenting a new revised plan on Friday.
- **BLM RMP revisions:** BLM and FO are coordinating well. BLM has not identified a preferred yet, but spending a lot of time on Service comments.

Wyoming

- **State Plan:** Wyoming is the only state where the Service has formally supported the State Plan. Oil and gas wants to get into wintering habitat in areas outside of core and the State is trying to address that now with the Service. Companies want relief from raptor seasonal and spatial buffers in turn, to which the Service has said no.
- **BLM RMP revisions:** The BLM has not given the Service enough time to review draft documents, but BLM and FO are meeting frequently. BLM saying that their preferred alternative will mimic the Executive Order, which the Service supports.
- **NRCS:** There is a CCAA for ranch operations (allotment holders on public lands) in progress.

Region 8

California

- **State Plan:** CAL Fish and Game has no plan to complete a state plan, but have participated in plans for bi-state DPS and tends to follow Nevada regarding greater sage-grouse. The State is contemplating state listing.

- **BLM RMP revisions:** The BLM relationship with the Service is great. RMP revisions will track Nevada plan revisions and FWS expects conservation for the species.

Nevada

- **State Plan:** In the summer of 2012, Nevada produced a Report of which the most important component was a commitment to no net loss of habitat. So any acreage lost will be mitigated.
- **BLM RMP revisions:** Although FO has a good relationship BLM-NV, status of planning efforts is unknown. BLM is putting together a vision for "proper" grazing.
- **NRCS and other efforts:** NRCS is great. NewMont Mine has approached FWS for a 2.2M acre Plan because their mining may impact sage-grouse.

APPENDIX: Categories and Criteria for the Status of State, BLM and other planning efforts

Note: sufficiency in this context is NOT an official FWS position, it simply represents the opinion of individuals filling out this table. This is an iterative process and subject to change as new information becomes available. We need to have open internal deliberations as we move through our assessment of the adequacy of State and BLM plans. As such this table should be treated as PREDECISIONAL AND DELIBERATIVE ONLY.

State Plans

Plan Assessment

A – State plan is complete and sufficiently addresses sage-grouse conservation needs. Regulatory mechanisms are in place and the plan is reasonably certain to be implemented and effective.

B – State plan is complete and sufficiently addresses sage-grouse conservation needs; however it lacks regulatory mechanisms that are reasonably certain to be implemented or effective. The State is actively working on developing regulatory mechanisms to implement the plan prior to September 2015.

C – State plan is incomplete. Progress is being made on completing a plan that sufficiently addresses sage-grouse conservation needs. The plan is expected to include regulatory mechanisms that are reasonably certain to be implemented and effective.

D – State plan is incomplete. Progress is being made on completing a plan, but there are significant uncertainties as to whether it will contain regulatory mechanisms that sufficiently address sage-grouse conservation needs.

E – State plan is complete; however it either lacks regulatory mechanisms that are reasonably certain to be implemented or effective (and it doesn't intend to develop them) OR it does not adequately address sage-grouse conservation needs.

F – State plan is incomplete. Progress on the plan is stalled or the plan is not expected to provide regulatory mechanisms that adequately address sage-grouse conservation needs.

G – No State plan in development

Communication

A – Excellent, no issues. Communication is frequent and effective.

B - Good ; some minor issues, but both parties are actively seeking ways to improve communication.

C – Insufficient communication; issues are not getting resolved or elevated effectively. People are not getting invited to meetings or calls in a timely manner and no indication that the responsible party is working to improve communication.

D – Poor communication. The parties involved are not working effectively to resolve issues or find solutions. Management intervention needed.

Modifiers that can be inserted after the Letter category

↑ - Trending positive – There is an expectation that the plan will move into a lower-letter category (toward A) in the future.

↓ - Trending negative – There is an expectation that the plan will move into a higher-letter category (toward Z) in the future.

BLM and Forest Service Management Plans

Plan Assessment

A – BLM/FS Plan and EIS complete and sufficiently address sage-grouse conservation needs. Plan is reasonably certain to be implemented and effective.

B – BLM/FS Draft Plan and Draft EIS published and preferred alternative sufficiently addresses sage-grouse conservation needs.

C – BLM/FS Draft Plan and EIS incomplete. Progress is being made on publishing a preferred alternative that sufficiently addresses sage-grouse conservation needs. All indications so far are that the Plan will sufficiently address sage-grouse conservation needs.

D – BLM/FS Draft EIS incomplete. Progress is being made on publishing a preferred alternative, but there are significant uncertainties as to whether it will contain measures that sufficiently address sage-grouse conservation needs.

E – BLM/FS Draft EIS incomplete and we expect that their preferred alternative will not sufficiently address sage-grouse conservation needs.

F – A plan amendment or revision is not expected to be completed in time for consideration in our FY2015 decision.

Communication

A – Excellent, no issues. Communication is frequent and effective.

B - Good; some minor issues, but both parties are actively seeking ways to improve communication.

C – Insufficient communication; issues are not getting resolved or elevated effectively. People are not getting invited to meetings or calls in a timely manner and no indication that the responsible party is working to improve communication.

D – Poor communication. The parties involved are not working effectively to resolve issues or find solutions. Management intervention needed.

Modifiers that can be inserted after the Letter category

↑ - Trending positive – There is an expectation that the plan or EIS will move into a lower-letter category (toward A) in the future.

↓ - Trending negative – There is an expectation that the plan will move into a higher-letter category (toward Z) in the future.