From: Frazer, Gary
To: Rhea Suh
Subject: Re: NTT Sage Grouse
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2014 5:26:01 PM

It will be used to support Service staff needed to support a sustained conservation effort for greater sage-grouse and the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem upon which they depend. That includes: 1) providing the technical assistance to federal and state land managers in finalizing and implementing their sage-grouse plans, 2) working with landowners that want to develop Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances, and 3) growing our in-house cadre of sage-grouse and sagebrush-steppe ecosystem experts and our arsenal of mapping and other technical tools, so we can make sense of this very complex situation and get to a good and defensible listing determination.

Hope the House hearing went ok today. -- GDF

Gary Frazer
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On Tue, Mar 25, 2014 at 7:16 PM, Rhea Suh <rhea_suh@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

> Thanks Gary! Really appreciate it. Yes, long day. So one more q: can you summarize what the $4m increase requested in 2015 for sage grouse will be used for? I'm sure it is somewhere but I'm cramming for the hearing w senate approps tomorrow and am at home.
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> On Mar 25, 2014, at 6:35 PM, "Frazer, Gary" <gary_frazer@fws.gov> wrote:
>
>> 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.
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>> 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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>
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