



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

**Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Oregon Cattlemen's Association**
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Contact: Jeff Clark, (503) 808-6028
Contact: Jeff Everett, (503) 231-6952
Contact: Kay Teisl, (503) 361-8941

Agreement signed to conserve sage-grouse on grazing allotments

PORTLAND, Ore. – Today, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), and the Oregon Cattlemen's Association (OCA) signed a Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) as part of ongoing efforts toward Greater Sage-Grouse conservation.

Implementation of this umbrella agreement, officially called the *Greater Sage-Grouse Programmatic Candidate Conservation Agreement for Rangeland Management on Bureau of Land Management Lands in Oregon* or Programmatic CCA, will occur through individual allotment CCAs. Entering into CCAs is not a mandatory requirement for continued grazing on public lands. These voluntary "step down" agreements, to be signed in the future by the BLM, the Service and participating livestock grazing permittees, will identify specific measures to be taken based on existing conditions of a particular allotment. Signing of the programmatic agreement represents the culmination of a two-year effort first initiated by the OCA.

"Sage-grouse conservation is a top priority for the agency," said Jerome E. Perez, BLM State Director for Oregon and Washington. "This agreement highlights our commitment, and our partners' commitment to a collaborative approach to multiple use management. This is a win-win, allowing for continued commercial activity important to rural Oregon while providing additional voluntary conservation measures for an at-risk species."

The Service declared the Greater Sage-Grouse a candidate for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 2010, and identified improperly managed grazing as one of the threats facing the species. Following the Service's decision, the OCA reached out to the BLM and the Service to see if the BLM grazing permittees could work with the agencies on an agreement that would give ranchers a level of predictability in their operations while meeting federal goals for rangeland management.

"The preservation and protection of our natural resources is a key priority for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association," noted Curtis Martin, OCA President. "The collaborative work done to develop the Programmatic CCA offers a voluntary management tool that recognizes the need to balance economic and conservation priorities for cattle producers and wildlife managers."

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The goal of the conservation agreement is to reduce or remove threats to sage-grouse on the enrolled BLM grazing allotments while supporting livestock grazing practices that are beneficial or neutral to sage-grouse. A successful track-record for this and similar sage-grouse conservation efforts may help avoid ESA-listing of the species, provide predictability of the management practices implemented to benefit sage-grouse, and ultimately, restore sagebrush habitat to a healthy, functioning ecosystem.

“This agreement is a vital component of a landscape-level approach to address the conservation needs of sage-grouse in Oregon and beyond,” said Paul Henson, the Service’s state supervisor for Oregon. “Working collaboratively with public and private partners, we can improve habitat for the bird and ultimately, restore health to the sagebrush ecosystem for the benefit of both wildlife and ranching life.”