

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [pat deibert](#)  
**Cc:** [Matt Kales](#); [Michael Thabault](#); [nicole.alt@fws.gov](#)  
**Subject:** GRSG: FW: buffer  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 06, 2015 3:45:22 PM  
**Attachments:** [Lek Buffer Screen 1.5.15.docx](#)

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Pat, per our conversation, here is the document shared with us yesterday as a new proposal for how to handle the USGS buffer review in the context of the RMPs.

Thanks,  
Noreen

**From:** Carman, Stephanie [mailto:[scarman@blm.gov](mailto:scarman@blm.gov)]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 05, 2015 3:03 PM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh; civerson  
**Cc:** Edwin Roberson; Glen Stein  
**Subject:** buffer

Attached is the buffer document

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On Mon, Jan 5, 2015 at 4:59 PM, Carman, Stephanie <[scarman@blm.gov](mailto:scarman@blm.gov)> wrote:  
This resolved issue tracks the few changes since the 12/16/14 version (the last widely shared version).

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**Issue:** **Use of Buffers in ADPPs**

**Direction:** The ADPPs will include a screening process for new BLM-authorized anthropogenic disturbances in both GHMA and PHMA (see Attachment X) and drop-in Chapter 2 language:

*“In undertaking BLM management actions, and consistent with valid and existing rights and applicable law in authorizing third-party actions, the BLM will complete the “Screening Process for New Anthropogenic Disturbances” to ensure that any activities in GRS habitat would comply with goals and objectives for GRS habitat as established in the ADPPs. The BLM will defer or deny any proposed action which does not meet these criteria.”*

Along with other criteria, the lek buffers identified in the USGS Report *Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage-Grouse – A Review* ([Open File Report 2014-1239](#)) will be used to assess impacts and determine conditions of approval for all proposed actions. As determined through the screening process, the BLM will defer or reject any proposed action that: 1) does not conform to the LUP; 2) exceeds the density and disturbance cap; and 3) cannot be effectively mitigated to provide a conservation gain.

## **Attachment X**

### **Screening Process for New Anthropogenic Disturbances**

ADPPs may expand the Screening Process as necessary, but at a minimum, it must include:

- **Step 1: *Determine LUP Conformance***  
Determine if the proposed action conforms to the LUP. All proposals must conform to the land use allocations, and GRSG goals and objectives, established in the LUP.
- **Step 2: *Determine Density and Disturbance Cap Conformance***  
If the proposed action occurs within PHMA, determine whether the disturbance from the activity exceeds the density (1 facility/640 acres in most states) and disturbance (3% in most states) cap limitations.
- **Step 3: *Evaluate Impacts to GRSG Populations and Habitat***  
Evaluate all impacts from the proposed action to GRSG populations and habitat. In addition to any other criteria determined to be appropriate, all BLM offices will use the lek buffer-distances (interpreted range – lower) identified in the USGS Report *Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage-Grouse – A Review* ([Open File Report 2014-1239](#)) to assess impacts:
  - linear features (roads) within 3.1 miles of leks
  - infrastructure related to energy development within 3.1 miles of leks.
  - tall structures (e.g., communication or transmission towers, transmission lines) within 2 miles of leks.
  - low structures (e.g., fences, rangeland structures) within 1.2 miles of leks.
  - surface disturbance (human activities that alter or remove the natural vegetation, excluding vegetation treatments) within 3.1 miles of leks.
  - noise and related disruptive activities including those that do not result in habitat loss (e.g., disruptive recreational events) at least 0.25 miles from leks.

It is recognized “that because of variation in populations, habitats, development patterns, social context, and other factors, for a particular disturbance type, there is no single distance that is an appropriate buffer for all populations and habitats across the sage-grouse range” (Manier et. al. 2014). Logical and scientifically justifiable departures from these buffers, based on local data, best available science and other factors, may be used as necessary.

In determining lek locations, the BLM offices will use the most recent active or occupied lek data available from the state wildlife agency.

- **Step 4: *Apply Avoidance, Minimization, and Compensatory Measures***  
Apply measures to avoid and minimize any impacts to GRSG. If unavoidable impacts remain, apply compensatory mitigation measures.
- **Step 5: *Approve, Defer, or Reject the Proposed Action***  
If all impacts can be mitigated, the proposed action can be approved. Defer or deny any proposed action that cannot be mitigated to provide a conservation gain.