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Subject: Lek Buffer Screen 1.6.15_v3.docx
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Attachments: [Lek Buffer Screen 1.6.15_v3.docx](#)

I have not opened this new version and have no idea how “final” it may be from BLM’s perspective.

If you have any thoughts, let me know. And thank you.

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

The ADPPs will include a required 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 GRSG habitat would comply with goals and objectives for GRSG habitat as established in the ADPPs. Consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, the BLM will defer or deny any proposed action which does not ~~meet the goal of~~ provide a conservation gain ~~for to~~ GRSG.”

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~~ does not 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 ([e.g. State wildlife agency plans](#)), 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). Justifiable departures from these buffers, based on local data, best available science and landscape features, 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: *[Determine Necessary Conditions of Apply Approval \(Apply Mitigation Hierarchy\) Avoidance, Minimization, and Compensatory Measures](#)***
 - 4a. First, apply measures to avoid any impacts to GRSG by locating projects outside of GRSG habitat.
 - 4b. If it is not possible to locate the project outside of GRSG habitat, minimize any impacts to GRSG.
 - [4c.](#) If unavoidable impacts remain, apply compensatory mitigation measures.
- **Step 5: *Approve, Defer, or ~~Reject-Deny~~ the Proposed Action***
If all impacts can be mitigated, the proposed action can be approved. [Consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, Defer or deny any proposed action which does](#)

not provide a conservation gain ~~(with included conditions of approval) that cannot be mitigated to~~ does not provide a conservation gain.