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MANAGEMENT ACTION

Disturbance Management Protocol

The Disturbance Management Protocol (DMP) is intended to provide for a 3% limitation on disturbance, except in situations where a biological analysis indicates a net conservation gain to the species.

Such discretionary activities that would cause disturbance in excess of 3% at the project or BSU scale would be prohibited, unless a technical team described below determines that new or site-specific information indicate the project could occur without significant impacts to sage-grouse or that the project could be modified to result in a net conservation gain at the BSU level. Factors considered by the team will include sage-grouse abundance and trends, habitat amount and quality, extent of project disturbance, location and density of existing disturbance, project design options and other biological factors.

Any exceptions to the disturbance cap may be approved by the Authorized Officer only with the concurrence of the State Director. The Authorized Officer may not grant an exception unless the NDOW, the USFWS, and the BLM unanimously find that the proposed action satisfies the conditions stated in the above paragraph. Such finding shall initially be made by the technical team of one field biologist or other GRSB expert from each respective agency. In the event the initial finding is not unanimous, the finding may be elevated to the BLM State Director, USFWS State Ecological Services Director, and NDOW Director for final resolution. In the event their recommendation is not unanimous to grant the exception, the exception will not be granted.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT LANGUAGE

The Disturbance Management Protocol and associated disturbance threshold shall be evaluated annually. As a result of such evaluation, the DMP or threshold (at either the project or BSU scale) may be modified in the event that new science or information indicates that other approaches to assess habitat function and availability are more effective or appropriate.