

From: [Noreen Walsh](#)
To: [Deibert, Pat](#)
Cc: [Michael Thabault](#); [Bob Budd](#); [Mary Flanderka](#)
Subject: Re: 16% in WY
Date: Saturday, January 10, 2015 8:05:38 AM

Thanks very much - this is very informative.

Noreen Walsh
Regional Director
Mountain-Prairie Region
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On Jan 9, 2015, at 1:45 PM, Deibert, Pat <pat_deibert@fws.gov> wrote:

Mike and Noreen -

I did some digging on this with awesome assistance from the state.

1. We think this came from the last SGIT meeting where the state gave a summary report on the DDCT application. Of a total of 570 projects, 105 were considered out of compliance with the DDCT calculations (meaning the project as proposed when the DDCT was run either resulted in more than 5% disturbance of a density of $> 1/640$). Approximately 16%.

The 105 projects were all associated with existing disturbance and had valid existing rights at the time the EO went into place. The State of WY worked with the project proponents to reduce the cumulative footprint of these 105 projects to a total of 26 acres across all the core areas where the projects were proposed, while conserving the existing development rights. For most of these 105 projects substantial restoration efforts were implemented so that pre-existing disturbance would eventually be reduced - and these efforts likely would not have happened if the DDCT analyses did not exist.

So, in summary, the "lack of compliance" was 26 acres across all core areas, all associated with pre-existing valid rights (pre- EO)..

Context is everything.

Additional information that may be useful for Monday:

- The total amount of pre-existing disturbance (pre EO) in each core area is unknown except for the Douglas core area. That measurement will likely happen as more data are collected and GIS data are refined. The disturbance is measured at the proposed project level to ensure each individual proposed project permitted within a core area has no negative effect on the local birds and the surrounding habitat. If at the project level pre-existing disturbance is at or above 5% the proposed project is not permitted to move forward until such time the 5% is reduced.
- Measurement of total disturbance at the core area scale is not likely to accurately reflect the actual impact to the birds because location is key. For example a 2% core-area level disturbance in the wrong place could be devastating but wouldn't be considered problematic when measured at that broader scale. By examining it at the project scale the problem would be detected. Additionally all the core areas are of different size, so the 2% in one area is not comparable to 2% in another.
- Core areas provide the most important habitats for grouse and grouse numbers are increasing

no matter what the pre-existing (pre-EO) disturbance was.

- Core areas have pre-existing disturbance, including fire. There were likely impacts to sage-grouse from the disturbance before the core areas were delineated. The core area strategy is not designed to look backwards but rather to ensure all current and future projects have no impact on the birds.
- If the pre-existing disturbance (including fire) is $\geq 5\%$ or 1/640 no further projects are permitted. Douglas is the obvious exception - but the development there is private mineral on private land with pre-existing rights. The conservation plan for Douglas isn't perfect, but it should result in better habitat in that core area than if the development had never happened (because they are actively restoring the burned area which constitutes a large part of the pre-existing disturbance).
- Data from the BLM indicates that most of the core areas in WY are at a total of 2% disturbance or less.
- 12 of 31 core areas (39%) have no development projects

If you have any questions on this please let me know. Thanks to our state partners for their help!

pat

--

Pat Deibert, PhD
Certified Wildlife Biologist®
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5353 Yellowstone Road, Suite 308A
Cheyenne, WY 82009
307-772-2374, ext. 226

got leks?