

**From:** [Alt, Nicole](#)  
**To:** [Matt Kales](#); [Michael Thabault](#); [Pat Deibert](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Follow up from the Secretary's SENR Hearing  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 25, 2015 9:02:37 AM  
**Attachments:** [State plans bp 4-24-13 rev.doc](#)

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Here is the briefing paper from 2013 on this topic, so let me know if you are tackling this or if you'd like me to write the first draft.

Nicole

Nicole Alt  
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**From:** **BalisLarsen, Martha** <[martha\\_balislarsen@fws.gov](mailto:martha_balislarsen@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Wed, Feb 25, 2015 at 8:45 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Follow up from the Secretary's SENR Hearing  
**To:** Matt Kales <[matt\\_kales@fws.gov](mailto:matt_kales@fws.gov)>, Michael Thabault <[michael\\_thabault@fws.gov](mailto:michael_thabault@fws.gov)>, Nicole Alt <[Nicole\\_Alt@fws.gov](mailto:Nicole_Alt@fws.gov)>  
**Cc:** Gary Frazer <[Gary\\_Frazer@fws.gov](mailto:Gary_Frazer@fws.gov)>, Gina Shultz <[Gina\\_Shultz@fws.gov](mailto:Gina_Shultz@fws.gov)>, Chris Nolin <[chris\\_nolin@fws.gov](mailto:chris_nolin@fws.gov)>, Jocelyn Hunn <[jocelyn\\_hunn@fws.gov](mailto:jocelyn_hunn@fws.gov)>, Rachel Merkel <[Rachel\\_Merkel@fws.gov](mailto:Rachel_Merkel@fws.gov)>, Jeff Newman <[jeff\\_newman@fws.gov](mailto:jeff_newman@fws.gov)>, Tim Vannorman <[tim\\_vannorman@fws.gov](mailto:tim_vannorman@fws.gov)>, Douglas Krofta <[Douglas\\_Krofta@fws.gov](mailto:Douglas_Krofta@fws.gov)>

Matt, a response is needed ASAP for this afternoon's hearing: "2) Several Senators asked when the States will know if their State Sage Grouse plans are approved. Please provide some background on the process and the timing."

Thanks!

Martha

Martha Balis-Larsen  
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**From:** **Jocelyn Hunn** <[jocelyn\\_hunn@fws.gov](mailto:jocelyn_hunn@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Wed, Feb 25, 2015 at 10:40 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Follow up from the Secretary's SENR Hearing

To: "Nolin, Chris" <[chris\\_nolin@fws.gov](mailto:chris_nolin@fws.gov)>  
Cc: Martha BalisLarsen <[Martha\\_BalisLarsen@fws.gov](mailto:Martha_BalisLarsen@fws.gov)>

Kris Sarri at the sage grouse meeting that just concluded ask Gary if he could also respond to a question yesterday in the Secretary's hearing about whether we have funding available to proceed with our work on sage grouse. There is some confusion about what the rider means. Gary responded that we have the funding available to do everything, we are just prohibited from listing the sage grouse and affording it the protection of the ESA if it were warranted. They had asked for this before this afternoon's hearing as well.

Thanks

Sent from my iPad

On Feb 25, 2015, at 10:29 AM, "Nolin, Chris" <[chris\\_nolin@fws.gov](mailto:chris_nolin@fws.gov)> wrote:

Can you folks work in an answer? Thanks

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From: **Moss, Adrienne** <[adrienne\\_moss@ios.doi.gov](mailto:adrienne_moss@ios.doi.gov)>  
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2015  
Subject: Follow up from the Secretary's SENR Hearing  
To: Chris Nolin <[chris\\_nolin@fws.gov](mailto:chris_nolin@fws.gov)>, Jocelyn Hunn <[jocelyn\\_hunn@fws.gov](mailto:jocelyn_hunn@fws.gov)>  
Cc: "Kristen (Kris) Sarri" <[kristen\\_sarri@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kristen_sarri@ios.doi.gov)>, Olivia Ferriter <[olivia\\_ferriter@ios.doi.gov](mailto:olivia_ferriter@ios.doi.gov)>, Denise Flanagan <[Denise\\_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Denise_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov)>, Trish Hall <[Latricia\\_A\\_Hall@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Latricia_A_Hall@ios.doi.gov)>, steve farrell <[Steven\\_Farrell@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Steven_Farrell@ios.doi.gov)>, Jason Freihage <[jason\\_freihage@ios.doi.gov](mailto:jason_freihage@ios.doi.gov)>, "Joos, PatrickPatrick Joos" <[Patrick\\_Joos@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Patrick_Joos@ios.doi.gov)>

There was a question that kept coming up at the SENR hearing yesterday and it is likely to continue to come up at the Secretary's other hearings. Can you please provide us an answer for her to use?

2) Several Senators asked when the States will know if their State Sage Grouse plans are approved. Please provide some background on the process and the timing.

If there is a short answer for this afternoon's hearing that would be great. Thank you very much.

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Chris Nolin



April 23, 2013

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

FROM: Noreen Walsh, Regional Director, Mountain-Prairie Region

SUBJECT: Greater Sage-grouse and Service support for State conservation plans

I. SUMMARY

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has committed to working with each State within the range of the species to develop a comprehensive conservation plan to address threats to greater sage-grouse. Several states are close to completing their plans and are seeking the Service's concurrence or approval of their plans as they begin implementation.

II. DISCUSSION

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has committed to working with each State within the range of the species to develop a comprehensive conservation plan to provide for the species long-term conservation. Most of the States in the range of the species have exerted significant effort and leveraged significant resources to develop and finalize their state plans and have an expectation that the Service would "approve" state plans when they were completed.

The Service through our Ecological Services field offices in each state have worked with and provided technical assistance our State agency partners as they developed their plans and conservation strategies. With the completion of the Conservation Objectives Team final report we have committed to additional conversations with State agencies regarding their plans and the objectives outlined in the COT report.

While there is no mechanism in the Endangered Species Act or regulations to "approve" state conservation efforts, we need to recognize the efforts of the states and encourage their implementation of conservation efforts especially on State and private land. Of particular concern to the States is recognition of their conservation efforts and have some support for implementation from the Service in order to gain support for conservation efforts in their state and leverage funding. A track record of implementation of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms will be an important component to our 2015 analysis.

Further, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) included an option in their interim Instructional Memorandum (IM) that allows for the development and implementation of a state-specific IM based if the Service concurs with a state plan. BLM-Wyoming completed and implemented a state-specific IM based on Wyoming's Core Area Strategy. Through written correspondence, we recently supported Idaho's plan for the purposes of the development and implementation of an IM based on the Idaho state plan.

The recognition of state efforts can take many forms from approval, concurrence or support for implementation. The States view the letter sent from the Service's Wyoming Ecological Services field office to the State of Wyoming as their goal. However, this letter was sent in

2008, prior to the 2010 listing determination, and responded to very specific questions that were only relevant to that state. We do not recommend providing correspondence that formally approves or concurs with a State plan nor states whether State plan will preclude listing. We do recommend correspondence, assuming we agree, that supports the over goals and objectives of the plan for conservation. Then, as appropriate, provide support for those actions that we believe will achieve the goals and objectives stated in the plan and that address threats identified in the COT Report. If there are areas we believe may not be effective, do not address the threats, or be inconsistent with the conservation of the species, we should state that as well. Depending on timing and support for the plan, we may, as we did with Idaho, support BLM development and implementation of state-specific IM based on a state plan.

PREPARED BY: Michael Thabault

DATE: April 23, 2013