

From: [Mackey, Dennis](#)
To: [Kathleen Hendricks](#); [Jason Pyron](#); [Katie Powell](#)
Subject: Fwd: Greater Sage-grouse Great Basin Bi-Weekly Coordination Call: Signed Implementation Plan
Date: Monday, February 02, 2015 8:47:33 AM
Attachments: [Implementation Plan - SO 3336.pdf](#)

FYI...can you all be on the call? Thanks.

Dennis

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Davis, Dawn** <dawn_davis@fws.gov>
Date: Mon, Feb 2, 2015 at 9:23 AM
Subject: Greater Sage-grouse Great Basin Bi-Weekly Coordination Call: Signed Implementation Plan
To: Betsy Herrmann <betsy_herrmann@fws.gov>, Dennis Mackey <dennis_mackey@fws.gov>, Genevieve Skora <genevieve_skora@fws.gov>, Jason Pyron <jason_pyron@fws.gov>, Jay Martini <jay_martini@fws.gov>, Jeffrey Dillon <jeffrey_dillon@fws.gov>, Jesse DELia <jesse_delia@fws.gov>, Jessica Gonzales <jessica_gonzales@fws.gov>, Kathleen Hendricks <kathleen_hendricks@fws.gov>, Kathy Hollar <kathy_hollar@fws.gov>, Katie Powell <katie_powell@fws.gov>, Larry Crist <larry_crist@fws.gov>, Laura Romin <laura_romin@fws.gov>, Mary Grim <mary_grim@fws.gov>, Michael Carrier <michael_carrier@fws.gov>, Pat Deibert <pat_deibert@fws.gov>, Paul Henson <paul_henson@fws.gov>, Ted Koch <ted_koch@fws.gov>, Theresa Rabot <theresa_rabot@fws.gov>

All,

Just a reminder that the next Great Basin Bi-Weekly Coordination call is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 4, at 3 PM PST. Please plan to discuss the attached signed Implementation Plan for SO 3336 - Rangeland. This will be an opportunity for us to discuss achievements for ameliorating the threats of fire and invasives and identifying the gaps that still remain.

Thanks,


--

Dawn Davis, Ph.D.
Certified Wildlife Biologist ®
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Regional Office
911 NE 11th Avenue, 4th Floor, Portland, OR 97232
Office: 503.231.6194; Cell: 503.784.7429; FAX: 503.231.6243
dawn_davis@fws.gov

--


Dennis Mackey
Deputy State Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Boise, Idaho

Office: 208-378-5267
Cell: 208-860-1970



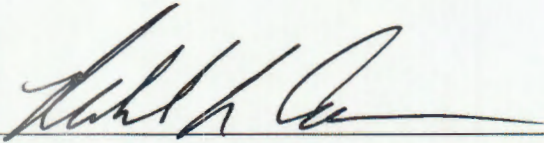
Implementation Plan

Secretarial Order 3336 – Rangeland
Fire Prevention, Management, and
Restoration

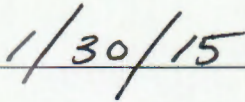


Page is intentionally blank

U. S. Department of the Interior Deputy Secretary Michael L. Connor, on behalf of the
Rangeland Fire Task Force, approves this Implementation Plan, as provided for by Secretarial
Order 3336 – Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management, and Restoration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Michael L. Connor', is written over a horizontal line.

Michael L. Connor, Deputy Secretary
U. S. Department of the Interior

A handwritten date '1/30/15' is written in dark ink over a horizontal line.

Date

Page is intentionally blank

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Background	1
Approach	2
Outreach to Stakeholders	2
Approach	2
Partners and Stakeholders	3
Tools and Methodology	3
Tribal Consultation Plan/Approach	4
Description	4
Goals of Tribal Consultation	4
Methodology	4
Integrated Fire Prevention, Suppression, and Restoration Strategy	6
Develop a science-based strategy to reduce the threat of large-scale rangeland fire to habitat for the greater sage-grouse and the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem.....	6
Minimum Additional Elements of the Initial and Final Reports	7
Section 7b (i)	7
Design and implement comprehensive, integrated fire response plans for the Fire and Invasives Assessment Team (FIAT) evaluation areas in the Great Basin that prioritize protection of low resilience landscapes most at-risk to detrimental impacts of fire and invasives.....	7
Section 7 b (ii)	9
Provide clear direction on the prioritization and allocation of fire management resources and assets.....	9
Section 7b (iii).....	10
Expand the focus on fuels reduction opportunities and implementation.	10
Section 7b (iv)	12
Fully integrate the emerging science of ecological resilience into design of habitat management, fuels management, and restoration projects.	12

Section 7b (v)	14
Review and update emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation policies and programs to integrate with long-term restoration activities.	14
Section 7b (vi)	15
Commit to multi-year investments for the restoration of sagebrush-steppe ecosystems, including consistent long-term monitoring protocols and adaptive management for restored areas.	15
Section 7b (vii)	16
Implement large-scale experimental activities to remove cheatgrass and other invasive annual grasses through various tools.	16
Section 7b (viii)	18
Commit to multi-year investments in science and research.	18
Section 7b (ix)	19
Develop a comprehensive strategy for acquisition, storage, and distribution of seeds and other plant materials.	19

Executive Summary

This Implementation Plan (“Plan”) is the roadmap to accomplish the objectives of Secretarial Order 3336 – Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management, and Restoration (“Order”), signed by Secretary Jewell on January 5, 2015. The Plan provides a short background describing the importance of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem and why the Order was issued.

The Plan lays out the timeline and methodology to be used in developing both the Initial report, due March 1, 2015, and the Final report, due May 1, 2015. It provides details on how the elements of Section 5 and each of the nine topics in Section 7(b) of the Order will be accomplished and discusses how we will engage with Tribes, States, and other partners and stakeholders throughout the implementation process and beyond, as part of a long-term integrated rangeland fire prevention, suppression, and restoration strategy.

Background

The accelerated invasion of non-native annual grasses, along with drought, and the effects of climate change, created conditions that are leading to increased threat of rangeland fires to the sagebrush landscape and the more than 350 species of birds, plants, and animals, including the golden eagle, mule deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope that rely on this critically important ecosystem. The threat of rangeland fire in the Great Basin region poses a particular threat to the continued viability of the greater sage-grouse – a species whose listing under the Endangered Species Act, by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) was found to be warranted in 2010 and, for which the FWS must make a final determination by the fall of 2015. Most importantly, the increased frequency and intensity of rangeland fire poses a significant threat to the many Tribal and local communities, ranchers, hunters, and others who live in, work, and/or value the iconic sagebrush-steppe landscape and who for generations have depended upon these lands and resources to sustain their way of life.

The Order places a priority on “protecting, conserving, and restoring the health of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem and, in particular, greater sage-grouse habitat, while maintaining safe and efficient operations,” and looks to the allocation of fire resources and assets associated with wildland fire to reflect that priority.

This Plan describes a strategy for developing enhanced policies and strategies for preventing and suppressing rangeland fire, controlling cheatgrass and other invasive grasses, and restoring sagebrush landscapes impacted by fire across the West. Efforts outlined in the Plan are built upon the experiences and successes of addressing rangeland fire, and broader wildland fire prevention, suppression, and restoration efforts to date, including the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The recent conference, *The Next Steppe: Sage-Grouse and Rangeland Fire in the Great Basin* brought together leading scientific researchers, national experts in wildland fire management, key policymakers, land managers, and stakeholders. The Conference provided important information on the means to improve rangeland fire prevention,

suppression, and the restoration of fire-impacted landscapes, and provided an additional and important source of knowledge, information, and expertise. This Plan also includes measures to ensure improved coordination with other Federal, Tribal, State, local, and regional efforts to address the threat of rangeland fire at a landscape level.

Approach

On January 12, 2015, Deputy Secretary Connor convened the first Task Force meeting to discuss the Order and provide direction to senior officials at the Department of the Interior (DOI). A Federal Interagency Working Group (Working Group) comprised of principal program area leadership met the week of January 20, 2015, to review the Order and build the Plan, due no later than February 1, 2015.

The Working Group used the ten elements of Section 5 of the Order as guiding principles and Section 6 as overarching expectations of the Task Force, as they focused on the nine specific topics identified in Section 7(b) of the Order. The Working Group held in-depth discussions on each of the nine topics and explored past and current activities, knowledge gaps, potential outcomes, science, opportunities to collaborate, and reasonable and achievable results.

The Task Force reviewed recommendations from the Working Group on January 27, 2015. This Plan identifies the issues, expected products, timeframes, and approach that each group will take to address the specific topics identified in Section 7(b) of the Order. The Initial (March 1, 2015) and Final (May 1, 2015) Reports will address the elements identified in Section 5 and the nine specific topics found in Section 7(b) of the Order to develop actions that can be implemented in conjunction with the 2015 fire season and beyond, respectively. The Working Group identified lead agencies for each element. Those agencies will work, in the coming weeks, collaboratively with various partners from the States, Tribes, other Federal agencies, and the private sector to identify and develop specific actions, tying those actions back to the guiding principles in Section 5, to implement the Order. As anticipated in Sections 5 and 6 of the Order, the actions identified in the two reports will be organized and presented as an integrated strategy to rangeland fire prevention, suppression, and restoration.

Implementation of the Order is the responsibility of the Task Force, supported by: 1) a Senior Steering Committee comprised of DOI senior leadership, 2) the Working Group, and 3) task groups that will focus on the specific elements and topics outlined in the Order.

Outreach to Stakeholders

Approach

The Working Group will take a three-pronged approach to engage with partners and stakeholders.

1. Topic leads will identify and reach out individually to partners, including Tribal consultations, to solicit input in drafting the reports.

2. The Working Group as a whole will engage with partners and stakeholders for feedback on draft documents as they are ready.
3. Members of the Senior Steering Committee and Rangeland Fire Task Force will engage directly with certain key partners immediately upon approval of the Plan and throughout the development of the reports.

Partners and Stakeholders

Partners, including Federal agencies in addition to DOI and their staffs, the offices of the Governors in states most threatened by rangeland fire (Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, and California) and their representatives, and the Intergovernmental Policy Group established by *The Next Steppe: Sage-Grouse and Rangeland Fire in the Great Basin* conference will be invited to participate as members of the task groups and will assist in the drafting of the Initial and Final Reports. Partner agencies include the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Forest Service (USFS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – U. S. Fire Administration (USFA).

Tribes will be consulted through formal government-to-government consultations and will be invited to participate on implementation task groups.

Stakeholders, those likely to be affected by the proposed actions and recommendations, will be identified by the individual task groups and the Working Group as a whole, and will include at a minimum those stakeholders identified in Section 6(c) of the Order, including State wildland fire agencies and programs; scientists; and local community-based fire organizations such as the rangeland fire protection associations, weed collaboratives, seed production organizations, soil and water conservation districts, and various stakeholder groups with interest and expertise in rangeland fire prevention, suppression, and restoration.

Tools and Methodology

The Working Group established several tools and plans to provide information to, and receive input from, partners and stakeholders throughout the development of the Initial and Final Reports including:

1. Webpage for posting public-facing documents, including draft documents for public comment: www.forestsandrangelands.gov;
2. A set of Key Themes and Questions and Answers regarding the Order and implementation process;
3. A monitored email account to field questions and comments at rangelandfire@ios.doi.gov;
4. Stakeholder engagement webinars on the Initial and Final Reports will be held the second half of February 2015 and in April 2015, respectively; and

5. The Working Group will also take advantage of existing meetings and may also schedule additional listening sessions via telephone or in-person to share draft documents and solicit individual feedback from stakeholders.

Once the Plan is approved, an email will be sent to partners and stakeholders announcing the opportunities to collaborate on the Initial and Final Reports. Continued outreach to *The Next Steppe: Sage-Grouse and Rangeland Fire in the Great Basin* conference participants will also occur throughout this process.

Who will implement: The Department Lead is the Deputy Assistant Secretary – Land and Minerals Management (DAS-ASLM).

Tribal Consultation Plan/Approach

Description

The Order requires a plan to consult and coordinate with affected Tribes. The entire Federal Government, including the DOI and USDA, has a responsibility to honor the sacred trust relationships by protecting tribal trust assets, and conducting consultation with Tribes on policies that have tribal implications (EO 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, Nov. 6, 2000).

Goals of Tribal Consultation

There are three main goals for consultation related to this Order: 1) develop a mechanism for continual tribal involvement in implementing the Order moving forward, 2) educate/inform Tribes about the Order, its genesis, and its implementation, and 3) gather and consider tribal input throughout the development of the Initial and Final Reports and into the future as subsequent actions are planned.

Methodology

- **Before Reports are Issued (between now and May 1, 2015)**
 - A Dear Tribal Leader Letter was issued on January 16, 2015, detailing listening session and government-to-government consultation opportunities;
 - A listening session is scheduled for February 4, 2015;
 - Two face-to-face tribal consultations are scheduled—in Portland, Oregon, on February 19, 2015, and in Reno, Nevada, on April 7, 2015; and
 - Tribes will be provided the same updates and information provided to Federal, State, and local partners and stakeholders.
- **May 1 to September 30, 2015 (after the Initial and Final Reports are issued)**
 - A Dear Tribal Leader Letter will be sent explaining how the Initial and Final Reports addressed their comments;

- A Webinar will be held to explain the Initial and Final Reports and next steps;
- Additional consultations, if deemed necessary, or requested; and
- Face-to-face meetings with specific Tribes, if requested.
- **2015, 2016 and Beyond**
 - Additional consultations, if deemed necessary, or requested;
 - Discussions at Inter-tribal meetings, (i.e., Alaskan Federation of Natives, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, Tribal-Interior Budget Council); and

Who will implement: **Department Lead** will be Assistant Secretary – PMB, with assistance from the Assistant Secretary – Land and Minerals Management (ASLM), and Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (ASIA).

This page is intentionally blank.

Integrated Fire Prevention, Suppression, and Restoration Strategy

Develop a science-based strategy to reduce the threat of large-scale rangeland fire to habitat for the greater sage-grouse and the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem.

Description: Deliver to the Secretary a science-based strategy to reduce the threat of large-scale rangeland fire to habitat for the greater sage-grouse and the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem through effective rangeland management (including the appropriate use of livestock), fire prevention, fire suppression, and post fire restoration efforts at a landscape scale.

This strategy will address actions outlined in Section 5 of the Order, including:

- Enhancing the capability and capacity of State, Tribal, and local government, as well as non-governmental fire management organizations, including rangeland fire protection associations and volunteer fire departments, through improved and expanded education and training.
- Improving coordination among all partners involved in rangeland fire management to further improve safety and effectiveness.
- Advancing the development and utilization of technologies for identifying areas of high ecological and habitat value in sagebrush-steppe ecosystems to enhance fire prevention and greater sage-grouse habitat protection efforts.
- Improving overall rangeland fire prevention, suppression and restoration efficiency and effectiveness.
- Piloting new strategies to reduce the threat of invasive, non-native plant species and rangeland fire to sagebrush-steppe ecosystems and greater sage-grouse conservation.
- Mechanisms to encourage continued collaboration and coordination of partners working at the regional, State, Tribal and local levels to advance efforts in the Great Basin to implement efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of rangeland fire prevention, fire suppression, and post fire restoration efforts at a landscape scale.
- Mechanisms for the distribution and effective communication of the findings and recommendations of this report in collaboration with partners to interested and affected stakeholders in the region.

This page is intentionally blank.

Minimum Additional Elements of the Initial and Final Reports

Section 7b (i)

Design and implement comprehensive, integrated fire response plans for the Fire and Invasives Assessment Team (FIAT) evaluation areas in the Great Basin that prioritize protection of low resilience landscapes most at-risk to detrimental impacts of fire and invasives.

Description: Apply risk based, cross-boundary approach to fire response planning and preparedness.

Products

Prior to the onset of the 2015 Western fire season

- Apply a risk-based approach to fire response; coordinate across jurisdictional boundaries; and review computer assisted pre-dispatch plans (WILDCAD) to assure initial attack response to identified critical sage-grouse areas.
- Units which manage critical sage-grouse habitat will develop a minimum draw-down level of resources which will clearly identify those suppression resources necessary in order to maintain an effective and aggressive initial attack capability.
- Develop additional guidance for the use of “severity funding” that provides specific sage-grouse stipulations to access funding and implement supplemental fire suppression resources.
- Provide national Leader’s Intent that directs all Federal agencies to implement the above outlined items and develop mechanisms to communicate that Intent to agency administrators, fire staffs, and incident management teams

During 2015

- Develop metrics for effectiveness monitoring of wildland fire response and reporting of success and/or failure as it pertains to Land Management Plans.

In 2016 and future years

- Conduct an annual review and update initial attack response and draw down levels.
- Incorporate the FIAT plans of work for fire suppression as part of revising Fire Management Plans in the FIAT areas as committed to the greater sage-grouse subregional environmental impact statement (EIS) amendments. Annual reporting of response effectiveness.

Methodology

The Lead Agency is BLM Fire and Aviation, who will work with other Federal fire leadership and supporting agencies and organizations (including local dispatch Board of Directors, local Federal agency fire management staffs, local Federal and state agency administrators, and local

fire departments [as applicable]) to develop issuance of national Leader's Intent document outlining the required process and products . Local dispatch centers will implement in collaboration with their partners and local leadership. National leadership will develop severity funding language and reporting metrics.

Section 7 b (ii)

Provide clear direction on the prioritization and allocation of fire management resources and assets.

Description: Includes direction on pre-fire readiness and guidance, criteria, and protocols for allocation of resources for fires that escape initial attack.

Products

Prior to the onset of the 2015 Western fire season

- Issue Federal agency leadership policy direction, and coordinate with States on commensurate State policy direction, on prioritization and allocation of fire management assets that can be tiered from national to geographic to local levels.
- Establish criteria for national, geographic, and local prioritization and allocation decisions.
- Develop criteria for ensuring level of resources necessary to maintain an effective and aggressive initial attack capability in units that manage critical greater sage-grouse habitat.
- Update and amend mobilization guides and protocols at all levels as needed.

During 2015

- Agency administrators at national, geographic, and local levels are actively engaged in reviewing and setting priorities.

In 2016 and future years

- Refine and update prioritization and allocation direction and protocols based on experience.

Methodology

The DOI and USFS national leadership will coordinate with partners and stakeholders to exchange information and ideas to develop overall direction and protocols. National leadership of Federal agencies will provide Leader's Intent and direction. The National Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group, Geographic Area MAC Groups, local Dispatch Board of Directors, Federal agency fire management staffs, and local agency administrators will implement the direction. Outreach on purpose and intent of the prioritization and allocation direction is a key aspect of the work.

This page is intentionally blank.

Section 7b (iii)

Expand the focus on fuels reduction opportunities and implementation.

Description: Coordination and integration of fuels reduction activities across programs (fire, fuels, and resources), agencies/bureaus, and landscapes to plan and implement fuels treatments. Fuels reduction work should: 1) incorporate resilience and resistance concepts; 2) be designed to contribute to sage-grouse habitat conservation and restoration; and 3) support fire operations and reduced fire size.

Products

During 2015, 2016 and future years

- Continue to identify, prioritize, and address scientific research needs related to fuels reduction and treatment implementation.
- Identify existing tools and plan landscape-level fuels treatments.
- Incorporate goals and directives for fuels reduction treatments into BLM Resource Management Plans for the Great Basin greater sage-grouse plans and other plans where applicable.
- Identify opportunities to leverage fire resources and funding on 2015 projects and to plan and implement future fuels treatments.
- Identify and implement pilot projects that capitalize on fuels reduction opportunities.
- Identify and begin to resolve NEPA barriers, including through programmatic landscape approaches.
- Apply a risk-based, landscape-scale tool to prioritize fuels work.
- Implement integrated fuels program of work.
- Build fuels work into landscape-scale restoration.
- Develop monitoring and assessment protocols to determine effectiveness of fuels reduction projects and influence future plans.
- Apply tools to plan and implement landscape-level fuels treatments that lead to restoration and conservation of sagebrush-steppe and greater sage-grouse habitat.

Methodology

The Lead Agency is BLM (Fire and Aviation) who will coordinate with the DOI interagency fuels committee and other partners (including Office of Wildland Fire, Solicitor's Office, USFS, USGS, USFA, Tribes, States, and NGOs) to: 1) develop a plan to review existing tools (e.g., Interagency Fuels Treatment Decision Support System) to help plan landscape-level fuels treatments, and develop guidelines for use of these tools; 2) identify actions to address barriers; 3) develop criteria and metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of fuels treatments, and 4) utilize

fuels program funding to promote fuels treatments that achieve the policy objectives of the Order.

Land management agencies will develop or enhance guidelines for integrating fuels and resources program work in sagebrush-steppe ecosystem.

Integrate fuels science needs with other science related tasked included in the Order.

Section 7b (iv)

Fully integrate the emerging science of ecological resilience into design of habitat management, fuels management, and restoration projects.

Description: Design management actions that utilize and integrate emerging scientific knowledge on ecological resistance and resilience thereby increasing the likelihood of sustaining greater sage-grouse habitat. Improve delivery and application of ecological resilience science to be used by land managers in habitat and fuels management, and restoration projects.

Products

During 2015

- Develop a directory of tech/science transfer groups and points of contact and directory of key NEPA subject matter experts.
- Inventory and review existing NEPA documents that incorporated principles and techniques of ecological resistance and resilience and emerging science.
- Identify best management practices (BMPs).
- Refine definition and understanding of what constitutes resilient and resistant greater sage-grouse habitat and what it means to apply resilience science to decision making at the site and landscape scales.
- Conduct a gap analysis of science and applied research capacity and identify policy needs.
- Commit to an adaptive management approach, including as a first priority development or refinement of monitoring protocols that will allow for a determination of whether management and restoration projects achieved desired objectives.

In 2016 and future years

- Enhance linkages and capacity within science and tech transfer groups.
- Enhance science delivery capability such as a science clearing house.
- Finalize BMPs for integrating ecological resilience science into the design of habitat management, fuels management, and restoration projects.
- Plan for ensuring accountability and recommended funding mechanisms.

Methodology

The BLM, in collaboration with USFS, will engage existing coordination groups and teams to initiate discussions on NEPA. BLM, USGS, and the USFS will together initiate discussions on resilience and resistance concepts, and integration of concepts with management actions. Many of these assessments have been completed; leverage off these efforts. Examine opportunities to

connect to the BLM Planning 2.0 effort. Establish timelines and document key principles/techniques to improve integration of science into on the ground actions.

Section 7b (v)

Review and update emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation policies and programs to integrate with long-term restoration activities.

Description: Address funding, project prioritization, seeding, and resource issues to better integrate emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation activities with long-term restoration activities.

Products

Prior to the onset of the 2015 Western fire season

- Address funding continuity across fiscal years to avoid project work stoppage (e.g., acquisition and financial management constraints).
- Update and refine project prioritization criteria.
- Issue interim policy guidance to clarify funding, time, and program scope.

During 2015

- Explore options for additional resource needs to complete projects.
- Explore efficiencies in seeding operations.

In 2016 and future years

- Update Department Manual with associated handbook, including interim policy guidance.
- Ensure research and technology information is incorporated into projects.
- Address effectiveness monitoring program to provide adaptive management feedback.

Methodology

The Interior Burned Area Response (IBAER) National Coordinators for the BLM, FWS, NPS, and BIA will lead the implementation of these products, in cooperation with the USFS National BAER coordinator and the OWF liaison.

Section 7b (vi)

Commit to multi-year investments for the restoration of sagebrush-steppe ecosystems, including consistent long-term monitoring protocols and adaptive management for restored areas.

Description: Improve and strengthen interagency coordination and organization of existing, ongoing restoration activities and take steps to expand multi-year investments within the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem.

Products

During 2015

- Establish standing team(s) to provide executive and staff level coordination to enhance integration and commitment to long-term, multi-year restoration investments, including associated effectiveness monitoring and adaptive management within the sagebrush-steppe ecosystems.
- Document BLM, NPS, BIA, USGS, and FWS activities to execute their commitments to long-term, multi-year restoration investments, including associated effectiveness monitoring, data management and integration, and adaptive management, within the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem.
- Facilitate and support a cross jurisdictional consortium of agencies and organizations dedicated to robust, experimental research and development of resulting management tools necessary to execute restoration activities leading to a healthy ecosystem.

In 2016 and future years

- Develop policies and procedures that simplify implementation of multi-year restoration projects, including associated effectiveness monitoring and adaptive management.

Methodology

The BLM (Resources) will work with other DOI bureaus and USFS and NRCS to build a team comprised of managers, budget officers, and restoration and monitoring specialists from across the DOI and its bureaus that are tasked to address how to improve and strengthen interagency coordination and the organization of existing, ongoing restoration activities and take steps to expand multi-year investments within the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem.

Section 7b (vii)

Implement large-scale experimental activities to remove cheatgrass and other invasive annual grasses through various tools.

Description: Develop and identify appropriate tools and design experimental treatments to reduce and remove cheatgrass and other invasives from key sagebrush-steppe plant communities at a landscape scale. Plan, implement, and evaluate landscape scale removal activities and subsequent restoration activities.

Products

During 2015

- Continue early detection and rapid response efforts to address spread of invasives.
- Initiate and finalize assessment of all available (biological, physical, and chemical) cheatgrass control measures and subsequent restoration treatments.
- Identify opportunities to accelerate efforts to obtain Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approval for use of effective cheatgrass control measures and herbicides where EPA registration and labeling is currently lacking.
- Identify efforts, as applicable with the ongoing BLM Vegetative Treatments Programmatic EIS.
- Identify funding sources, suitable locations, and key agency partners to conduct experimental testing of promising measures. Begin planning of pilot projects that progress from laboratory and small-plot tests to larger scale applications in the field. Identify ways to streamline NEPA for pilot treatments.

In 2016 and future years

- Solicit and review experimental designs for control of invasive annual grasses and subsequent restoration.
- Approve and initiate experimental treatments as well as monitoring.
- Develop a standardized long-term monitoring protocol to determine effectiveness of treatments.
- Develop a process to coordinate with the EPA to register and label new invasive grass control agents (biological and chemical).

Methodology

The BLM, USGS, and FWS, in collaboration and coordination with USFS, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), DOI Invasive Species Coordinator, DOI Bureau Invasive Species Coordinators, Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP), and Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative (GB LCC) will implement an aggressive all-lands approach by integrated project

teams to assess, evaluate and build on existing work and results from the experimental treatments and proceed expeditiously.

Section 7b (viii)

Commit to multi-year investments in science and research.

Description: Scientific information is needed to support management and policy decisions to protect, conserve, and restore the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem, and in particular, greater sage-grouse habitat. A comprehensive research strategy will be developed to identify science gaps and priority research and monitoring needs in direct support of resource management issues. The strategy will be used to direct regular and recurring investments in scientific research and information delivery.

Products

During 2015

- Organize an interagency team, define scope and timeline, and resources needed to support the Order.
- Identify science capabilities with expertise to address fire, invasives, sage-grouse biology, and sagebrush-steppe ecosystem, and landscape scale restoration.
- Identify ongoing research and resources committed in FY 2015 and plans for FY 2016.
- Complete prioritization of restoration/rehabilitation research needs identified in the BLM/USGS July 2014 workshop.
- Review and categorize research needs identified in existing assessments, plans, and strategies

In 2016 and future years

- Create a research strategy of prioritized research and monitoring needs for fire and invasives relative to sagebrush-steppe ecosystems and greater sage-grouse conservation.
- Initiate highest priority research efforts and opportunities for collaboration.
- Develop efficient and effective mechanisms for science delivery to management practitioners.
- Develop a prioritization process for senior agency leadership to review and support priority research.
- Identify potential funding sources and seek new funding opportunities to support critical research priorities.

Methodology

The USGS will collaborate and coordinate with the DOI Science Coordinator and Science Advisors, BLM, FWS, USFS, NRCS, and other research and management agencies to identify and prioritize research and monitoring needs, articulate Department and agency commitment and involvement, communicate ongoing research efforts, and identify mechanisms for moving from a list of needs to a strategy.

Section 7b (ix)

Develop a comprehensive strategy for acquisition, storage, and distribution of seeds and other plant materials.

Description: Provide land management agencies the tools to address ecological restoration including acquisition, storage, and distribution of seed and other plant materials, utilizing locally-adapted seeds and native plant materials as appropriate to the location, conditions, and management objectives for vegetation management and restoration.

Products

Prior to the onset of the 2015 Western fire season

- Complete a draft National Seed Strategy and make available for review and comment.

During 2015

- Finalize the National Seed Strategy and associated business plan, which will describe what is needed to implement the Strategy.

In 2016 and future years

- Prepare a needs and capacity assessment to increase production, storage capacity, and use of appropriate seed and plant materials.
- Characterize genetic variation for restoration of species and seed zones delineated.
- Develop procurement tools to facilitate multiagency acquisition, as well as develop guidelines for appropriate use of plant materials.

Methodology

The BLM (current chair of Plant Conservation Alliance Federal Committee), with support from other offices within the BLM, BIA, Federal Highway Administration, NPS, Smithsonian Institution, U. S. Botanical Garden, USDA Agricultural Research Service, USFS, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, NRCS, FWS, USGS, and relevant States will develop the draft and final National Seed Strategy, and work towards implementation of that strategy.

This page is intentionally blank.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

SECRETARIAL ORDER 3336 – RANGELAND FIRE PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT, AND RESTORATION

January 30, 2015