

From: [Heather Johnson](#)
To: [Bill Noonan](#); [Dominic Barrett](#); [Greg Neudecker](#); [karl.fleming](#); [Kenny Dinan](#); [Kurt Forman](#); [Mark J Hogan](#); [Michael Disney](#); [Scott Mcleod](#)
Subject: FW: R1 Fire Management and the Secretaries Sage Grouse Order
Date: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 8:33:28 AM
Attachments: [Informal Transmittal Sec Order No. 3336.Operations.Suppression.Preparedness.docx](#)
[Final-Rangeland-SO-greater \(1\).pdf](#)
[Secretary Jewell Launches Comprehensive Strategy to Protect and Restore Sagebrush Lands Threatened by Rangeland Fire.pdf](#)
[Sage Grouse FIAT_small.pdf](#)

FYI

Heather

Heather Johnson
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134 Union Blvd., Suite 300
Lakewood, CO. 80228

Heather_johnson@fws.gov
303-236-4316

From: DElia, Jesse [mailto:jesse_delia@fws.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 5:04 PM
To: FW6 Sage-grouse Biologists; FW6 Sage-grouse FMT
Subject: Fwd: R1 Fire Management and the Secretaries Sage Grouse Order

FYI

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

From: **Fay, Brett** <brett_fay@fws.gov>
Date: Wed, Jan 14, 2015 at 8:54 AM
Subject: R1 Fire Management and the Secretaries Sage Grouse Order
To: John Kasbohm <john_kasbohm@fws.gov>, Shannon Ludwig <shannon_ludwig@fws.gov>, Tracy Casselman <Tracy_Casselman@fws.gov>, Chad Karges <chad_karges@fws.gov>, Shane Theall <shane_theall@fws.gov>, Betsy Schenk <Betsy_Schenk@fws.gov>, Andrew Taylor <Andrew_Taylor@fws.gov>
Cc: Kevin Foerster <kevin_foerster@fws.gov>, Kim Trust <kim_trust@fws.gov>, ICE Cyndi Sidles <cyndi_sidles@fws.gov>, Brian Gales <brian_gales@fws.gov>, Jesse DElia <jesse_delia@fws.gov>, John Segar <John_Segar@fws.gov>, Kim VanHemelryck <Kim_VanHemelryck@fws.gov>

Hello,

Our capability to prepare and respond to fires that threaten Greater Sage-Grouse (GSG) habitat is critical. The DOI Secretaries order 3336 identifies specific actions needed to make sure we are ready to minimize the threat from wildfire to GSG habitat. The BLM has come up with the attached management recommendations and our National Fire Office feels we will likely follow the same direction. Here are a few things to consider:

1. Are there fuel treatments that are unfunded that could be completed to reduce the threat to GSG habitat (FIAT mapped areas) this year.

2. Do you see any barriers to providing the fire response capability at the level identified under the draft budget for this year? If so, what would help to meet that capability.
3. Are there specific actions or resources in existing plans that would provide more effective fire response this fire season?

The fire portion of the GSG issue will continue to "heat-up" over the the next few months and we need to be prepared to describe what we have done to be wildfire ready. Continue your close coordination with the your local BLM office on these issues to provide a coordinated effort.

Please take look at the attachments and John Segar's note below.

Please let me know your thoughts and if you have any questions.

Brett Fay
Acting Regional Fire Management Coordinator
US Fish and Wildlife Service - Pacific Region
911 NE 11th Ave, Portland Or 97232

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Cell: 503-347-8194

Brett_Fay@fws.gov

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

From: **Segar, John** <john_segar@fws.gov>

Date: Mon, Jan 12, 2015 at 2:29 PM

Subject: Fwd: Sage Grouse Order...

To: Brett Fay <Brett_Fay@fws.gov>, Michael Haydon <michael_haydon@fws.gov>, Jessica Wade <Jessica_Wade@fws.gov>

Cc: Robert Eaton <robert_eaton@fws.gov>, Chris Wilcox <Chris_Wilcox@fws.gov>, Kevin Conn <Kevin_Conn@fws.gov>, Kim VanHemelryck <Kim_VanHemelryck@fws.gov>

I've attached BLMs guidance to the field regarding sage grouse preparations for the fire season. My bet is that DOI will require these preps for all DOI units that fall within the FIATs (high priority areas - primarily R1 and possibly parts of R8) -- and possibly any area with sage grouse habitat which would bring in parts of R6. Nothing earth shattering here, but there will be added accountability and monitoring. I'd suggest making your FMOs aware and encouraging them to get ahead of this.

I will probably come out with something more formal in the future, but I'd appreciate it if you let me know if you are anticipating any of the following situations in units with Sage Grouse:

1. Units where you can't meet the staffing levels required by the step-up, preparedness, or Fire Management Plans
2. Unfunded prescribed fires or fuel breaks which would significantly reduce the risk of large fires in sage grouse habitat.
3. Other sage grouse issues or situations where we could be perceived as not doing all possible to protect SG

This info will help me as discussions and requirements ramp up in DOI. Also, if you haven't done so already, please establish contact with your Region's SG SME and make sure there are

open communications so that you don't get blindsided by things coming the ES channels.

Expect a lot more discussion about all of this in the next few weeks. John

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

From: **Glenn, John** <jglenn@blm.gov>

Date: Mon, Jan 12, 2015 at 10:32 AM

Subject: Sage Grouse Order...

To: 10Gage <sgage@fs.fed.us>, "cc: Alex Baldwin" <aaron.baldwin@bia.gov>, Dangerous Dan <desmith@blm.gov>, Igor <abidaburu@fs.fed.us>, John Cigar <John_Segar@fws.gov>, MK <mark_koontz@nps.gov>

NMAC Members:

Please see the attachment... Here are some items we (BLM Fire Operations) have been working on the address the Sec Order on Sage Grouse... I believe it may have some national/interagency applicability to our meeting(s) with OWF/WO FS...

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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
National Fire Operations FA-300



Informal Transmittal

January 6, 2015

To: Acting AD, Fire/Aviation (Ron Dunton)

Through: DAD, Fire/Aviation (Howard Hedrick)

From: Division Chief, Fire Operations (John Glenn)

Subject: Today's Conference Call, Secretary of the Interior Reference Order No 3336, Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management and Restoration

Reference: Sec. 7bii "Provide clear direction on the prioritization and allocation of fire management resources and assets"

Recommendation #1

What: Assure local Multi-Agency Coordination Groups are functional and plans are in place at the local/District level in all FIAT units (Reference "prioritization and allocation")

When: May 1, 2015

Who: District Fire Management Office, reviewed by Assistant State Fire Management Officer (Operations)

Why: Reference "prioritization and allocation"

Follow-up Actions: State Fire Management Officer review/assurance State Director and AD Fire/Aviation Boise

Recommendation #2

What: Review Preparedness Action Plans (reference 10-1 Interagency Standards for Fire Operations aka Red Book) to assure initial attack response to critical Sage Grouse areas (critical winter range, leks, brooding areas, nesting areas) meets Sec Order No 3336 intent for FIAT Districts in BLM

- Initial Response Plan (aka run card, computer assisted dispatch, WILDCAD)
- Staffing plan (aka Step-up Plan)
- Fire Prevention Plan
- Wildfire Decision Support Plan
- Fire Danger Operating Plan (National Fire Danger Rating System)
- Preparedness Level Plans

When: May 1, 2015

Who: District Fire Management Office, reviewed by Assistant State Fire Management Officer (Operations)

Why: Reference "prioritization and allocation"

Follow-up Actions: State Fire Management Officer review/assurance to State Director and AD Fire/Aviation Boise

Recommendation #3

What: Assure initial attack draw-down levels are functional, implemented and plans are in place at the local/District level in all FIAT units, (reference Red Book, 19-4).

When: May 1, 2015

Who: District Fire Management Office, reviewed by Assistant State Fire Management Officer (Operations)

Why: Reference “prioritization and allocation”

Follow-up Actions: State Fire Management Officer review/assurance to State Director and AD Fire/Aviation Boise

Recommendation #4

What: Assure Fire Management Officers in FIAT Districts understand and implement State/ National Severity and Preposition funding when needed (reference Red Book 2-31)

When: May 1, 2015

Who: District Fire Management Office, reviewed by Assistant State Fire Management Officer (Operations)

Why: Reference “prioritization and allocation”

Follow-up Actions: State Fire Management Officer review/assurance to State Director and AD Fire/Aviation Boise

Recommendation #5

What: As Alaska, New Mexico, Arizona fire resources become available in mid-fire (Great Basin) season (Engines, Smoke Jumpers, Helicopters, Misc Overhead, Aircraft, IHCs, etc); assess possible priority placement/reposition to Great Basin Sage-Grouse PPH areas

When: 2015

Who: BLM Fire Operations Group

Why: Focus on maintaining initial attack success rate, capabilities and preservation of Sage-Grouse Priority Habitat (CA, UT, NV, ID, OR)

Follow-up Actions: Tracking by FOG, Suppression/Preparedness Chief (Jeff Arnberger) to Division Chief Ops, DAD, AD on internal resource movements

Recommendation #6

What: Initial Response Draw down assessments in Sage-Grouse FIAT Districts (CA, NV, UT, ID, OR)

When: Over the fire season

Who: BLM Fire Operations Group

Why: Focus on maintaining initial attack success rate (CA, UT, NV, ID, OR)

Follow-up Actions: Report out as requested by Suppression/Preparedness Chief (Jeff Arnberger) to Division Chief Ops, DAD, AD on draw down levels

Recommendation #7

What: Monitor three million dollar add-on, 75% distributed to (CA, UT, NV, OR, ID) for preparedness activities, 25% held in reserve at National Office :

- Must be utilized to support Sage-Grouse FIAT Districts
- Distribution based on percentage of Sage Grouse PPH areas (BLM acres) in each FIAT state
- Applicable only to FY-15 preparedness activities
- May be utilized for prepositioning/supplemental resources, overtime, call-when-needed resources, applicable contract resources, back-filling, pre-fire break/line construction etc

When: Distribution in 2015

Who: BLM National Office Budget (Lead) coordination with Ops/Aviation

Why: Boost/maintain initial attack resources, success rate and preservation of Sage-Grouse FIAT Districts (CA, UT, NV, ID, OR)

Follow-up Actions: FOG monitors funding, end of year report out (\$\$\$ spend, resources moved and after action review)

Recommendation #8

What: Develop strategic fuels break plans to prevent large fires in FIAT Districts

When: May 1, 2015

Who: District Fire Management Officer

Why: Focus on the 2% of wildland fires that escape initial attack in FIAT Districts

Follow-up Actions: Implement plans



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

ORDER NO. 3336

Subject: Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management and Restoration

Sec. 1 Purpose. This Order sets forth enhanced policies and strategies for preventing and suppressing rangeland fire and for restoring sagebrush landscapes impacted by fire across the West. These actions are essential for conserving habitat for the greater sage-grouse as well as other wildlife species and economic activity, such as ranching and recreation, associated with the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem in the Great Basin region. This effort will build upon the experience and success of addressing rangeland fire, and broader wildland fire prevention, suppression and restoration efforts to date, including the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, and ensure improved coordination with local, state, tribal, and regional efforts to address the threat of rangeland fire at a landscape-level.

Sec. 2 Background. The Department of the Interior is entrusted with overseeing the management of Federal lands for the benefit of current and future generations as well as the protection and recovery of imperiled species of flora and fauna and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Rangeland fires in the Great Basin of the Western United States have increased in size and intensity in recent years. The accelerated invasion of non-native annual grasses, in particular cheatgrass and medusahead rye, and the spread of pinyon-juniper across the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem, along with drought and the effects of climate change, have created conditions that have led to the increased threat of rangeland fires to the sagebrush landscape and the more than 350 species of plants and animals, such as mule deer and pronghorn antelope, that rely on this critically important ecosystem. As a result, the increasing frequency and intensity of rangeland fire also poses a significant threat to ranchers, livestock managers, sportsmen, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts who use the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem, and puts at risk their associated economic contributions across this landscape that support and maintain the American way of life in the West.

In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) found that the invasion of annual grasses and the loss of habitat from fire in the Great Basin is a significant threat to the greater sage-grouse in that portion of its remaining range. The USFWS is now considering whether protections under the Endangered Species Act are warranted. In response to this finding, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service are currently undertaking land use plan revisions and amendments to incorporate appropriate conservation measures to conserve, enhance, and restore greater sage-grouse habitat by reducing, eliminating, or minimizing threats to that habitat. More targeted actions to reduce the likelihood and severity of fire, to stem the spread of invasive species, and to restore the health and resilience of the landscape are necessary to preserve, protect, and restore greater sage-grouse habitat in the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem, and address important public safety, economic, cultural, and social concerns. This includes enhanced coordination and collaboration with partners and stakeholders, including rangeland fire protection associations.

Sec. 3 Authorities. This Order is issued under the authority of Section 2 of Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1950 (64 Stat.1262), as amended. Other statutory authorities related to this Order include

and are not limited to the following:

- a. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*
- b. The Endangered Species Act (ESA), 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*
- c. The Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 715 *et seq.*
- d. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act, 16 U.S.C. 3701 *et seq.*
- e. The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*
- f. The Federal Land and Policy Management Act (FLPMA), 43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*
- g. The Federal Land Assistance Management and Enhancement Act of 2009, Title V of Division A of P.L. 111-88.

Sec. 4 Policy. Protecting, conserving, and restoring the health of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem and, in particular, greater sage-grouse habitat, while maintaining safe and efficient operations, is a critical fire management priority for the Department. Allocation of fire management resources and assets before, during, and after wildland fire incidents will reflect this priority, as will investments related to restoration activities.

Sec. 5 Developing an Enhanced Fire Prevention, Suppression, and Restoration Strategy. To accomplish protection, conservation, and restoration of greater sage-grouse habitat the Department, through the Rangeland Fire Task Force established in accordance with Section 6, will:

- a. Work cooperatively and collaboratively with other Federal agencies, states, tribes, local stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations on fire management and habitat restoration activities, including: (i) 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; and (ii) Improving coordination among all partners involved in rangeland fire management to further improve safety and effectiveness.

- b. Utilize risk-based, landscape-scale approaches to identify and facilitate investments in fuels treatments, fire suppression capabilities, and post-fire stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration in the Great Basin.

- c. Seek to reduce the likelihood, size, and severity of rangeland fires by addressing the spread of cheatgrass and other invasive, non-native species.

- d. Commit wildland fire management resources and assets to prepare for and respond to rangeland fires.

e. Advance the development and utilization of technologies for identifying areas of high ecological and habitat value in sagebrush-steppe ecosystems to enhance fire prevention and sage-grouse habitat protection efforts.

f. Apply science and research to improve the identification and protection of resistant and resilient sagebrush-steppe landscapes and the development of biocontrols and other tools for cheatgrass control to improve capability for long-term restoration of sagebrush-steppe ecosystems.

g. To the extent practicable, utilize locally-adapted seeds and native plant materials appropriate to the location, conditions, and management objectives for vegetation management and restoration activities, including strategic sourcing for acquiring, storing, and utilizing genetically-appropriate seeds and other plant materials native to the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem.

h. Encourage efforts to expedite processes, streamline procedures, and promote innovations that can improve overall rangeland fire prevention, suppression and restoration efficiency and effectiveness.

i. Explore opportunities to pilot new strategies to reduce the threat of invasive, non-native plant species and rangeland fire to sagebrush-steppe ecosystems and greater sage-grouse conservation, including enhanced use of veteran fire crews and youth conservation teams, and efforts to further public-private partnerships to expand capacity for improved fire management.

j. Establish protocols for monitoring the effectiveness of fuels management, post-fire, and long-term restoration treatments and a strategy for adaptive management to modify management practices or improve land treatments when necessary.

Sec. 6 Rangeland Fire Task Force. A Rangeland Fire Task Force (Task Force) is hereby established and is chaired by the Deputy Secretary. Members of the Task Force shall include: Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget, Assistant Secretary – Land and Minerals Management, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Assistant Secretary – Water and Science, and Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs. The Task Force will do the following:

a. 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 through effective rangeland management (including the appropriate use of livestock), fire prevention, fire suppression, and post-fire restoration efforts at a landscape scale.

b. Conduct a comprehensive review of the existing programs, policies, and practices associated with current efforts to prevent, suppress, and restore rangeland fire-impacted sagebrush-steppe, including the outcomes of the recent rangeland fire conference *The Next Steppe: Sage-grouse and Rangeland Fire in the Great Basin*, and utilize the experience of the conference participants; and the expertise of the practitioners and senior policy groups in this effort.

c. Seek input from the U.S. Geological Survey and individual Bureau Fire Directors in the Department; the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the

Department of Agriculture; various state wildland fire agencies and programs; the offices of the governors in the states most threatened by rangeland fire, including California, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, and Idaho, as well as the Western Governors' Association; affected American Indian tribes; scientists; and local, community-based fire organizations such as the rangeland fire protection associations, weed collaboratives, native seed production organizations, soil and water conservation districts, and various stakeholder groups with interest and expertise in rangeland fire prevention, suppression, and rangeland restoration.

Sec. 7 Implementation Plan, Deliverables and Report.

a. No later than February 1, 2015, the Task Force will provide a detailed plan for implementing this Order that includes a process for tribal consultation.

b. The Task Force will provide to the Secretary two reports that outline actions that can be accomplished prior to the onset of the 2015 Western fire season, actions that can be accomplished prior to the onset of the 2016 Western fire season, and actions that will require a longer period for implementation. At a minimum, these actions are to include the following:

- (i) Design and implement comprehensive, integrated fire response plans for the Fire and Invasives Assessment Tool evaluation areas in the Great Basin subject to fire and invasive species;
- (ii) Provide clear direction on the prioritization and allocation of fire management resources and assets;
- (iii) Expand the focus on fuels reduction opportunities and implementation;
- (iv) Fully integrate the emerging science of ecological resilience into design of habitat management, fuels management, and restoration projects;
- (v) Review and update emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation policies and programs to integrate with long-term restoration activities;
- (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;
- (vii) Implement large-scale experimental activities to remove cheatgrass and other invasive annual grasses through various tools;
- (viii) Commit to multi-year investments in science and research; and
- (ix) Develop a comprehensive strategy for acquisition, storage, and distribution of seeds and other plant materials.

c. No later than March 1, 2015, the Task Force will present its initial report on actions that will be implemented prior to the 2015 Western fire season. Individual bureaus are also encouraged to take immediate action to implement improvements within their respective areas of responsibility before the initial report is issued.

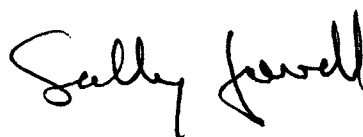
d. No later than May 1, 2015, the Task Force will present its final report on activities that will be implemented prior to the 2016 Western fire season, and longer term actions to implement the policy and strategy set forth in this Order, including to ensure continued implementation of approved actions associated with the strategy.

Sec. 8 Implementation. The Deputy Secretary is responsible for implementing all aspects of this Order. This responsibility may be delegated as appropriate. This Order does not alter or affect any existing duty or authority of individual Assistant Secretaries or bureaus.

Sec. 9 Effect of the Order. This Order is intended to improve the internal management of the

Department. This Order and any resulting report or recommendations are not intended to, and do not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person. To the extent there is any inconsistency between the provisions of this Order and any Federal laws or regulations, the laws or regulations will control.

Sec. 10 Expiration Date. This Order is effective immediately. It will remain in effect until its provisions are converted to the Departmental Manual, or until it is amended, superseded or revoked, whichever occurs first.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sally Jewell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Secretary of the Interior

Date: **JAN 5** 2015

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U.S. Department of the Interior

Secretary Jewell Launches Comprehensive Strategy to Protect and Restore Sagebrush Lands Threatened by Rangeland Fire

U.S. Department of the Interior sent this bulletin at 01/06/2015 11:00 AM EST



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**U.S. Department
of the Interior**

www.doi.gov

News Release

Date: January 6, 2015

Contact: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

Secretary Jewell Launches Comprehensive Strategy to Protect and Restore Sagebrush Lands Threatened by Rangeland Fire

Builds on work with federal, state, tribal and non-government partners to protect economic activity and wildlife habitat vital to the Western way of life

WASHINGTON, DC – Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell today issued a [Secretarial Order](#) calling for a comprehensive science-based strategy to address the more frequent and intense wildfires that are damaging vital sagebrush landscapes and productive rangelands, particularly in the Great Basin region of Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Oregon and California.

The strategy will begin to be implemented during the 2015 fire season. Goals include reducing the size, severity and cost of rangeland fires, addressing the spread of cheatgrass and other invasive species, and positioning wildland fire management resources for more effective rangeland fire response.

“Targeted action is urgently needed to conserve habitat for the greater sage-grouse and other wildlife in the Great Basin, as well as to maintain ranching and recreation economies that depend on sagebrush landscapes,” said Secretary Jewell. “The Secretarial Order further demonstrates our strong commitment to work with our federal, state, tribal and community partners to reduce the likelihood and severity of rangeland fire, stem the spread of invasive species, and restore the health and resilience of sagebrush ecosystems.”

The Secretarial Order establishes a top-level Rangeland Fire Task Force, chaired by Interior’s Deputy Secretary Mike Connor, includes five assistant secretaries, and lays out the goals and timelines for completing the Task Force’s work.

The Task Force will work with other federal agencies, states, tribes, local entities and non-governmental groups on fire management and habitat restoration activities. This includes enhancing the capability and capacity of our partners’ fire

management organizations through improved and expanded education and training. The Task Force also will encourage improved coordination among all partners involved in rangeland fire management to further improve safety and effectiveness.

The Order builds on wildland fire prevention, suppression and restoration efforts to date, including the [National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#), which provides a roadmap for achieving “all hands—all lands” cooperation, and the President’s wildland fire budget proposal to change how fire suppression costs are budgeted to treat extreme fire seasons the way other emergency disasters are treated. The budget proposal would provide greater certainty in addressing growing fire suppression needs while better safeguarding prevention and other non-suppression programs, such as fuels reduction and post-fire rehabilitation.

The accelerated invasion of non-native grasses and the spread of pinyon-juniper, along with drought and the effects of climate change, increased the threat of rangeland fires to the sagebrush landscape and the more than 350 species of plants and animals, such as mule deer and pronghorn, that rely on this critically important ecosystem. The increasing frequency and intensity of rangeland fire in sagebrush ecosystems has significantly damaged the landscape on which ranchers, livestock managers, hunters and outdoor recreation enthusiasts rely. This unnatural fire cycle puts at risk their economic contributions across this landscape that support and maintain the Western way of life in America.

Efforts to conserve and protect sagebrush habitat are the centerpiece of an historic campaign to address threats to greater sage-grouse prior to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s court-ordered 2015 deadline whether to propose the bird for Endangered Species Act protection.

Secretary Jewell is working with Western governors to improve wildland fire-fighting capacity at all levels, highlighting the proactive voluntary partnership with ranchers, farmers and other landowners to conserve the sagebrush landscape on private and public lands. Interior’s November 5-7, 2014, conference in Idaho, [The Next Steppe: Sage-grouse and Rangeland Fire in the Great Basin](#), brought together fire experts and land managers at the federal, state and local levels who underscored the need for a comprehensive, landscape-scale strategy to rangeland fire suppression and prevention.

At the December 6, 2014, Western Governors’ Association winter meeting, Jewell directed her Department’s leadership to develop a comprehensive strategy to fight rangeland fire with an eye toward protecting rural communities, sagebrush landscapes and habitats essential to the conservation of the sage-grouse and other wildlife.

“These efforts will help Governors, state, tribal and local fire authorities, and those landowners on the ground – including rangeland fire protection associations and rural volunteer fire departments – make sure they have the information, training and tools to more effectively fight the threat of rangeland fires,” said Jewell. “To protect these landscapes for economic activity and wildlife like the greater sage-grouse, we need a three-pronged approach that includes strong federal land management plans, strong state plans, and an effective plan to address the threat of rangeland fire.”

Because about 64 percent of the greater sage-grouse’s 165 million acres of occupied range is on federally managed lands, Interior’s Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Agriculture’s U.S. Forest Service are currently analyzing amendments to existing land use plans to incorporate appropriate conservation measures to conserve, enhance and restore greater sage-grouse habitat by reducing, eliminating or minimizing threats to the habitat.

State and private lands, which make up a significant portion of the priority and general habitat for the greater sage-grouse, are also critical for the species. As a result, the Department is working in an unprecedented partnership with the states to provide strong habitat protection and conservation measures on the lands they administer. As part of her efforts with Western governors, Secretary Jewell encouraged, assisted and highlighted the proactive, voluntary state and federal partnership with ranchers, farmers and other landowners to conserve the sagebrush landscape on private and public lands.

The rangeland fire Secretarial Order will help frame the third part of the greater sage-grouse conservation strategy by encouraging further federal, state, tribal and local protection for those vulnerable sagebrush lands in the Great Basin states.

Greater sage-grouse once occupied more than 290 million acres of sagebrush in the West, but the bird, known for its flamboyant mating ritual at sites called leks, has lost more than half of its habitat since then. Settlers reported that millions of birds once took to the skies; current estimates place population numbers between 200,000 and 500,000 birds. The species now occurs in 11 states and two Canadian provinces. More information on the greater sage-grouse and the ongoing, collaborative work to conserve the sagebrush landscape is available at: <http://www.fws.gov/greatersagegrouse/>

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U.S. Department of the Interior

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**U.S. Department
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News Release

Date: January 6, 2015

Contact: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

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Builds on work with federal, state, tribal and non-government partners to protect economic activity and wildlife habitat vital to the Western way of life

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“Targeted action is urgently needed to conserve habitat for the greater sage-grouse and other wildlife in the Great Basin, as well as to maintain ranching and recreation economies that depend on sagebrush landscapes,” said Secretary Jewell. “The Secretarial Order further demonstrates our strong commitment to work with our federal, state, tribal and community partners to reduce the likelihood and severity of rangeland fire, stem the spread of invasive species, and restore the health and resilience of sagebrush ecosystems.”

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The Task Force will work with other federal agencies, states, tribes, local entities and non-governmental groups on fire management and habitat restoration activities. This includes enhancing the capability and capacity of our partners’ fire

management organizations through improved and expanded education and training. The Task Force also will encourage improved coordination among all partners involved in rangeland fire management to further improve safety and effectiveness.

The Order builds on wildland fire prevention, suppression and restoration efforts to date, including the [National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#), which provides a roadmap for achieving “all hands—all lands” cooperation, and the President’s wildland fire budget proposal to change how fire suppression costs are budgeted to treat extreme fire seasons the way other emergency disasters are treated. The budget proposal would provide greater certainty in addressing growing fire suppression needs while better safeguarding prevention and other non-suppression programs, such as fuels reduction and post-fire rehabilitation.

The accelerated invasion of non-native grasses and the spread of pinyon-juniper, along with drought and the effects of climate change, increased the threat of rangeland fires to the sagebrush landscape and the more than 350 species of plants and animals, such as mule deer and pronghorn, that rely on this critically important ecosystem. The increasing frequency and intensity of rangeland fire in sagebrush ecosystems has significantly damaged the landscape on which ranchers, livestock managers, hunters and outdoor recreation enthusiasts rely. This unnatural fire cycle puts at risk their economic contributions across this landscape that support and maintain the Western way of life in America.

Efforts to conserve and protect sagebrush habitat are the centerpiece of an historic campaign to address threats to greater sage-grouse prior to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s court-ordered 2015 deadline whether to propose the bird for Endangered Species Act protection.

Secretary Jewell is working with Western governors to improve wildland fire-fighting capacity at all levels, highlighting the proactive voluntary partnership with ranchers, farmers and other landowners to conserve the sagebrush landscape on private and public lands. Interior’s November 5-7, 2014, conference in Idaho, [The Next Steppe: Sage-grouse and Rangeland Fire in the Great Basin](#), brought together fire experts and land managers at the federal, state and local levels who underscored the need for a comprehensive, landscape-scale strategy to rangeland fire suppression and prevention.

At the December 6, 2014, Western Governors’ Association winter meeting, Jewell directed her Department’s leadership to develop a comprehensive strategy to fight rangeland fire with an eye toward protecting rural communities, sagebrush landscapes and habitats essential to the conservation of the sage-grouse and other wildlife.

“These efforts will help Governors, state, tribal and local fire authorities, and those landowners on the ground – including rangeland fire protection associations and rural volunteer fire departments – make sure they have the information, training and tools to more effectively fight the threat of rangeland fires,” said Jewell. “To protect these landscapes for economic activity and wildlife like the greater sage-grouse, we need a three-pronged approach that includes strong federal land management plans, strong state plans, and an effective plan to address the threat of rangeland fire.”

Because about 64 percent of the greater sage-grouse’s 165 million acres of occupied range is on federally managed lands, Interior’s Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Agriculture’s U.S. Forest Service are currently analyzing amendments to existing land use plans to incorporate appropriate conservation measures to conserve, enhance and restore greater sage-grouse habitat by reducing, eliminating or minimizing threats to the habitat.

State and private lands, which make up a significant portion of the priority and general habitat for the greater sage-grouse, are also critical for the species. As a result, the Department is working in an unprecedented partnership with the states to provide strong habitat protection and conservation measures on the lands they administer. As part of her efforts with Western governors, Secretary Jewell encouraged, assisted and highlighted the proactive, voluntary state and federal partnership with ranchers, farmers and other landowners to conserve the sagebrush landscape on private and public lands.

The rangeland fire Secretarial Order will help frame the third part of the greater sage-grouse conservation strategy by encouraging further federal, state, tribal and local protection for those vulnerable sagebrush lands in the Great Basin states.

Greater sage-grouse once occupied more than 290 million acres of sagebrush in the West, but the bird, known for its flamboyant mating ritual at sites called leks, has lost more than half of its habitat since then. Settlers reported that millions of birds once took to the skies; current estimates place population numbers between 200,000 and 500,000 birds. The species now occurs in 11 states and two Canadian provinces. More information on the greater sage-grouse and the ongoing, collaborative work to conserve the sagebrush landscape is available at: <http://www.fws.gov/greatersagegrouse/>

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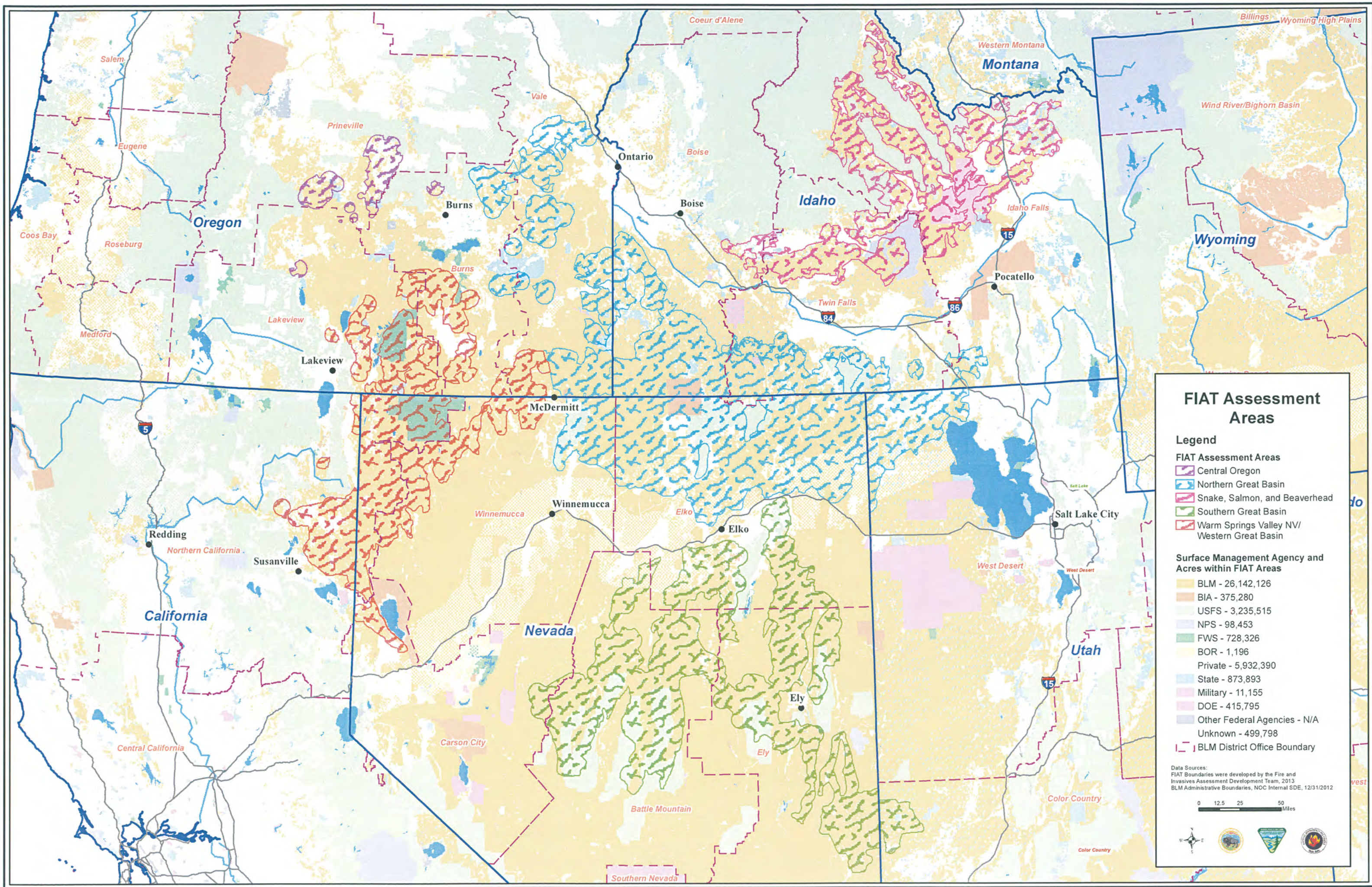


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FIAT Assessment Areas

Legend

FIAT Assessment Areas

- Central Oregon
- Northern Great Basin
- Snake, Salmon, and Beaverhead
- Southern Great Basin
- Warm Springs Valley NV/
Western Great Basin

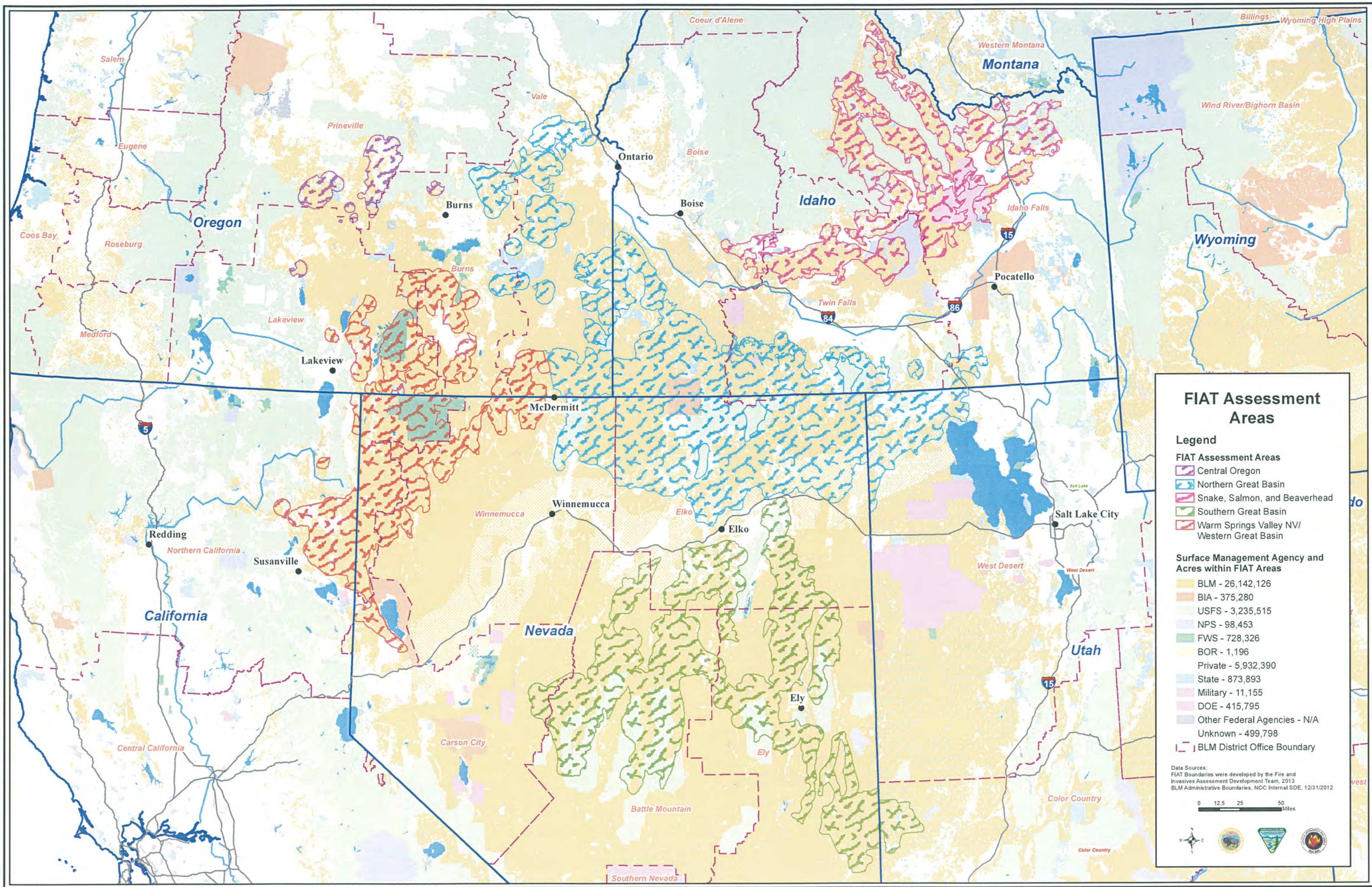
Surface Management Agency and Acres within FIAT Areas

- BLM - 26,142,126
- BIA - 375,280
- USFS - 3,235,515
- NPS - 98,453
- FWS - 728,326
- BOR - 1,196
- Private - 5,932,390
- State - 873,893
- Military - 11,155
- DOE - 415,795
- Other Federal Agencies - N/A
- Unknown - 499,798
- BLM District Office Boundary

Data Sources:
FIAT Boundaries were developed by the Fire and
Invasives Assessment Development Team, 2013
BLM Administrative Boundaries, NOC Internal SDE, 12/31/2012

0 12.5 25 50 Miles





FIAT Assessment Areas

Legend

FIAT Assessment Areas

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