

Policy considerations will include Distinct Population Segment (DPS), Significant Portion of the Range (SPR), and foreseeable future. At the appropriate time in the decision framework process, the Service ~~would then~~ will apply those policies to determine the appropriate outcomes.

Comment [MG3]: We mention this in this introductory text, but don't discuss further below. Do we want to get into these issues in the framework, or delete from here? Maybe just a general discussion about the need to consider specific application of listing policies?

Foundation

Consideration of 2010 Finding

The foundation of the 2015 status review will be the 2010 finding that determined the greater sage-grouse ~~is warranted for listing under the Endangered Species Act (Act).~~ The principle factors leading to the 2010 finding were:

- Habitat fragmentation, principally due to invasive species and fire,
- Energy development and associated infrastructure, and
- Sage-brush conversion due to agricultural practices, along with a
- Lack of adequate regulatory mechanisms to address those threats.

This will be the starting point for any analysis we conduct for the species status assessment. Changes in threats, conservation actions, and regulatory actions will be projected into the future using the analytical framework to provide a greater degree of resolution than was portrayed in the 2010 finding. This level of analysis will likely be at a greater level of detail than the most recent proposal on Bi-state. All of this will be cast in the form of abundance and distribution both now and into the future. The exact metric has yet to be developed but examples might be percent of populations persisting over time or percent distribution or possibly some index of habitat fragmentation in to the future. We do not recommend that the metric take the form of number of birds.

Comment [MG4]: Move this to a bistate discussion

Consistency with Bi-State Status Review

We are working closely with the Bi-State sage grouse status review team to ensure that, to the extent practicable and appropriate, the two assessments are being conducted in similar ways. For the most part, we see the two assessments being conducted in a very similar manner, with consideration being given to the 2010 finding and the COT report. However, some localized research and conservation efforts may result in some portions of the assessment being done at different scales than assessments conducted for the greater sage--grouse-assessment. When these differences in approach are appropriate, we will document in the project files for both assessments why the differences occurred.

Formatted: Heading 2

Consistency with Conservation Objective Team (COT) Report

Other elements include keeping our commitment to evaluate conservation measures against the objectives laid out in the COT report. The Service needs to take a consistent approach when evaluating measures regardless of state or district boundaries. The COT report identified the most important geographies for the long-term persistence of the species. These have been identified as Primary Areas of Conservation, also known as PACs. These PACs have been identified by the participants of the COT as areas with the highest density of birds on the landscape with in the range of the greater sage-grouse. ~~Another factor identified on t~~The COT report ~~also identified~~were discretely

Formatted: Normal