

~~identifiable populations and~~ the principle threats ~~that might be~~ acting on each ~~discretely identified~~ ~~these~~ populations that need to be ameliorated to ensure the long-term persistence of each population. The Service is proposing to utilize the COT report in establishing much of the baseline for the analytical framework to follow. The Service ~~does~~ anticipates utilizing the population densities within the PAC geographies and populations to evaluate current and future conditions for the species; the Service will as well as looking assess risk of threats to ~~at~~ PAC areas or populations that have higher ~~degree of~~ population densitiesy. ~~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 agricultural practices, along with a lack of adequate regulatory mechanisms to address these threats. This will be the starting point for any analysis we conduct for the species status assessment.~~

Consideration of Conservation Activities

The Service will be quantifying, to the extent the data allows, regulatory actions that will be applied to the landscape in relation to implementation of regulatory planning documents, State plans, etc. and the effect those regulatory actions will have to the main threat factors. Non-regulatory conservation actions will need to be categorized based on their certainty of implementation. F, for example, legislative actions to guarantee funding for localized fire management, while, not regulatory, provides a level of certainty that would be similar to a regulatory action.— Second, the Service must evaluate the adequacy of the all the actions in terms of strength of the agency action, legal support, etc. This second evaluation will likely occur later and will involve less quantitative methods, but must be done in the context of the effect of these actions on abundance and distribution at different population scales.

~~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 come index of habitat fragmentation in to the future. We do not recommend that the metric take the form of number of birds.~~

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 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.~~

Analytical Framework