

BI-STATE SAGE-GROUSE DPS

RECOMMENDATION MEETING

OCTOBER 29, 2014

April 2015, FEDERAL REGISTER DEADLINE

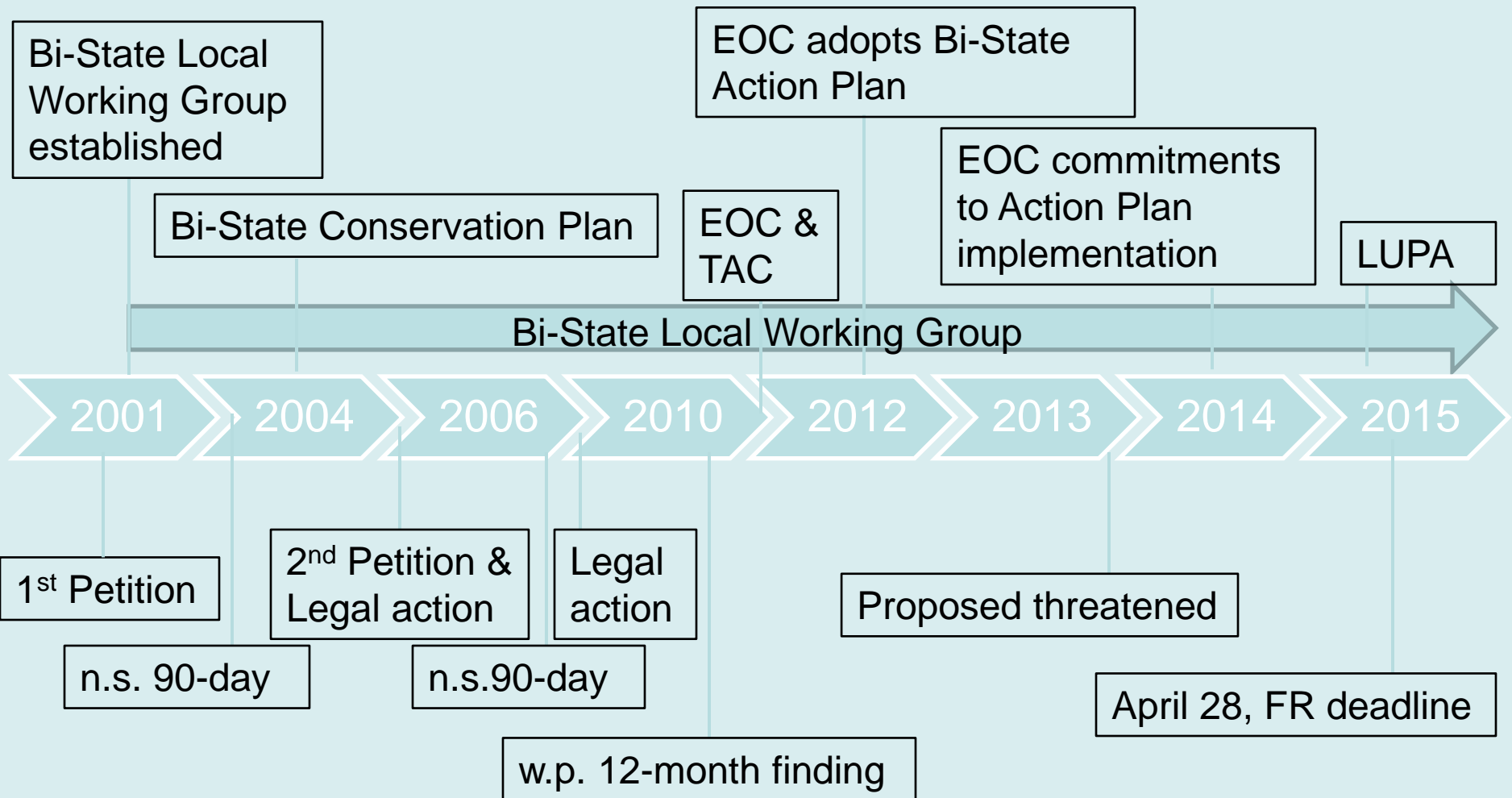


Presentation Structure

- Bi-State Conservation and ESA History
- Summary of 2013 Proposed Listing Rule
- Summary of Comments
- 2014 Issues for Consideration
- Future Conservation Efforts



Bi-State Conservation & ESA History





BI-STATE SAGE-GROUSE DPS

SUMMARY OF DIRECTOR BRIEFING APRIL 15, 2013

PROPOSED THREATENED LISTING
OCTOBER 28, 2013

Photo by J. Stafford USFWS

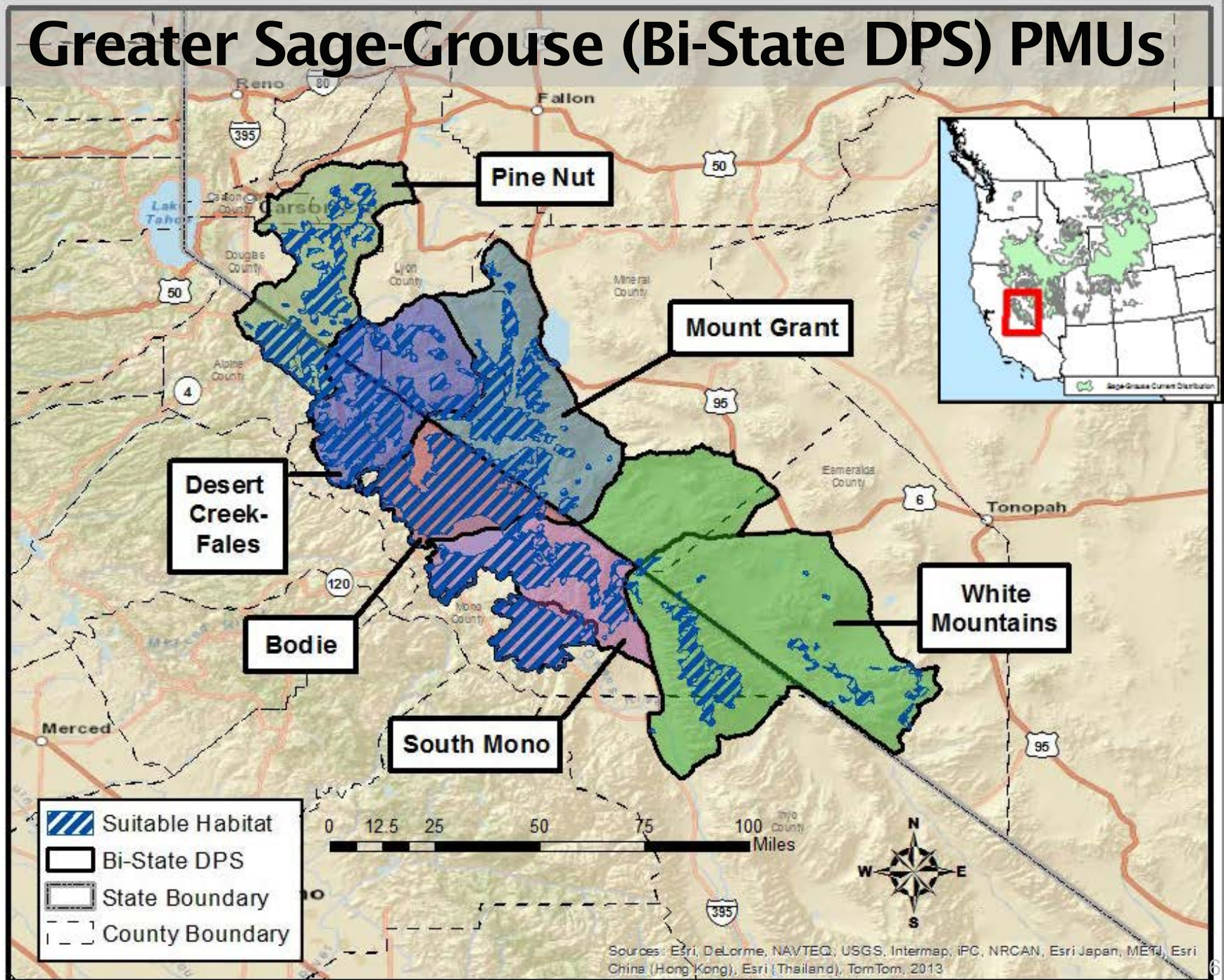


USFWS Proposed Threatened Listing

October 28, 2013

- DPS recognition driven by genetics
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- Finding considerations:
 - Habitat loss/modification
 - Disease
 - Inadequate regulatory mechanisms
 - Limited population redundancy and resiliency
-
- Compounding threats to habitat interacting on a small, fragmented population

Greater Sage-Grouse (Bi-State DPS) PMUs





Habitat, Population Size, and Leks 2013

Population Management Units	Estimated Suitable Habitat (acres)	Estimated Population Size Range (2002 – 2013)	2013 Active Leks
Pine Nut	192,366	50–331	1
Desert Creek-Fales	260,136	317–1,268	8
Mount Grant	113,139	85–1,412	8
Bodie	197,850	522–2,400	13
South Mono	179,511	859–2,005	11
White Mountains	132,081	Data not available	2+
Total (all PMUs)	1,047,020	1,833–7,416	43

Historic Baseline

> 50% Habitat Loss

Sagebrush habitat lost:

- Since 1850,
 - 40% lost to woodland succession since 1850
 - Urbanization and agricultural conversion has reduced habitat by 10%
- Since 2000, fire has burned 5%
- Unquantified historical habitat lost outside existing PMUs

Population Loss Exceeds Habitat Loss

- Habitat loss > 50%
- Remaining habitat reduced in:
 - Quality
 - Carrying capacity
 - Population levels
- Extirpations outside current PMUs



Summary of 2013 Population Analyses

- Five independent analyses
- Two “Core” PMUs, comprise $< 20\%$ of historical range
 - Stable long-term trend, moderate to high probability of persistence
- Four other PMUs
 - Declining trend; moderate to low probability of persistence



Summary of 2013 Threats

- Woodland encroachment: significant, measurable habitat loss
 - Management response insufficient
- Cheatgrass and fire: increasing, compounded by climate change
 - Risk of rapid habitat loss
- Others: Infrastructure, Urbanization, Recreation, Small Population Size
- Livestock grazing: low risk, addressed in 4(d) special rule
- Threats interacting – affecting, fragmenting habitat
 - Esp. of concern for a long-lived, slow-growing habitat specialist



Summary Of 2013 Status

- Reduction in habitat of >50%
- Reduction in abundance greater than habitat loss
- Connectivity is limited and deteriorating
- Low redundancy and resiliency
- Four PMUs significantly reduced and threatened
- Two PMUs reduced, but more stable, less threatened

BI-STATE SAGE-GROUSE DPS

Summary of Comments



Summary of Peer Review

- 4 Peer reviewers
 - 2 offered agreement/2 withheld opinion on our proposal
-
- **Clarification** on historic habitat and population loss
 - **Clarification** with population trend
 - **Agreement** with our DPS determination
 - **Agreement** with stability of core populations
 - **Agreement** with risk associated with small populations
 - **No dissent** on threats analysis
-
- **No significant disagreement**



Summary of State Comments

- California
 - No comment
- Nevada Department of Wildlife
 - Supports *Action Plan* approach
- State of Nevada
 - Listing will not expedite conservation
 - Populations have exhibited stable to increasing trends



Summary of Public Comments

Oppose listing

- Populations are stable to increasing
 - Support for *Action Plan* approach
 - Disagreement with threat assessment
 - Concern over economic impact
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Support Listing

- Populations are small and isolated
- Regulatory mechanisms inadequate
- Endangered listing justified
- Disagreement with livestock assessment & 4(d)

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2014 Issues for Consideration



2014 Issues Summary

- No change in historic baseline:
 - Greater than 50% habitat and population losses
- New information:
 - Additional potential habitat
 - New population trend analysis, more positive
 - Invasive species and fire, and grazing threats affirmed
- Some threats reduced since 2013
 - Additional conservation actions completed



Habitat, Population Size, Leks

	2013	2014
Estimated Suitable Habitat (acres)	1,047,020	1,300,238 ^A
Estimated Population Size Range	1,833 to 7,416 (2002 to 2013)	2,497 to 9,828 ^B (2004 to 2014)
Active Leks	43	43

A. Difference reflects change in mapping methodology

B. Difference reflects change in population estimate methodology



Population Trend and Probability of Persistence

Study	Trend	Persistence
Connelly <i>et al.</i> 2004	✓	
WAFWA 2008	✓	
Aldridge <i>et al.</i> 2008		✓
Wisdom <i>et al.</i> 2011		✓
Garton <i>et al.</i> 2011	✓	✓
USGS 2014	✓	
Chambers <i>et al.</i> 2014		✓



Population Trend 2013 vs 2014

Core

Others

PMU	Population	pL 2013	USGS 2014
South Mono	Long Valley	Stable	<u>Increase</u>
	Parker Meadows	Decrease	Decrease
Bodie	Bodie Hills	Stable	<u>Increase</u>
Pine Nut	Pine Nut	Decrease	Increase*
Desert Creek–Fales	Desert Creek	Decrease	<u>Increase</u>
	Fales	Decrease	Decrease
Mount Grant	Mount Grant	Decrease	Unknown
White Mountains	White Mountains	Unknown	Unknown

* Model results



Population Persistence 2013 versus 2014

PMU	2013	2014
(2) Core	Moderate to high	High
(4) Others	Moderate to low	Moderate to low



Conservation Efforts Since 2013

- 3,500+ acres of woodland treatments
 - (out of 120+ k ac)
- 1,808 acres of conservation easements
 - (2 of 12 priority projects)
- 16 miles of fence modifications
- 6,430 acres of wildland fire restoration
- 58 acres of invasive weed treatments



2014 Summary of Status and Threats

- Changed:
 - Apparent improvement in trend and persistence
 - Reduction in degree of threats
- Remaining:
 - Reduction in habitat > 50%
 - Population loss greater than habitat loss
 - All threats persist; multiple and compounding
 - Distribution contracting toward core

Future Conservation Efforts

- Evaluation Strategy
- Efforts
 - Action Plan
 - Land Use Plan Amendments
 - Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan
 - Habitat Conservation Plan
 - Lands Bill



Conservation Efforts Evaluation Strategy

Developed in coordination with R1 and R6

- Certainty of Implementation
 - Strength of commitments
 - Consider past efforts to evaluate likelihood of implementing future actions
 - Actions likely to be implemented...
- Certainty of Effectiveness
 - Consistency with COT report = measure of effectiveness



Future Conservation Efforts

- *Action Plan* and EOC commitments to remove threats to preclude the need to list
 - 79 projects and \$ 38 million over 10 years, including:
 - 120+ k ac of woodland treatments
 - 9 priority easements through FY 2015
 - Other habitat improvement projects
- USFS and BLM Land Use Plan Amendments
 - Land use allocations
 - Feral horses at AML in 2 years
- Marine MWTC INRMP
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power HCP
- Lands Bill / Wilderness Designation