**DAVE FREUDENTHAL**
GOVERNOR

THE STATE OF WYOMING

STATE CAPITOL
CHEYENNE, WY 82002

# Office of the Governor

**STATE OF WYOMING**
**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**
**EXECUTIVE ORDER**

**Order 2008-2**

## GREATER SAGE-GROUSE CORE AREA PROTECTION

WHEREAS the Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) is an iconic species that inhabits much of the sagebrush-steppe habitat in Wyoming; and

WHEREAS the sagebrush-steppe habitat type is abundant across the state of Wyoming; and

WHEREAS the state of Wyoming currently enjoys robust populations of Greater Sage-Grouse; and

WHEREAS the state of Wyoming has management authority over Greater Sage-Grouse populations in Wyoming; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Department of the Interior has been petitioned to list the Greater Sage-Grouse as a threatened or endangered species in all or a significant portion of its range, including those populations in Wyoming; and

WHEREAS the listing of the Greater Sage-Grouse would have a significant adverse affect on the custom and culture of the state of Wyoming; and

WHEREAS the listing of the Greater Sage-Grouse would have a significant adverse affect on the economy of the state of Wyoming, including the ability to generate revenues from state lands; and

WHEREAS the Wyoming State Legislature has appropriated significant state resources to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse populations in Wyoming; and

WHEREAS the state of Wyoming has endeavored to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse populations in order to retain management authority over the species through its statewide sage grouse working group, local sage grouse working groups and the efforts and initiatives of private landowners and industry; and



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WHEREAS the Governor's Sage Grouse Implementation Team developed a "Core Population Area" strategy to weave the many on-going efforts to conserve the Greater Sage-Grouse in Wyoming into a statewide strategy; and

WHEREAS on April 17, 2008, the Office of the Governor requested that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service review the "Core Population Area" strategy to determine if it was a "sound policy that should be moved forward"; and

WHEREAS on May 7, 2008, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service responded that the "core population area strategy, as outlined in the Implementation Team's correspondence to the Governor, is a sound framework for a policy by which to conserve greater sage-grouse in Wyoming".

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Laws of the State, and to the extent such actions are consistent with the statutory obligations and authority of each individual agency, I, Dave Freudenthal, Governor of the State of Wyoming, do hereby issue this Executive Order providing as follows:

1. Management by state agencies should, to the greatest extent possible, focus on the maintenance and enhancement of those Greater Sage-Grouse habitats and populations within the Core Population Areas identified by the Sage Grouse Implementation Team and modified through additional habitat and population mapping efforts.
2. Current management and existing land uses within Core Population Areas should be recognized and respected by state agencies.
3. New development or land uses within Core Population Areas should be authorized or conducted only when it can be demonstrated by the state agency that the activity will not cause declines in Greater Sage-Grouse populations.
4. Funding, assurances (including state-conducted efforts to develop Candidate Conservation Agreements and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances), habitat enhancement, reclamation efforts, mapping and other associated proactive efforts to assure viability of Greater Sage-Grouse in Wyoming should be focused and prioritized to take place in Core Population Areas.
5. State agencies should use a non-regulatory approach to influence management alternatives within Core Population Areas, to the greatest extent possible. Management alternatives should reflect unique localized conditions, including soils, vegetation, development type, climate and other local realities.
6. Incentives to enable development of all types outside Core Population Areas should be established (these should include stipulation waivers, enhanced permitting processes, density bonuses, and other incentives). However, such development scenarios should be designed and managed to maintain populations, habitats and essential migration routes outside Core Population Areas.

7. Incentives to accelerate or enhance required reclamation in habitats adjacent to Core Population Areas should be developed, including but not limited to stipulation waivers, funding for enhanced reclamation, and other strategies.
8. Existing rights should be recognized and respected.
9. On-the-ground enhancements, monitoring, and ongoing planning relative to sage grouse and sage grouse habitat should be facilitated by sage grouse local working groups whenever possible.
10. Fire suppression efforts in Core Population Areas should be emphasized, recognizing that other local, regional, and national suppression priorities may take precedent. However, public and firefighter safety remains the number one priority on all wildfires.
11. State agencies work collaboratively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and other federal agencies to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, a uniform and consistent application of this Executive Order to maintain and enhance Greater Sage-Grouse habitats and populations.
12. State agencies shall work collaboratively with local governments and private landowners to maintain and enhance Greater Sage-Grouse habitats and populations in a manner consistent with this Executive Order.

Given under my hand and the Executive Seal of the State of Wyoming this 1st day of August, 2008.

Dave Freudenthal
Governor