

Proposed Action

The Forest Service (FS) is proposing to amend the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and the BLM is proposing to amend the Tonopah Resource Management Plan (RMP) and the Carson City Field Office Consolidated RMP by adding to or changing some of the regulatory mechanisms (management direction) that would reduce, eliminate, or minimize threats to the Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat on federal lands administered by the FS and the BLM under those plans.

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues or concerns that the public has with the proposed action. These issues or concerns will be used by the agencies to modify the proposed action, develop alternatives to the proposed action, or develop mitigation. The following table displays the agencies' proposal for modified or additional regulatory mechanisms to the plans.

Goal
In cooperation with other conservation partners maintain or increase the Bi-State Sage Grouse populations by conserving, enriching, enhancing, or restoring the sagebrush ecosystems upon which populations depend.
Provide interagency coordination for vegetation treatments on (e.g., pinyon/juniper removal, fuels treatments, green stripping) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the maintenance of large intact sagebrush communities; • Limit the expansion or dominance of invasive species, including cheatgrass; • Maintain or improve soil site stability, hydrologic function, and biological integrity; and • Enhance the native plant community, including the native shrub reference state in the State and Transition Model, with appropriate shrub, grass, and forb composition identified in the applicable Ecological Site Description (ESD) where available.
Maximize benefits to Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat and Bi-State Sage Grouse populations across the range.
Objectives
Protect Bi-State-Sage Grouse habitat from human induced disturbances that will reduce distribution and abundance of Bi-State Sage Grouse.
Target ninety-seven percent or greater of the Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat to be restored from human caused disturbance within ten years.
Restore or maintain plant communities to desired conditions as defined by the Bi-State Greater Sage Grouse Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat. See Appendix A.
Utilize the TAC Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat map.
Discrete anthropogenic disturbances should not involve more than 3% of the total identified Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat regardless of ownership. Anthropogenic features include but are not limited to paved highways, graded gravel roads, transmission lines, substations, wind turbines, oil and gas wells, geothermal wells and associated facilities, pipelines, landfills, homes, and mines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat where the 3% disturbance threshold is already exceeded from any source, no further anthropogenic disturbances should be permitted on BLM or FS managed lands until enough habitat has been restored to maintain the area under this threshold (subject to valid existing rights).

Any vegetation treatment within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat shall be designed for maintaining, improving, or restoring Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat. Projects can include but are not limited to the removal of pinyon/juniper or Jeffrey pine, treatment of noxious or invasive species, restoration of native vegetation, or increasing the species and age diversity of sagebrush stands.
Threatened, endangered and sensitive species (including Bi-State Sage Grouse) and associated habitats shall be a high natural resource priority for National and Geographic Multi-Agency Coordination Groups, whose purpose is to manage and prioritize wildland fire operations on a national and geographic area scope when fire management resource shortages are probable.
Evaluate land treatments (including Bi-State population habitat treatments) in a landscape-scale context to address habitat fragmentation, effective patch size, invasive species presence, and protection of intact sagebrush communities. Coordinate land treatments with adjacent land owners to avoid any unintended negative landscape effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse.
<i>All Resource Areas</i>
Yearlong protection of Bi-State Sage Grouse within 1/3 mile of active Bi-State Sage Grouse leks. Yearlong protection is defined as no discretionary actions which would adversely affect sage-grouse would be allowed. Existing uses and casual uses shall be managed to prevent disturbance which would adversely affect Bi-State Sage Grouse.
Seasonal protection of Bi-State Sage Grouse within two miles of active Bi-State sage-grouse leks from May 1 to June 30. An active lek is defined as a lek in which two or more males are detected for two or more years within a five year period. Seasonal protection is defined as within the period specified, no discretionary actions which would adversely affect sage-grouse would be allowed. Existing uses and casual uses would be managed to prevent disturbance which would adversely affect Bi-State Sage Grouse.
<i>Habitat Restoration/Vegetation Management</i>
Objective: Design post restoration management to ensure long term persistence. This could include changes in livestock grazing management, wild horse and burro management and travel management, etc., to achieve and maintain the desired condition of the restoration effort that benefits Bi-State Sage Grouse.
Implement management actions, where appropriate, to improve degraded Bi-State Sage Grouse habitats that have become encroached upon by shrubland or woodland species.
Where pinyon and/or juniper trees are encroaching on sagebrush plant communities, treatments shall be designed to increase cover of sagebrush and/or understory to: (1) improve habitat for Bi-State Sage Grouse; and (2) minimize avian predator perches and predation opportunities on Bi-State Sage Grouse.
Vegetation objectives shall be based on: (1) native shrub reference states as shown in the State and Transition Model outlined in the applicable Ecological Site Description (ESD) or similar information, where available; (2) published scientific habitat recommendations for specific areas; and (3) Bi-State Greater Sage-Grouse Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommendations,
Revegetation activities shall use native plant species outlined in the applicable Ecological Site Description (ESD), where available, to revegetate sites.
In vegetation management project areas where a seeding component was implemented the seeding area shall be rested for a minimum of two growing seasons. When treating invasive species, standard operating procedures and best management practices outlined in the 2007 Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 States Environmental Impact Statement and applicable practices found in its accompanying biological assessment shall be used.

Native seeds shall be used for restoration based on availability, adaptation (ecological site potential), and probability of success. Where probability of success or adapted seed availability is low, non-native seeds may be used as long as they support Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat objectives.
Reestablishment of sagebrush cover and desirable plants relative to ecological site potential shall be the highest priority for restoration efforts.
Habitat restoration for sage-grouse will be prioritized in seasonal habitats that are thought to be limiting sage-grouse distribution and/or abundance
Recreation Standards
Camping shall not be allowed within 0.6 miles of active Bi-State Sage Grouse leks from March 1-May 15
Only BLM Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) and FS Recreation Special Use Authorizations (RSUAs) that have neutral or beneficial effects to priority habitat areas shall be allowed.
Consider closing recreation sites seasonally or permanently to restrict recreational traffic and avoid disturbance to Bi-State Sage Grouse.
Evaluate existing Special Recreation Permits (SRP) for adverse effects to BS Sage Grouse and modify or cancel the permit, as appropriate, to avoid or minimize effects of habitat alterations or other physical disturbances to Bi-State Sage Grouse (e.g., breeding, brood-rearing, migration patterns, or winter survival).
Post SRP event habitat restoration activities shall address Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat objectives.
Work with permit applicants to avoid impacts to Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat.
Fire and Fuels Management Standards
Fire
A full range of fire management activities and options shall be utilized to sustain healthy ecosystems (including Bi-State Sage Grouse habitats) within acceptable risk levels. Local agency administrators and resource advisors will convey protection priorities to incident commanders.
Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat areas shall be prioritized immediately after life and property, to conserve the habitat during suppression activities.
In fire prone areas, where sagebrush seed is required for Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat restoration, seed harvest areas that are managed for seed production shall be a priority for protection from outside disturbances.
Fuels
Objective: Identify opportunities for prescribed fire; including where prescribed fire has been identified as the most appropriate tool to meet fuels management objectives and Bi-State Sage Grouse conservation objectives, and the potential expansion or dominance of invasive species has been determined to be minimal through an invasive species risk determination for the treatment project (see BLM Manual 9015).
Objective: Post fuels management treatment projects shall be designed to promote the long term persistence of seeded or pre-treatment native plants. This may require temporary or long-term changes in livestock grazing management, wild horse and burro management, travel management, or other activities to achieve and maintain the desired condition of the fuels management project.
Objective: During fuels management treatment project design, consider the utility of using livestock to strategically reduce fine fuels, and implement grazing management that will accomplish this objective. Consult with ecologists to minimize impacts to native perennial grasses.
Before using prescribed fire, units shall analyze the potential expansion or dominance of invasive species as a result of proposed treatments.

In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, design and implement fuels management treatments with an emphasis on protecting/enhancing existing sagebrush ecosystems.

- Fuels management treatments shall not reduce sagebrush canopy cover to less than 15 percent. There may be times when a fuels management objective requires additional reduction in sagebrush cover to meet strategic protection of Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat and conserve habitat quality for the species. Closely evaluate the benefits of the fuel break against the additional loss of sagebrush cover in future NEPA documents.
- Seasonal restrictions for implementing fuels management treatments shall be applied according to the type of seasonal habitats present in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat (see Wildlife and Fish section below for restriction dates based on seasonal habitats).
- Fuels management treatments shall not be allowed in known wintering habitat unless the treatments are designed to strategically reduce wildfire risk around or in the wintering habitat and will maintain habitat quality.
- Prescribed fire shall not be used to treat sagebrush in less than 12-inch precipitation zones (e.g., Wyoming big sagebrush or other xeric sagebrush species). However, if as a last resort and after all other treatment opportunities have been explored and site specific variables allow, the use of prescribed fire for fuel breaks that would disrupt the fuel continuity across the landscape should be considered, in stands where cheatgrass is a very minor component in the understory.
- Monitor and control invasive vegetation post-treatment.
- Treated areas shall be rested for two full growing seasons unless vegetation recovery dictates otherwise.

Give genetically appropriate native plant materials primary consideration in any revegetation effort associated with fuels management treatment, consistent with FSM 2070.3. Restrict the use of non-native plant materials to situations in which their use supports sage-grouse habitat objectives and satisfies the conditions specified in FSM 2070.3.

Fuels management projects in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat shall be designed to strategically and effectively reduce wildfire threats in the greatest area. This may require fuels treatments implemented in a more linear versus block design.

Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation (ES&R) and Post Fire Treatment

Objective: In post fire restoration plans, prioritize re-vegetation projects to maintain and enhance unburned intact sagebrush habitat when at risk from adjacent threats, limit expansion or dominance or invasive species; and reestablish native species.

Post Fire and ES&R management shall be designed to promote the long term persistence of seeded or pre-burn native plants. This may require temporary or long-term changes in livestock grazing, wild horse and burro, and travel management, etc., to achieve and maintain the desired condition of post fire and ES&R projects to benefit Bi-State Sage Grouse.

In emergency stabilization and post fire restoration planning teams shall prioritize re-vegetation projects to

- (1) maintain and enhance unburned intact sagebrush habitat when at risk from adjacent threats;
- (2) maintain and enhance biological integrity;
- (3) promote plant resiliency; limit expansion or dominance of invasive species; and
- (4) re-establish native species.

Changes in climate shall be a consideration when proposing post-fire seedings using native plants. Consider seed collections from the warmer component within a species' current range for selection of native seed.

Range Management

Objective: Incorporate management objectives that promote the growth and persistence of native shrubs, grasses, and forbs beneficial to sage-grouse. Utilize Ecological Site Descriptions or other State and Transition Models, where they are available, to develop realistic objectives.

Objective: Prioritize completion of land health assessments (FS may use other analyses) and processing grazing permits within Bi-State SAGE GROUSE habitat areas. Focus this process on allotments that have the best opportunities for conserving, enhancing or restoring habitat for Bi-State SAGE GROUSE. Utilize BLM Ecological Site Descriptions (ESDs) (FS may use other methods) to conduct land health assessments to determine if standards of range-land health are being met.

Objective: In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, conduct land health assessments that include (at a minimum) indicators and measurements of structure/condition/composition of vegetation specific to achieving sage-grouse habitat objectives. If local/state seasonal habitat objectives are not available, use sage-grouse habitat recommendations.

Objective: Develop specific objectives to conserve, enhance or restore Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat based on BLM ESDs (FS may use other methods) and assessments (including within wetlands and riparian areas). If an effective grazing system that meets Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat requirements is not already in place, analyze at least one alternative that conserves, restores or enhances Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat in the NEPA document prepared for the permit renewal.

Objective: Water developments will be maintained to ensure that Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat will not be adversely affected. This includes developing new water sources for livestock as part of an AMP/conservation plan to improve Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat (BLM only).

Objective: Analyze springs, seeps and associated pipelines to determine if modifications are necessary to maintain the continuity of the predevelopment riparian area within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat. Make modifications where necessary, considering impacts to other water uses when such considerations are neutral or beneficial to Bi-State Sage Grouse.

Objective: Evaluate the role of existing seedings that are currently composed of primarily introduced perennial grasses in and adjacent to Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat to determine if they should be restored to sagebrush or habitat of higher quality for Bi-State Sage Grouse. If these seeded areas are part of an AMP/ Conservation Plan or if they provide value in conserving or enhancing Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, then no restoration would be necessary. Assess the compatibility of these seeded areas for Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat or as a component of a grazing system during the land health assessments or other analyses [FS only].

Objective: Maintain retirement of grazing privileges as an option in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat areas when the current permittee is willing to retire grazing on all or part of an allotment. Analyze the adverse impacts of no livestock use on wildfire and invasive species threats in evaluating retirement proposals.

Multiple range allotments may be incorporated under a single management plan or strategy when the result would enhance Bi-State-Sage Grouse habitat.

Within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, sage-grouse habitat objectives and management considerations shall be incorporated into all BLM and FS grazing allotments through Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) or permit renewals and/or FS Annual Operating Instructions.

Manage rangeland for vegetation composition and structure consistent with achieving Bi-State sage-grouse habitat objectives.

During drought periods, the effects of the drought should be evaluated to determine impacts on Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat areas relative to their needs for food and cover. Since there is a lag in vegetation recovery following drought, manage Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat post-drought to promote vegetation

recovery that meets Bi-State Sage Grouse needs in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat areas.
Manage riparian areas and wet meadows for proper functioning condition or other similar methodology (FS only) within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat.
Within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, manage wet meadows to maintain a component of perennial forbs with diverse species richness relative to site potential (e.g., reference state) to facilitate brood rearing.
Conserve or enhance wet meadow complexes to maintain or increase amount of edge and cover and to minimize elevated Bi State Sage Grouse mortality during the late brood rearing period.
Within habitat, reduce hot season grazing on riparian and meadow complexes to promote recovery or maintenance of appropriate vegetation and water quality.
Utilize fencing/herding techniques or seasonal use or livestock distribution changes to reduce pressure on riparian or wet meadow vegetation used by Bi-State Sage Grouse in the hot season (summer).
In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, only allow treatments that conserve, enhance or restore sage-grouse habitat (this includes treatments that benefit livestock as part of an AMP/Conservation Plan to improve sage-grouse habitat).
In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, design any new structural range improvements and location of supplements (salt or protein blocks) to conserve, enhance, or restore Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat through an improved grazing management system relative to Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat objectives. Structural range improvements, in this context, include but are not limited to: cattle guards, fences, exclosures, corrals or other livestock handling structures; pipelines, troughs, storage tanks (including moveable tanks used in livestock water hauling), windmills, ponds/reservoirs, solar panels and spring developments.
When developing or modifying water developments in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, use applicable best management practices to mitigate potential impacts from West Nile virus.
All livestock watering facilities will be designed to facilitate wildlife use. Escape ramps and a mechanism such as a float or shut-off valve to control the flow of water in tanks and troughs shall be installed to prevent waste and accidental death of wildlife.
Manage livestock use of sagebrush vegetation types within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks to achieve shrub structure and density characteristics more homogeneous (less patchy) than average. Horizontal cover (grass, forb and shrub combined) in these areas will range between 8 and 20%.
To improve visibility, mark existing fences within 1.25 miles ³ of a lek that have been identified as a collision risk. Fences posing higher risks to sage-grouse include fences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On flat topography; • Where spans exceed 12 feet between T-posts; • Without wooden posts; or Where fence densities exceed 1.6 miles of fence per section (640 acres).
Identify and remove fences not needed for resource management, particularly those within 1.25 miles of leks.
Evaluate progress towards meeting standards that may affect the Bi-State Sage Grouse or its habitat prior to authorizing grazing on an allotment that was not achieving land health standards in the last renewal cycle, and livestock was a significant causal factor. Where available, use current monitoring data to identify any trends (e.g., progress) toward meeting the standards. Where monitoring data are not available or inadequate to determine whether progress is being made toward achieving Land Health Standards, an interdisciplinary team should be deployed as practicable to conduct a new land health assessment. The NEPA analysis for the permit/lease renewal must address a range of reasonable alternatives including alternatives that improve Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat.

Wild Free Roaming Horses and Burros

Within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, develop or amend BLM Herd Management Area Plans (HMAPs) and FS Wild Horse Territory Plans (WHTPs) to incorporate Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat objectives and management considerations for all BLM herd management areas (HMAs) and FS Wild Horse Territories (WHTs).

For all BLM HMAs and FS WHTs within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, prioritize the evaluation of all AMLs based on indicators that address structure/condition/composition of vegetation and measurements specific to achieving Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat objectives.

Wild Horse Herd Management Areas will receive priority for removal of excess horses within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat.

Wild horses and burros remaining in Herd Management Areas/Wild Horse Territories where the AML has been established as zero will receive priority for removal.

Public Information and Coordination

No proposed changes

Wilderness

No proposed changes

Timber

No proposed changes

Soil and Water

No proposed changes

Riparian Areas

No proposed changes

Wildlife and Fish

When conducting environmental analyses on proposals affecting Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, documentation shall include (1) short- and long-term objectives and (2) direct, indirect, and cumulative effects relative to Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat. Evaluate proposed actions in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat in a landscape-scale context to address habitat fragmentation, effective patch size, invasive species presence, and protection of intact sagebrush communities

The following dates shall be used to minimize impacts to Bi-State Sage Grouse unless there is contrary site specific information, these dates are associated with major life history requisites:

- Winter – 12/1-3/1
- Breeding – 3/1 – 5/15
- Nesting/Early Brood Rearing – 3/15 - 6/30
- Late Brood Rearing – 6/1 - 9/1

Areas determined to have important Bi-State Sage Grouse populations, breeding sites or important seasonal habitats, such as, but not limited to areas identified in the state-led and local working group sage-grouse plans, conservation agreements, and Forest Plans, as well as areas identified by the Bi-State Greater Sage-Grouse Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) shall be given priority for maintenance, enhancement and restoration.

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species
No proposed changes
Human Resources
No proposed changes
Cultural Resources
No proposed changes
Lands
Bi-State sage-grouse habitat areas shall be excluded from new Right of Way (ROW) permits.
<p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within designated ROW or Special Use Area (SUA) corridors encumbered by existing ROW or SUA authorizations: new ROWs may be co-located only if the entire footprint of the proposed project (including construction and staging), can be completed within the existing disturbance associated with the authorized ROWs or SUAs. • Subject to valid, existing rights: where new ROWs or SUAs associated with valid existing rights are required, co-locate new ROWs or SUAs within existing ROWs or SUAs or where it best minimizes impacts to Bi-State Sage Grouse populations and habitat. • Use existing roads, or alignments as described above, to access valid existing rights that are not yet developed. • If valid existing rights cannot be accessed via existing roads, then build any new road constructed to the absolute minimum standard necessary, and add the surface disturbance to the total disturbance in the habitat area. • If that disturbance exceeds 3% for that area, then evaluate and implement additional effectiveness mitigation on a case-by-case basis to offset the resulting loss of Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat.
In identified Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat Bi-State Sage Grouse where existing lease, ROWs, or SUAs occur and have had some level of development (road, fence, well, etc) and are no longer in use, reclaim the site by removing these features and restoring the habitat.
Bi-State sage-grouse habitat areas shall be made “avoidance areas” for new ROWs or SUAs.
Where new ROWs or SUAs are necessary in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, co-locate new ROWs or SUAs within existing ROWs or SUAs where possible.
Retain public ownership of Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat.
<p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is mixed ownership, and land exchanges would allow for additional or more contiguous federal ownership patterns within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat. • Under Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat areas with minority federal ownership, include an additional, effective mitigation agreement for any disposal of federal lands. • As a final preservation measure consideration should be given to including retention (or exclusion) of federal lands with Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat in the analysis of any lands conveyance or exchange proposal.
Where suitable conservation Standards and Guidelines cannot be achieved in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, seek to acquire state and private lands intact subsurface mineral estate by donation, purchase or exchange in order to best conserve, enhance or restore Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat.

Propose lands within Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat areas for mineral withdrawal.
In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, do not recommend withdrawal proposals not associated with mineral activity unless the land management is consistent with Bi-State Sage Grouse conservation measures. (For example; in proposed withdrawal for a military training range buffer area, manage the buffer area with Bi-State Sage Grouse conservation measures.)
Transportation System
Objective: Complete activity level travel plans within five years of the record of decision. During activity level planning, where appropriate, designate routes in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat with current administrative/agency purpose or need for administrative access only.
In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, limit motorized travel to existing roads, primitive roads, and trails at a minimum, until such time as travel management planning is complete and routes are either designated or closed.
Travel Management Plan updates shall incorporate updated Bi-State Sage Grouse telemetry and habitat categorization.
In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, travel management should evaluate the need for permanent or seasonal road or area closures.
In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, limit route construction to realignments of existing designated routes if that realignment has a minimal impact on Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, eliminates the need to construct a new road, or is necessary for motorist safety.
In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, use existing roads, or realignments as described above to access valid existing rights that are not yet developed. If valid existing rights cannot be accessed via existing roads, then build any new road constructed to the absolute minimum standard necessary, and add the surface disturbance to the total disturbance in the priority area. If that disturbance exceeds 3 % for that area, then evaluate and implement additional, effective mitigation necessary to offset the resulting loss of Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat.
In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, allow no upgrading of existing routes that would change route category (road, primitive road, or trail) or capacity unless the upgrading would have minimal impact on Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, is necessary for motorist safety, or eliminates the need to construct a new road.
In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, conduct restoration of roads, primitive roads and trails not designated in travel management plans. This also includes primitive route/roads that were not designated in Wilderness Study Areas and within lands with wilderness characteristics that have been selected for protection in previous RMPs and other previous land use planning decisions.
Establish speed limits on BLM and FS system roads to reduce vehicle/wildlife collisions or design roads to be driven at slower speeds.
Cross-country motorized travel in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat is prohibited unless otherwise exempted in 36 CFR 212.51 Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; final rule (FS only).
Place a high priority on closing and reclaiming unauthorized motor vehicle routes that cause habitat alterations or population disturbance.
Limit and enforce motorized vehicle use to existing or designated roads, primitive roads, and trails and seasons of use to prevent habitat loss or population disturbance that impair life history functions of the Bi-State Sage Grouse, such as breeding, migration patterns, or winter survival.
Law Enforcement
No proposed changes

Minerals

For non-discretionary locatable minerals projects, the Forest Service shall consider current best available science on Bi-State Sage Grouse to minimize direct habitat loss and disturbance. Appropriate conservation measures shall be considered and applied on a case by case basis based on ground surveys.

Proposed Authorizations/Activities (i.e., new Notices of Intent to Operate or Plans of Operation):

- New Notices of Intent shall adequately describe proposed operations to assess whether or not significant disturbance of National Forest System surface resources, including Bi-State Sage Grouse and Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, is likely. When the authorized officer determines that the operations described by a notice of intent to operate are likely to cause significant disturbance of National Forest System surface resources, require the submission of a proposed plan of operations and advise the operator that the operations cannot be conducted until the plan of operations is approved.
- Require that new plans of operation shall include measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects to Bi-state Sage Grouse populations and their habitat.
- New notices and plans of operation include measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse populations and its habitat. Ensure that new notices and plans of operation shall comply with the requirements in 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation. Such compliance may assist in avoiding or minimizing adverse effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse populations and habitat.

Ongoing Authorizations/Activities (i.e., existing operations conducted under a Notice of Intent to Operate or a Plan of Operations):

- Ongoing operations causing or likely to cause significant disturbance of surface resources not authorized by an approved plan of operations, units shall utilize the authority provided by 36 CFR 228.4(a)(4) to require an operator to submit a plan of operations for approval; or, if appropriate, the authority provided by 36 CFR 228.4(d) to require an operator to supplement an approved plan of operations.

If ongoing operations authorized by a plan of operations are causing unforeseen significant disturbance of surface resources, units shall exercise the authority provided in 36 CFR 228.4(e) concerning modifying the plan of operations.

Request that holders of Notices and Plans of Operation modify their operations to avoid or minimize adverse effects on Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat. Operators must be informed in the request that compliance is not mandatory.

Saleable Minerals

Ongoing Authorizations (i.e., a contract, prospecting permit or permit has been issued leading to the creation of valid existing rights):

- Where operating plans have been approved, work with the holders of the authorization to develop reasonable conditions such as siting/design of infrastructure, timing of operations, or reclamation standards that will avoid or minimize effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse and their habitat.
- When proposed operating plans are submitted, require reasonable conditions that will avoid or minimize effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse and Bi-State sage-grouse habitat.

Proposed Authorizations:

- Authorizations that provide for the development of operating plans shall include measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse and their habitat.

Where valid existing rights exist, work with the holders of authorizations to develop actions such as siting/design of infrastructure, timing of operations, or reclamation standards that will avoid or minimize

effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse populations and its habitat.
Work with applicants to minimize habitat loss, fragmentation, and direct and indirect effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat.
Determine, in coordination with the respective state wildlife agency, whether the proposed authorization would likely have more than minor adverse effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat. If the proposed authorization would likely have more than minor adverse effects, then implement the policies and procedures set forth in the section immediately below (“All Other Proposed Authorizations/Activities”).
<i>Leasable Minerals (Solid and Fluid): Oil, Gas, and Geothermal</i>
Forest Service Only
Proposed Leasing (i.e., leasing availability determination analysis by the FS-a lease has not been issued and, therefore; no valid existing rights): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental analyses for leasing in areas affecting Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat shall adhere to current applicable policies and procedures. • The BLM often utilizes FS environmental analyses to support its independent leasing decisions; FS analyses and associated decisions/recommendations should be consistent with the leasable mineral guidance contained in the latest BLM Instructional Memorandum for Bi-State Sage Grouse • Exercise any authority that the Forest Service has with respect to the authorization of lease issuance for National Forest System lands to avoid or minimize adverse effects to Bi-State sage-grouse and Bi-State sage-grouse habitat.
Proposed Pending Authorizations (i.e., permit application has not been received or has been received and is being processed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in cooperation with applicants to minimize habitat loss, fragmentation, and direct and indirect effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat. • Determine, in coordination with the respective state wildlife agency, whether the proposed authorization would likely have more than minor adverse effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat. If the proposed authorization would likely have more than minor adverse effects, then then implement onsite and off-site mitigation for compensation of short-term and long-term effects.
Special Uses
When amending an authorization or reauthorizing a use, assess the impacts of ongoing use on Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat shall be assessed to avoid or minimize impacts to the extent practicable.
Within 3 kilometers of Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, avoid authorizing placement of overhead power lines or other tall structures that provide perch sites for raptors.
Determine whether the proposed use would likely result in more than minor adverse effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse and Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat. If the proposed use likely would have more than minor adverse effects on Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider feasible alternatives for siting the use outside of habitat. • Identify technically feasible best management practices in terms of siting (e.g, burying power lines) that may be implemented, to avoid or minimize impacts on Bi-State sage-grouse or Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat. • Develop mitigation measures for construction, maintenance, operation, and reclamation of the proposed use that minimize impacts to Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat.
Where Bi-State Sage Grouse conservation opportunities exist, BLM District and Field offices should work

in cooperation with rights-of-way (ROW) holders to conduct maintenance and operation activities, authorized under an approved ROW grant, to avoid and minimize effects on Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat.
When renewing or amending ROWs, assess the impacts of ongoing use of the ROW to Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat and minimize such impacts to the extent allowed by law
<p>Pending and Future ROW Applications (i.e., permit application has not been received or has been received and is being processed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with applicants to minimize habitat loss, fragmentation, and direct and indirect effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat. • Determine, in coordination with the respective state wildlife agency, whether the proposed ROW would likely have more than minor adverse effects to Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat. If the proposed ROW would likely have more than minor adverse effects, then implement the use of onsite and off-site mitigation for compensation of short-term and long-term effects.
<p>For pending applications, assess the impact of the proposed ROW on Bi-State Sage Grouse and its habitat, and implement the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include an alternative for siting the ROW outside of the Habitat or within a designated utility/transportation corridor are considered and analyzed in the NEPA document. • Identify technically feasible best management practices, conditions, etc. (e.g., siting, burying power lines) that may be implemented in order to eliminate or minimize impacts.
For ROWs where the total project disturbance from the ROW and any connected action is less than 1 linear mile, or 2 acres of disturbance, develop mitigation measures related to construction, maintenance, operation, and reclamation activities that, as determined in cooperation with the respective state wildlife agency, would cumulatively maintain or enhance Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat.
Air Quality
No proposed changes
Research Natural Areas
No proposed changes
Renewable Energy Development
Do not site wind/solar energy development in Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat.
Site wind/solar energy development at least five miles from active Bi-State Sage Grouse leks.
Site wind energy development at least four miles from the perimeter of Bi-State Sage Grouse winter habitat.
Rights-of-way for industrial wind/solar construction will be prohibited in or near ACECs and occupied habitats. 5-10 mile buffers between these habitats and wind development are required.
Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Control and Management
<p>Proposed Authorizations/Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management actions and operating procedures may include, but are not limited, to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evaluate and restrict or modify treatment methods and timing of use or other mitigation. ○ Avoid spraying treatment areas in May and June (or as appropriate to local circumstances) to provide insect availability for early development of Bi-State Sage Grouse chicks.

- Application timing should be implemented to reduce disturbance and impacts to Bi-State Sage Grouse
- Use approved chemicals with the lowest toxicity to Bi-State Sage Grouse that still provide effective control of grasshopper and Mormon cricket. Coordinate with APHIS to determine the approved chemical with the lowest toxicity.
- Evaluate the appropriate percentages of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) allowable chemical rates and the pros and cons of available chemical use, in coordination with state wildlife agencies, FWS, and APHIS.
- Use Carbaryl only when necessary to treat large grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations late in the season. APHIS will coordinate the use with the respective BLM state office prior to any application.
- Implement effectiveness monitoring, if warranted.

Monitoring

Effectiveness monitoring of grazing activities shall be considered to ensure that current management is meeting Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat objectives/desired conditions.

In Bi-State Sage Grouse habitat, monitor for, and treat invasive species associated with existing range improvements.

Continue to prioritize use, supervision and effectiveness monitoring of grazing activities to ensure compliance with permit conditions and that progress is being made on achieving land health standards.

Appendix A

<i>Sage-Grouse Habitat Objectives</i> *			
Life Requisite	Habitat Indicator	Objective	Notes
GENERAL			
All life stages	Rangeland Health Standards	Meeting all standards	
LEK			
Cover	Availability of sagebrush cover	Has adjacent sagebrush cover	Connelly et al. 2000 Blomberg et al. 2012
Security	Proximity of tall trees or other tall structures	None within line of sight of lek and none to uncommon within 3 km.	Connelly et al. 2000
NESTING			
Cover	Sagebrush canopy cover (%)	≥20	Kolada et al. 2009a. Kolada et al. 2009b.
	Sagebrush species present	Includes <i>Artemesia tridentata</i> subspecies	Coates et al. 2011 Kolada et al. 2009a Kolada et al. 2009b
	Perennial grass cover (%)	≥10 if shrub cover <25	Coates et al. 2011 Coates and Delehanty 2010
	Annual grass (%)	<5	Blomberg et al. 2012
	Total shrub cover (%)	≥40	Coates and Delehanty 2010 Kolada et al. 2009a Lockyer et al., In review
BROOD-REARING/SUMMER			
Cover	Sagebrush canopy cover (%)	≥10	Connelly et al. 2000
Cover and Food	Perennial forb canopy cover (%)	≥5 arid ≥15 mesic	<u>Casazza et al. 2011</u> Lockyer et al., In review
Food	Perennial forb availability	≥5 species present**	<u>Casazza et al. 2011</u>
	Riparian Areas/Meadows	Manage for PFC	
	Conifer encroachment	<3 phase I (0 – 25% cover) No phase II (25 – 50% cover) No phase III (>50% cover) within 850 m buffer of microhabitat plot	<u>Casazza et al. 2011</u> Coates et al. In prep (A)
	Riparian Area/Meadow Interspersion	Perimeter to area ratio of 0.15 within 159 m buffer of the microhabitat plot	<u>Casazza et al. 2011</u>

*Sage-Grouse Habitat Objectives**

Life Requisite	Habitat Indicator	Objective	Notes
BROOD-REARING/WINTER			
Cover and Food	Sagebrush canopy cover (%)	≥10	Connelly et al. 2000
	Sagebrush height (cm)	≥25	Connelly et al. 2000
	Conifer encroachment	<5 phase I (0 – 25% cover) no phase II (25 – 50% cover) no phase III (>50% cover) within 850 m buffer of microhabitat plot	Coates et al. In prep (A) Coates et al. In prep (B) Doherty et al. 2008
	Sagebrush extent	>85% sagebrush land cover within 850 m buffer centered on microhabitat plot	Coates et al. In prep (B) Doherty et al. 2008
	Sagebrush species comp	>50% <i>A. tridentate</i> 25% <i>A. arbuscula</i> 25% <i>A. vaseyana</i>	Coates et al. In prep (B)