
Appendix K

Greater Sage-Grouse Noise Protocol

APPENDIX K

GREATER SAGE-GROUSE NOISE PROTOCOL

The following recommendations are intended to serve as a general protocol for collection of noise measurements in areas of existing and proposed development. The intent is to provide guidelines to experienced personnel so that measurements are made in a consistent and accurate manner and to highlight areas where specialized training and equipment is required. The goal is to develop a protocol that is efficient, effective, and produces consistent results. The protocol was written to facilitate the gathering of noise measurements relevant to stipulations for GRSG protection. Use of a standard protocol for noise monitoring will ensure that future measurements are comparable across locations, times, and surveyors. This protocol should be considered a work in progress and should be updated, in coordination with appropriate entities as data needs and availability change (Blickley and Patricelli 2013).

SUMMARY OF NOISE-MONITORING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Measurements should be made by qualified personnel experienced in acoustical monitoring.
- Measurements should be made with a high quality, calibrated Type I (noise floor < 25 dB) sound level meter (SLM) with a microphone windscreen and (where applicable) environmental housing.
- Measurements should be collected during times when noise exposure is most likely to affect greater sage-grouse— nights and mornings (i.e. 6 pm – 9 am) and should be taken for ≥1 hour at each site, ideally over multiple days with suitable climactic conditions. To capture typical variability in noise level at the site of interest, deployment of SLM units for multiple days is preferred.
- Environmental conditions should be measured throughout noise measurement periods so that measurements made during unsuitable conditions can be excluded.

- Measurements should be made at multiple (3-4) locations between each noise source and the edge of the protected area. On-lek measurements should exclude time periods when birds are lekking.
- Accurate location data should be collected for each measurement location. Surveyors also should catalog the type and location of all nearby sources of anthropogenic noise.
- Critical metrics should be collected: L50, L90, L10, Leq, and Lmax. All measurements should be collected in A-weighted decibels (dBA) and, if possible, also collected in unweighted (dBF) and C-weighted (dBC) decibels. If possible, SLM should log 1/3-octave band levels throughout the measurement period. Additional metrics may be collected, depending on the goals of the study.
- Due to the difficulty of measuring ambient noise levels in quiet conditions, we recommend the use of both empirical sampling and ambient noise modeling to establish baseline ambient values.

REFERENCES

See the following studies for complete protocols and methods:

- Blickley, J. L, and G. L. Patricelli. 2013. Noise monitoring recommendations for Greater Sage-Grouse habitat in Wyoming. Prepared for the PAPA, Pinedale, WY.
- Ambrose, S., and C. Florian. 2013. Sound Levels of Gas Field Activities at Greater Sage-Grouse Leks, Pinedale Anticline Project Area, Wyoming. Prepared for Wyoming Game and Fish Department Cheyenne, WY.