

Appendix N

Proposed Plan Mapping Adjustments



This Page Intentionally Blank

N. Mapping Adjustments in Development of Proposed Plan Map Differences between Draft EIS Preferred Alternatives and Proposed Plan

Overview: The preparation of the Alternative D (BLM/FS Alternative) GRSG map in the DEIS (the GRSG Management Area map) involved modeling of Preliminary Priority and Preliminary General Habitat (PPH/PGH) by Idaho BLM using available GRSG lek data, Breeding Bird Density and Lek Connectivity Models, available winter habitat and additional refinements using available land use or vegetation data (e.g., agriculture, timber), and as well as expert opinion and additional local data. The Southwest Montana GRSG areas were refined by Montana BLM based on modeling and map refinements previously completed by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, based on their Core area designations. For the Utah portion of the Sawtooth National Forest, BLM/FS adopted Utah BLM's designation for that area.

For Alternative E in the DEIS, the Idaho Governor's Sage-Grouse Task Force re-configured the initial BLM PPH/PGH data to create three categories of Management Zones (Core, Important, General), using additional population and habitat information, to support an adaptive management strategy focused on GRSG conservation.

During review of the DEIS, mapping adjustments were made in response to public comments and were based on agency field and personnel input and discussions with State of Idaho and USFWS. Specifically, adjustments were intended to address the broad scale nature of the initial map and to address disparities. Specifically, certain portions of the Alternative D and Alternative E maps still encompassed some areas of non-habitat, such as timber or farm lands; or they were missing some areas of potential restoration or other locally definable areas or habitat; or were designated inappropriately as Core and/or Important.

As a result, in preparing the Proposed Plan/FEIS, BLM, Forest Service, USFWS and the State of Idaho worked together to refine the GRSG Habitat Management Area map. To resolve map disparities between Alternatives D and E, and to provide more recognizable boundaries of Habitat Management Areas on the ground, BLM and FS worked closely with field personnel in December 2013. During the winter and spring of 2014, BLM and FS also worked closely with the State of Idaho and USFWS (Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office, Boise) in re-evaluating the Core, Important or General Management Zone designations of Alternative E, in order to move forward with a map for the Proposed Plan (Alternative G) that met BLM and FS objectives for habitat and State of Idaho and USFWS objectives for populations. The final Proposed Plan map is identified in **Tables N-1** and **N-2**, displayed in **Map N-1**, and summarized as follows:

- Refinements in General Habitat delineations. Additional areas in south-central Idaho, Mountain Home and the Weiser area were added as General Habitat Management Areas (approximately 488,018 acres); these areas were previously encompassed by "Restoration" areas identified in Alternative F, of the DEIS. The additional areas contain similar habitat characteristics as General habitat areas. Specifically, General Habitat Management Areas (GHMAs) encompass habitat outside of Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMAs) or Important

Habitat Management Areas (IHMA) and contain approximately 10 percent of the occupied GRSG leks that are also of relatively low male attendance compared to leks in PHMA or IHMA. The GHMA are generally characterized by lower quality, disturbed or patchy habitat or low lek connectivity. These additional areas added to the GHMA are annual grassland or perennial grassland areas, from the Idaho “Key Habitat Map” that had been previously excluded from the initial PPH/PGH model; or were based on additional field input. These areas have restoration potential to GRSG habitat, or involve past or ongoing restoration efforts therefore were incorporated into the map, based on recommendations from the field and are characterized by lower quality, disturbed or patchy habitat or low lek connectivity. As a result, the additional areas embody the same or similar characteristics as those areas identified as General habitat in the DEIS.

- Small Isolated Areas. These areas (i.e., less than 500 acres in size) referred to as “Donut holes” of non-habitat inside of a larger matrix of habitat were classified according to the surrounding habitat. As a result of mapping corrections and refinements, data was collected from BLM Field Offices. This data showed that there were many areas that contained holes of non-habitat within larger tracts of habitat. In order to ensure efficient and practicable management of these areas, these areas (holes) will be managed according to the habitat management designation that governs the surrounding area. The total acreage of all of these areas is a small percentage of the total planning area. Specifically, the areas that comprise the “donut holes” amounts to 6,746 acres out of approximately 11,000,000 acres of habitat in the planning area. This amounts to only 0.06 percent of the entire planning area/habitat.
- Snapping of Priority, Important, or General Habitat Management Areas to meaningful edges or features (canyons, allotment/pasture boundaries, roads etc.) was completed at the field level to facilitate use of the map designations at the field level.
- Refinements in Important and Priority Habitat delineations. In the case of Priority, refinements arose from very minor adjustments in localized areas during the snapping exercise. Similar minor refinements were made for Important designations. However, in the southern Big Desert area near Craters of the Moon National Monument roughly 200,000 acres of General habitat identified in Alternative E were identified as having the same characteristics as Important habitat and therefore are depicted as Important in the Proposed Plan (see Table 2 Desert Conservation Area, Southern Big Desert Area Geographic Area). Smaller areas of IHMA refinements as described above were identified in the Owyhee Mountains, Cotterel/Jim Sage Mountains, Curlew National Grasslands and Bear Lake area. See Table 2 below for mapping adjustment details and acreages. Specifically, Important Habitat Management Areas are defined as areas of moderate to high conservation value to GRSG that are generally adjacent to PPMAs but reflect reduced GRSG population and/or habitat characteristics.

**Table N-1
Mapping Adjustment Summary**

Habitat Management Area	Alt. B (DEIS)	Alt. C (DEIS)	Alt. D (DEIS)	Alt. E (DEIS)	Alt. F (DEIS)	New Mapping Effort -Proposed Plan
Priority (Core – Alt E)	8,235,923.31	11,132,465.87	6,849,163.04	P- 694,581.01 C-4,213,562.21	8,235,923.31	5,192,615.53
Important (Medial – Alt D)	0	0	1,386,771.23	2,743,839.51		3,153,334.61
General	2,896,542.56	0	3,129,038.47	3,523,002.46	2,896,542.56	2,786,078.46
Restoration					500,334.74	

Table N-2
Mapping Adjustment Details by Geographic Area:

Conservation Area	Geographic Area	Initial Recommendation (BLM/FS field)	Final Decision and Rationale	Location and Acres (Depicted on Map 1)
WEST OWYHEE				
	Mountain tops in the Owyhee Mtns.	Field recommended including the top of mountains, previously mapped as non-habitat, as General. Some local records of bird use; likely some summer use	Left mountain tops as <u>non-habitat</u> . Difficult to justify as General based on nominal bird use and limited other information. No known lek or winter habitat.	A = 127,468 acres Is the total of non-habitat mountain tops
	Juniper encroachment surrounding Owyhee mountains	Field recommended classifying as Important due to potential for juniper control efforts and habitat improvement. No leks or winter habitat in vicinity.	Kept as <u>General</u> . Difficult to justify as “Important” due to general lack of leks/nest habitat or winter habitat in that zone. Juniper work should probably focus on juniper encroachment in adjacent Core areas. General designation does not preclude restoration work, if otherwise justified.	B = 229,290 acres Is the total number of GHMA in this area
	Owyhee front	This was a large oblong area recommended by the field to be changed from Important (as in Alt E) to Core, along the Owyhee Front. The majority of the area is overlain by recently modeled winter habitat and also encompasses a	Multiple discussions with the State and US FWS led to a delineation where much of the Owyhee Front remained as Important, with an additional area of Core (~25,000 ac) identified that overlaid a cluster of leks and nesting/winter habitat. Area maintained as Important has fewer and smaller leks.	C1 = 554,026 acres Total Area of IHMA in the Owyhee Front C2 = 70,827 Acres of PHMA Total in the Owyhee Front

Table N-2
Mapping Adjustment Details by Geographic Area:

Conservation Area	Geographic Area	Initial Recommendation (BLM/FS field)	Final Decision and Rationale	Location and Acres (Depicted on Map 1)
		number of occupied and undetermined status leks and nesting habitat. BLM also had concerns with protecting connectivity.		
SOUTHERN				
	Jarbidge FO	Field recommended removal of General habitat at north end of FO that burns repeatedly and modification of some Core to Important in southern 1/3 of the area.	Adopted recommendation for final map.	D = 232,331 acres GHMA Removed
	Burley FO-South Hills	Field recommended changing Core in west half or so of the South Hills to Important, based on existing infrastructure, recreation activity. Also included and important area of winter habitat west of Oakley as Core and added some General to Middle Mountain area.	Adopted recommendations a noted. Also retained Goose Creek area as <u>Important</u> as in Alt E.	E1 = 39,260 acres South Hills E2 = 5,283 acres Priority E3 = 26,174 acres Goose Creek Area as IHMA
	Burley FO-Jim Sage	Field recommended making part of Jim Sage Core; additional edits to Important and General.	Majority of Jim Sage mapped as Important. Proposed Core was small area not readily implementable.	F = 47,629 acres IHMA in Jim Sage

Table N-2
Mapping Adjustment Details by Geographic Area:

Conservation Area	Geographic Area	Initial Recommendation (BLM/FS field)	Final Decision and Rationale	Location and Acres (Depicted on Map 1)
	Burley FO-Cotterel	Field added some Important patches to top of Cotterels.	Adopted recommendation.	G = 14,279 acres IHMA on Cotterel Mountains
	Burley FO-No Mans/Basalt; North of Interstate area.	Field recommended removing the General habitat that extends from the north end of the Cotterels to Lake Walcott. There has been no known GRSG use for many years.	Adopted recommendation.	H = 137,827 acres Total of non-habitat
	Pocatello FO-Bear Lake	Field cleaned up slivers and added some Core. Recommended dropping the larger “U” shaped area of General. Recommended two smaller polygons of I and G north of Bear Lake be Core.	Retained the U shaped area as General habitat as there are two leks just to south. The polygons north of Bear Lake were designated “Important”.	I1 = 23,448 acres I2 = 39,249 acres IHMA N of bear lake
	Pocatello FO-Curlew area	Some additions/revisions to I and G.	Adopted recommendations.	J = 74,820 Habitat change from G to IHMA
MOUNTAIN VALLEY				
	Weiser	Field recommended adding substantial areas of Core and Important as well as additional,	Keep <u>entire area as General</u> as shown in Alt E. Added in some additional General in SW portion based on imagery and adjacency to	K = 181,308 acres GHMA added in the South

Table N-2
Mapping Adjustment Details by Geographic Area:

Conservation Area	Geographic Area	Initial Recommendation (BLM/FS field)	Final Decision and Rationale	Location and Acres (Depicted on Map 1)
		previously unmapped General based on additional scrutiny of imagery and lek information.	existing habitat. Size and number of leks did not justify proposed designation.	
	Challis	Field did extensive, detailed work edge snapping. Added some new General; changed a large area from Important (Alt E) to Core, per leks, uniqueness/isolated nature of area and connectivity with Moyer Basin to north.	Adopted the edge snapping and addition of General. Uniqueness and isolated nature is not a characteristic considered in the classification.	L = 135,608 acres Total GHMA habitat in the area
DESERT				
	Mountain Home	Field recommended certain “Restoration Type 2” (cheatgrass) areas shown on the “Key Habitat Map” be classified as Important. No leks. Adjacent to Interstate. Nesting habitat and winter habitat (in north half).	Adopted the addition of the R2 but classified as <u>General</u> . Since it is R2 (cheatgrass), it was difficult to justify as Important without more compelling information.	M = 44,939 acres GHMA added
	Wild Horse	Large area not on Alt D or E maps, but currently mapped as R2 (annual	Adopted addition of the R2 areas, but classified as <u>General</u> . Could be upgraded in future if restoration	N = 188,475 acres GHMA Added

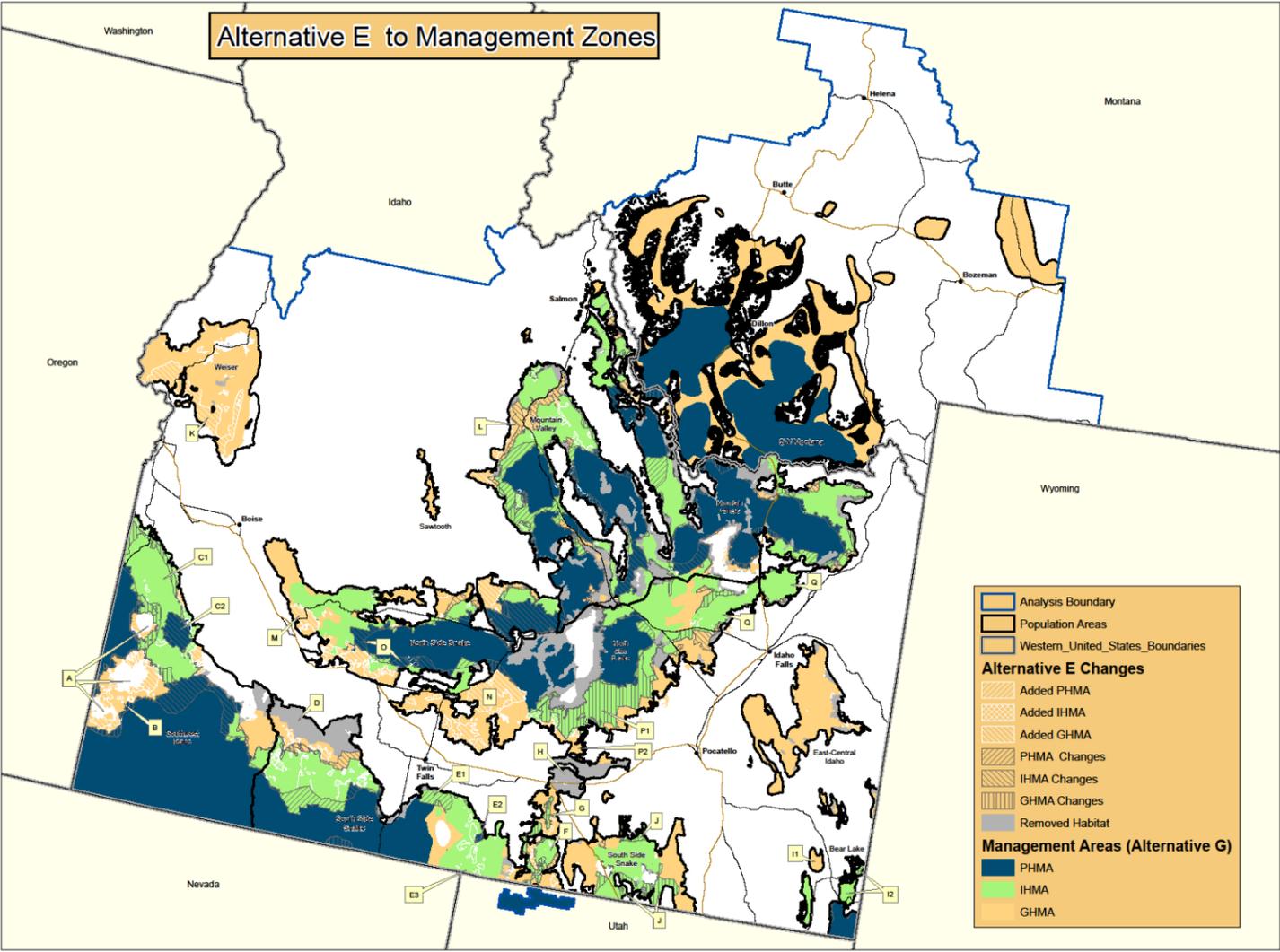
Table N-2
Mapping Adjustment Details by Geographic Area:

Conservation Area	Geographic Area	Initial Recommendation (BLM/FS field)	Final Decision and Rationale	Location and Acres (Depicted on Map 1)
		grassland) per the Key habitat map has ongoing restoration focus by Shoshone Field Office. Field recommended this area be added as Important. No significant lek presence (only one, small to south); majority is in between mapped winter areas.	efforts show progress and GRSG use, but not justified as Important at this time.	
	Core area in Shoshone FO	Some additional Core added by edge snapping exercise.	Adopted recommendation.	O = 79,687 acres
	Southern Big Desert area	Field recommended adding southern Big Desert area as Core due to leks, connectivity with Craters Nat. Monument core to the west and northern Big Desert Core. Also cut out some edge habitat that interfaced with agricultural land, lava.	Adopted S. Big Desert area as Important, adding to the overall area of PACs. Number and size of leks did not warrant Core designation. Also designated <u>Important</u> for the areas generally adjacent to southern end of the Craters of the Moon National Monument lava in the Brigham Point Area etc. This added a small acreage to the overall are of initial PACs.	P1 = 363,818 Total acres of IHMA in the South Desert and Brigham Point Area

Table N-2
Mapping Adjustment Details by Geographic Area:

Conservation Area	Geographic Area	Initial Recommendation (BLM/FS field)	Final Decision and Rationale	Location and Acres (Depicted on Map 1)
			Areas to the south of Power lines and east/south side of the Wapi flow were designated <u>General</u> .	P2 = 61,175 total of GHMA acres
	Idaho Falls/Roberts	Field recommended adding some areas of Core per snapping efforts around the edges. Added two small patches of Core near the Interstate; Added moderate sized Core area near Howe (but low lek density, no wintering habitat mapped).	Retained as Important. Changing the small patches near the Interstate to Core would create doughnut holes of different classification not implementable on the ground.	Q = 50,223 acres Stayed IHMA habitat

Map N-1. Proposed Plan Map Changes from Draft



Idaho and Southwestern Montana Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse Proposed LUPA/Final EIS
June 2015