PLAN CHANGE NO. 2

Page: WL pg 18, WL pg 40

Decision No: Wildlife
Appendix 1 – Wildlife Mitigation Guideline

DESCRIBE EXACTLY WHAT IS TO BE DELETED, ADDED, REWRITTEN, ETC. IN MOST CASES, THE NEW TEXT SHOULD BE STATED VERBATIM.

CHANGE: Per item 6 in IM-2004-057

Sage Grouse Leks: 1) Avoid surface disturbance or occupancy within ¼ mile of the perimeter of occupied sage grouse leks. 2) Avoid human activity between 8 PM and 8 AM from March 1 – May 15 within ¼ mile of the perimeter of occupied sage grouse leks.

Sage grouse Nesting/early brood rearing habitat: Avoid surface disturbing and disruptive activities in suitable sage grouse nesting and early brood rearing habitat within two miles of an occupied lek or in identified sage grouse nesting and early brood rearing habitat outside the 2 mile buffer from March 15 – July 15.

Sage grouse winter habitat: Avoid disturbance and disruptive activities in sage grouse winter habitat from November 15 – March 14.

(Disruptive activities will include, but not be limited to, the following examples: resource surveys that require that personnel be in nesting habitats for longer than 1 hour (e.g., excavation of cultural sites, land surveys, project construction, geophysical activities, permitted or organized recreational activities, prescribed fires, noise, etc.)

Exception to controlled surface use and timing restrictions will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Exception criteria will be established and included in new LUP's and revisions.

DESCRIBE EXACT RATIONALE FOR THE CHANGE, TO INCLUDE REFERENCE MATERIAL (I.E., EA, RMP, IM, ETC).

REASON:

The distances and timeframes noted above will hereafter be utilized in all new land use and activity plan development (including revisions) and other resource management implementation actions (authorizations and projects) that involve activities that may impact sage grouse or their habitats on BLM administered Public Lands in Wyoming. Those distances and timeframes are based on current information and may be subject to change in the future based upon new information.

Per Im-WY-2004-057 and the associated Statement of Policy (Items 1 through 11), Resource Management Plan (RMP) decisions (listed above) in the 2000 Newcastle Field Office RMP are revised to conform with the State Directors policy regarding timing and distance requirements. This action constitutes a "Plan Maintenance". No further requirements per the 1600 regulations are needed.

The Policy outlined in the IM establishes specific occupancy and time limitations for sage grouse relative to leks, nesting/early brood rearing habitat and winter habitat. The timeframes referenced in the IM are a refinement of data for sage grouse conservation and do not constitute a reallocation of resources.

IM-WY-2004-057 and the guidance/policy contained therein are part of this maintenance action. The content of the IM provides for sage grouse habitat definitions and should be review when managing sage grouse and associated habitats.

SIGNATURES AS APPROPRIATE

Specialist	[signature]	Date	12/2/2008
Field Manager	[signature]	Date	12/08/08

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In Reply Refer To:
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August 16, 2004

Instruction Memorandum No. WY-2004-057
Expires: 9/30/05

To: Field Managers and Deputy State Directors

From: State Director, Wyoming

Subject: Statement of Policy Regarding Sage-Grouse Management Definitions, and Use of Protective Stipulations, and Conditions of Approval (COAs)

The management of the greater sage-grouse (sage-grouse) and its habitat on western rangelands has become a matter of high public interest in recent years. Since much of the sage-grouse's habitat occurs on Public Lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), this species' welfare and management is also of significant concern to our agency. The purpose of this Instruction Memorandum is to provide general guidance and consistency for BLM (Wyoming) Field Offices for the conservation of sage-grouse and their habitats on Public Lands administered by the BLM in Wyoming.

BASIC SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT COMPONENTS AND TERMINOLOGY

To effectively manage for sage-grouse and their habitat it is necessary to have a basic, common, understanding of general sage-grouse biology and their habitat needs.

The following seasonal use periods and habitat components have been identified as important to sage-grouse and contribute to their productivity and conservation. The policy described herein relies heavily on these sage-grouse habitat components and definitions. Breeding and wintering habitats have been identified as limiting factors in sage-grouse populations across their range.

BREEDING HABITATS - Breeding habitats are composed of leks, nesting and early broad rearing habitats.

> **Leks** - A lek (also known as a strutting, or breeding ground) is a traditional courtship display area attended by male sage-grouse in, or adjacent to, sagebrush dominated habitat, and is the location where breeding of females occurs. The lek is typically an open area surrounded by potential nesting habitat. The common feature is that leks have less shrub and herbaceous cover than surrounding habitats. The sagebrush cover that surrounds the lek provides important hiding cover from predators for both the male sage-grouse and particularly the hen while attending the lek. Sagebrush cover immediately adjacent to the lek may, or may not, meet the following definition of productive, high quality, nesting habitat. The currently accepted Wyoming lek definitions can be found in Attachment 1.