

# Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Environmental Impact Statement

**BLM** - Forest Service  
Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy

Draft EIS Public Meetings  
February, 2013



# Why now?

- In April 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) determined that the Greater Sage-Grouse warranted protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- One of the primary threats identified in the FWS decision was a lack of regulatory mechanisms for protection of GRSG in BLM Resource Management Plans and the USFS Land Use Plans.
- The WY GRSG DEIS is part of a national effort to include GRSG conservation measures/regulatory mechanisms into RMPs.
- FWS has until 2015 to make a final determination on listing the Greater Sage-Grouse under the ESA.



# Roles and Responsibilities

What are the responsibilities of the lead agency in an EIS development?

- A lead agency shall supervise the preparation of an environmental impact statement

What are the responsibilities of the cooperating agency?

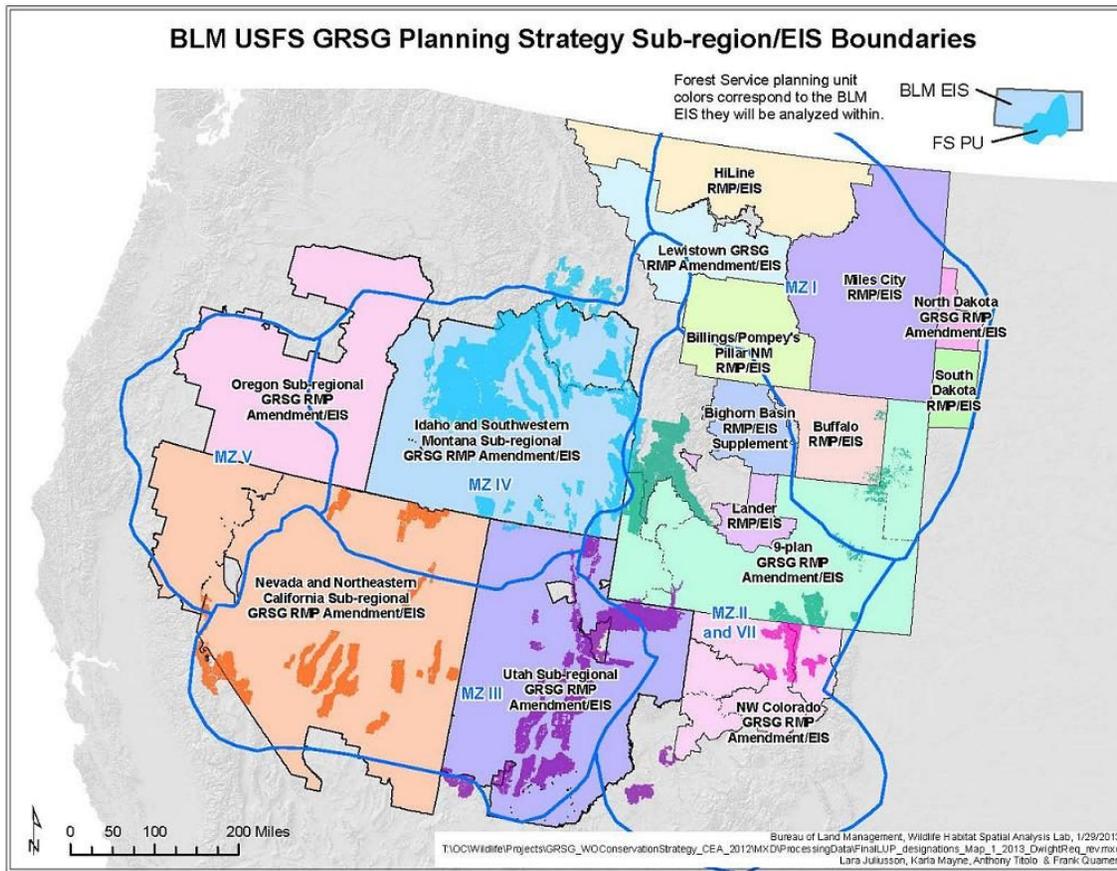
- Each cooperating agency shall:
  - Participate in the NEPA process at the earliest possible time.
  - Participate in the scoping process (described below in § 1501.7).
  - Assume on request of the lead agency responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses including portions of the environmental impact statement concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise.
  - Make available staff support at the lead agency's request to enhance the latter's interdisciplinary capability.

**\*\*For this project the BLM is the lead agency and the USFS is contributing as a cooperating agency.**

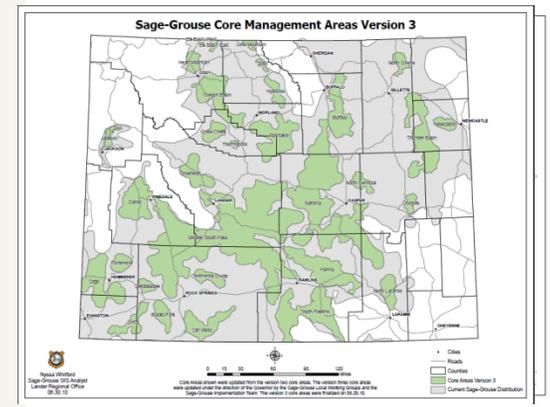


# How does Wyoming fit into the bigger picture?

- Wyoming contains about 50.5% of all of the GRSG habitat range-wide (regardless of ownership)
  - WY contains 38% of the range-wide GRSG population
- Of the GRSG habitat in WY, this project area contains 29% of the range-wide GRSG habitat



# Habitat Management



**Objective:** Maintain and increase current sage-grouse abundance and distribution by conserving, enhancing, or restoring the sagebrush ecosystem.

- **Disturbance Caps and the Density of Disturbances would be managed on a project by project basis throughout the sagebrush ecosystem.**
- **Note: The Wyoming density disturbance calculation tool will be used on a project by project basis to determine the level of existing disturbance.**



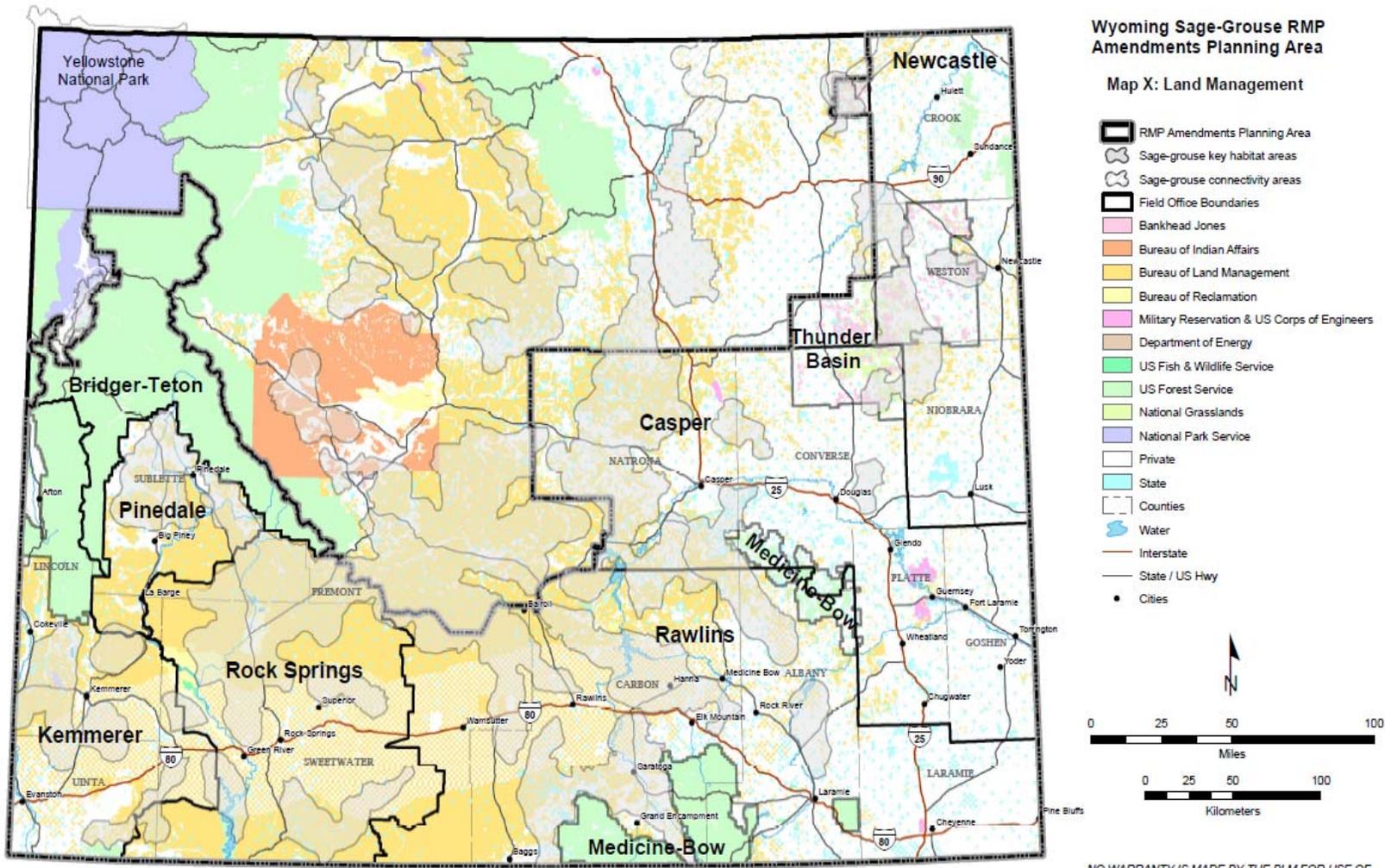
# Disturbance Cap Management

Cap	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Anthropogenic Disturbances	None	3% Disturbance Cap on Priority Habitat	3% Disturbance Cap on Priority Habitat	9% Disturbance Cap on Priority Habitat	5% Disturbance Cap on Priority Habitat

\* Cap management is accomplished using the Web-based Density and Disturbance Calculation Tool program developed by WYGISC, WGFD and the WY BLM.



# Core Habitat, General Habitat, and Connectivity Habitat



**Would Amend 6 BLM RMPs and 3 USFS Land Use Plans**

# Habitat Ownership

- **All Designated Habitat (regardless of ownership) = About 5 million acres**
- **Decision Area (BLM/FS surface) = About 16.2 million acres**
- **Decision Area (Federal Mineral Estate) = About 22.9 million acres**



# Sub-Population Threats in the Wyoming Project Area

Major Threats	Concerns
<b>Wyoming Basin Sub-population</b>	
Energy	Conifers
Grazing	Weeds/Annual Grasses
Recreation	Mining
Infrastructure	Free Roaming Equid
	Urbanization
	Sagebrush Elimination
	Fire
<b>Jackson Sub-population</b>	
Isolated/Small size	Fire
Weeds/Annual Grasses	Conifers
Recreation	Sagebrush
	Urbanization



# Alternatives

## Alternative A – No-Action

- Alternative A continues current management direction under existing planning documents for all six BLM field offices (Casper, Kemmerer, Newcastle, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs) involved in the planning effort, plus the Bridger-Teton National Forest, Medicine Bow National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grassland.
- The no action focused on current management of GRSG and GRSG habitat.

ACEC
No ACEC
Realty-ROW
Avoidance Acres: 2,460,340 Exclusion Acres: 285,930
Livestock Grazing
Available for livestock grazing



# Alternatives (Continued)

## **Alternative B**

- Alternative B analyzes management actions outlined in the National Technical Team's (NTT) report. Conservation measures under Alternative B are focused primarily on priority habitat areas that have the highest conservation value to maintaining or increasing GRSB populations. These conservation measures include such protections as right-of-way exclusions and a fluid mineral leasing closure.

<b>ACEC</b>
ACEC for priority habitat
<b>Realty-ROW</b>
Avoidance Acres: 6,390,010 Exclusion Acres: 5,141,340
<b>Livestock Grazing</b>
Available for livestock grazing



# Alternatives (Continued)

## **Alternative C**

- Alternative C analyzes management recommendations submitted by conservation groups for protection and conservation of GRSG and its habitat at the range-wide level.
- Conservation measures under Alternative C include creating an ACEC that would include all PPH and a grazing closure over All Designated Habitat (ADH) in the planning area.

<b>ACEC</b>
ACEC for priority habitat and Audubon Important Bird Areas
<b>Realty-ROW</b>
Avoidance Acres: 0 Exclusion Acres: 11,531,340
<b>Livestock Grazing</b>
Priority habitat (core areas) closed to livestock grazing



# Alternatives (Continued)

## **Alternative D**

- Alternative D, the sub-regional alternative, incorporates local adjustments to the NTT report plus the Wyoming Governor's Executive Order Greater Sage-grouse Core Area Protection which were developed with cooperating agencies. The purpose is to provide a balanced level of protection, restoration, enhancement and use of resources and services to meet ongoing programs and land uses. Conservation measures under Alternative D are focused on both GRSG core habitat, GRSG general habitat and connectivity habitats.

<b>ACEC</b>
No ACEC
<b>Realty-ROW</b>
Avoidance Acres: 1,211,030 Exclusion Acres: 5,141,340
<b>Livestock Grazing</b>
Available for livestock grazing



# Alternatives (Continued)

## *Alternative E (BLM's Preferred Alternative)*

- Alternative E, the sub-regional alternative, incorporates local adjustments to the NTT report, plus the Wyoming Governor's Executive Order Greater Sage-grouse Core Area Protection which were developed with cooperating agencies. The purpose is to provide a balanced level of protection, restoration, enhancement and use of resources and services to meet ongoing programs and land uses. Conservation measures under Alternative E are focused on both GRSG core habitat, GRSG general habitat and connectivity habitats.

<b>ACEC</b>
No ACEC
<b>Realty-ROW</b>
Avoidance Acres: 6,065,960 Exclusion Acres: 285,930
<b>Livestock Grazing</b>
Available for livestock grazing

**\*\*The Proposed Plan/ Final EIS could end up being a mixture of any of these alternatives. The BLM and FS do not have to choose one alternative in it's entirety, rather, they may pick and choose from each alternative to develop the Proposed Plan/Final EIS.**



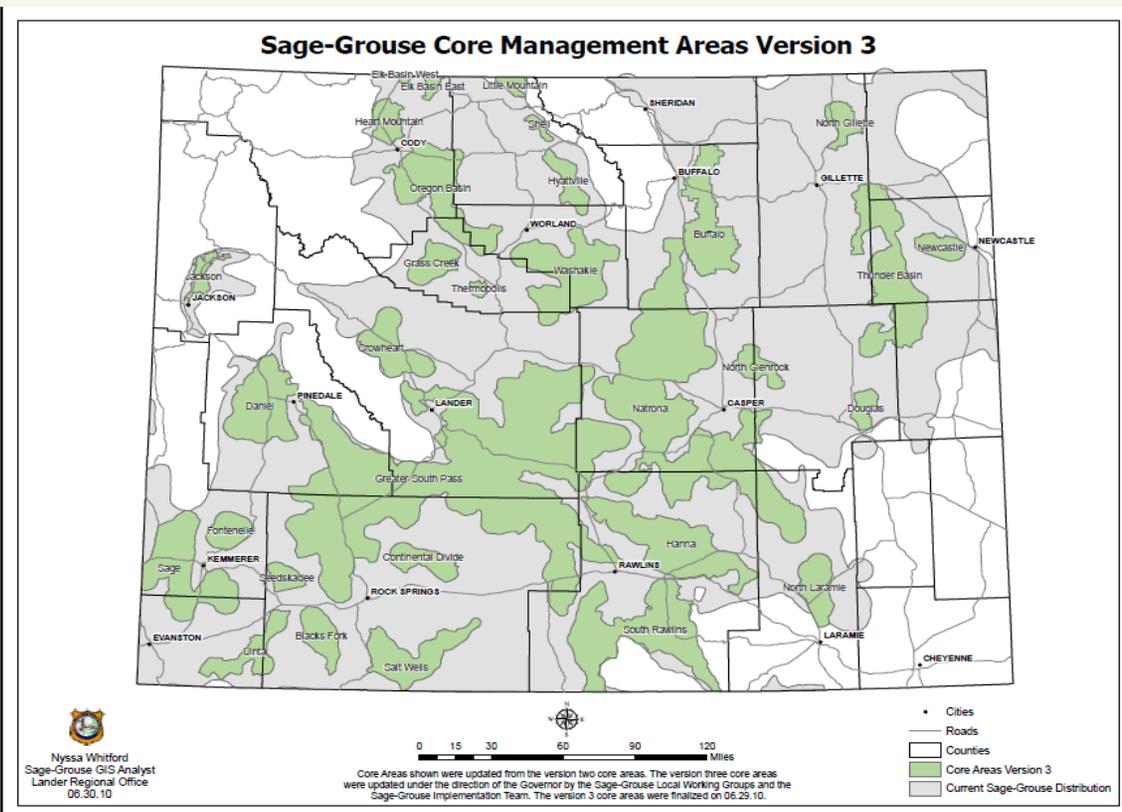
# Alternatives Summary

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
ACEC				
No ACEC	ACEC for priority habitat	ACEC for priority habitat and Audubon Important Bird Areas	No ACEC	No ACEC
Lands and Realty				
Avoidance Acres: 2,460,340 Exclusion Acres: 285,930	Avoidance Acres: 6,390,010 Exclusion Acres: 5,141,340	Avoidance Acres: 0 Exclusion Acres: 11,531,340	Avoidance Acres: 1,211,030 Exclusion Acres: 5,141,340	Avoidance Acres: 6,065,960 Exclusion Acres: 285,930
Livestock Grazing				
Available for livestock grazing	Available for livestock grazing	Priority habitat (core areas) closed to livestock grazing	Available for livestock grazing	Available for livestock grazing



# Wyoming Management Zones

- The green polygons display the Core Area designations, which primarily apply to Management Actions described in Alternatives B, C, D, and E.
- The gray polygons display the general habitat designations, which apply to specific management actions described in Alternatives C, D and E (a few cases in Alternative B.)



# Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Amendment

## Cooperating Agencies and Meetings Held

### Cooperating Agencies

- 9 Federal Agencies
- 8 State of Wyoming Agencies
- 16 Counties
- 10 Conservation Districts

### Cooperator Agency Meetings Held

- October/November/December 2010-Alternative Development
- March 2011-Alternatives Development
- October 2012- National Alternatives Development
- January 2013- Finalized National Alternatives
- May 2013- Preferred Alternative Development



# Navigating the Draft EIS

- Chapter 1 – Introduction, Purpose & Need
- Chapter 2 – Description of Alternatives
- Chapter 3 – Description of the Affected Environment
- Chapter 4 – Impact Analysis
- Chapter 5 – Consultation and Coordination
- Acronyms-Glossary, Literature Cited, Figures
- Appendices



# How to provide helpful comments

A substantive comment is a comment that does one or more of the following:

- Questions, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the RMP and EIS;
- Questions, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analysis;
- Presents new information relevant to the analysis.
- Adequately identified and evaluated impacts
- Adequately addressed ways to mitigate impacts



# Tips for providing helpful comments

- Provide substantive comments.
- Provide constructive solutions with documentation or resources to support your recommendations.
- Include any knowledge, experience or evidence as it relates to your observations and comments.
- Provide GPS/Township, Range, Section readings if possible when referring to specific locations.
- Avoid vague statements or concerns. These don't give the BLM something on which to act.
- Comments are not votes for or against a decision. The BLM must rely on supporting information, not the number of comments received. Multiple comments / topics with the same concern are considered one comment.



# How to submit your comments

- Email: Sagegrouse\_Amendment\_WY@blm.gov
- Fax: 307- 775-6129 – Attention Greater Sage Grouse EIS
- Mail: BLM Wyoming State Office – Greater Sage Grouse EIS, 5353 Yellowstone Road , Cheyenne, WY 82003



# WY GRSG EIS Next Steps

- **Current Status: Draft LUPA/EIS**
- **Draft Public Comment Period:**
  - December 27, March 27, 2014
  - **Public Meetings (4pm-7pm):**
    - FS, February 4th
    - BLM, February 5th
    - FS, February 6th
    - BLM, February 11<sup>th</sup>
    - BLM, February 12<sup>th</sup>
    - BLM, February 13th
- **Final: Fall 2014**
- **ROD: Fall/Winter 2014**



# Have Questions?

Lisa Solberg Schwab  
WY SG Amendment Project Manager

(307) 367-5340

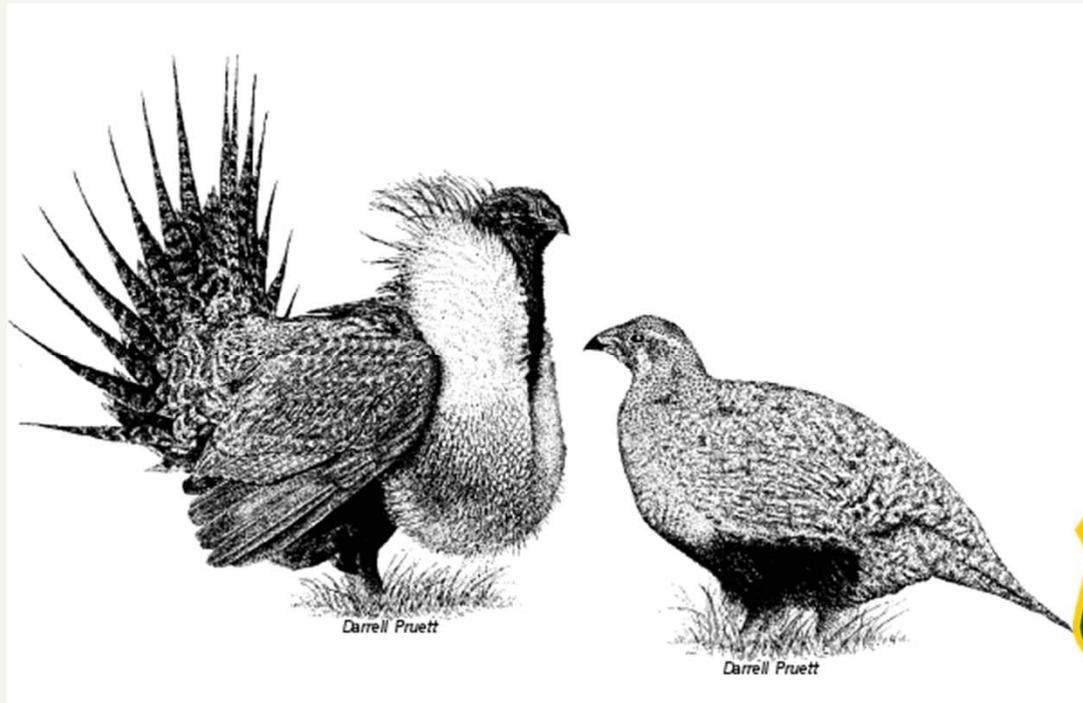
[lsolbergschwab@  
blm.gov](mailto:lsolbergschwab@blm.gov)

or

Caleb Hiner  
WY SG Planning Lead

(307) 347-5171

[chiner@blm.gov](mailto:chiner@blm.gov)



# Questions and Discussion

