



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Intermountain Region

324 25th Street  
Ogden, UT 84401

File Code: 2760  
Date: February 1, 2022

BLM-UTAH STATE OFFICE

Mrs. Patricia Diebert  
National Sage Grouse Coordinator  
Bureau of Land Management  
440 W 200 S, Suite 500  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

FEB 11 2022

RECEIVED

Dear Mrs. Diebert:

Thank you for your letter dated January 11, 2022, requesting the USDA's Forest Service participate as a cooperating agency during the National Environmental Policy Act process for the proposed withdraw of Sagebrush Focal Areas from location and entry under the Mining Law of 187.

The Forest Service looks forward to working with you as a cooperating agency as you re-initiate the planning process to consider whether a withdrawal is needed for conservation of sage grouse habitat on public and National Forest System lands.

The points of contact for the subject withdrawal are: John Shivik, Greater Sage-Grouse Coordinator and Program Leader, 435-757-6253 or [john.shivik@usda.gov](mailto:john.shivik@usda.gov); Heidie Torrealday, Regional Geologist / Minerals Program Lead, 208-677-8295 or [heidie.torrealday@usda.gov](mailto:heidie.torrealday@usda.gov); and Forrest Decker, Regional Boundary and Title Program Manager, 801-625-5226 or [forrest.decker@usda.gov](mailto:forrest.decker@usda.gov).

Sincerely,

MARY

FARNSWORTH

Digitally signed by MARY  
FARNSWORTH  
Date: 2022.02.01  
17:23:35 -07'00'

MARY FARNSWORTH  
Regional Forester

Enclosure

cc: Kathryn Conant, Forrest Decker, Heidie Torrealday, John Shivik, Elise Boeke, David Jenkins-BLM





United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
<https://www.blm.gov>



January 11, 2022

Ms. Mary Farnsworth  
Regional Forester  
U.S. Forest Service  
Intermountain Regional Office  
324 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
Ogden, UT 84401

Dear Ms. Farnsworth:

In compliance with an Order from the United States District Court for the District of Idaho (the Court), the Secretary of the Interior is re-initiating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for a proposal to withdraw the sagebrush focal areas (SFAs) from location and entry under the Mining Law of 1872 to protect Greater sage-grouse and its habitat (86 Federal Register 44742).

Consideration of the proposed withdrawal was initiated in September 2015 (80 Federal Register 57635, as corrected in 80 Federal Register 63583). In December 2016, the withdrawal proposal was amended and a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released for public comment (81 FR 96478). In October 2017, the BLM cancelled the withdrawal application and proposal, and terminated the preparation of the EIS (82 Federal Register 47248). The cancellation was then vacated by the Court on February 11, 2021 (Western Watersheds Project v. Bernhardt, Case No. 1:16-cv-00083-BLW, EFC 264). The Court ordered the BLM to consider "...whether the withdrawal is needed for sage grouse conservation. Such proceedings shall include re-initiation of the NEPA process."

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is now re-initiating the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), to inform the Secretary's consideration of whether to withdraw any of the lands proposed for withdrawal.

In 2016, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) agreed to serve as a cooperating agency for the development of this EIS (per 40 CFR 1508.5). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was executed on May 13, 2016, to memorialize the cooperating agency status (attached).

If you are interested in continuing to participate in the development of this EIS, please respond to this letter with your consent to continue working together under the existing MOU. If you would like to cease participating as a cooperating agency, please also respond to this letter to indicate such a preference. No response to this letter will be interpreted as your desire to cease participating as a cooperating agency. Please send your response with 15 days to Pat Deibert ([pdeibert@blm.gov](mailto:pdeibert@blm.gov); 307-757-3709).

Additional project information can be found on BLM's website at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/70697/510> (DOI-BLM-WO-WO3500-2016-0002-EIS), including applicable maps.

Further, we would like you to be aware that, separate from the subject of this letter, the BLM is initiating a process to reconsider the BLM's land use plans that address Greater sage-grouse habitat management. Additional information on that land use planning effort has been sent separately.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Jenkins", is written over the printed name and title.

David Jenkins

Assistant Director, Resources and Planning

Enclosure