

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

Utah State Office  
440 West 200 South, Suite 500  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101-1345

December 2025

# Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning

Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment for Utah







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<https://www.blm.gov/programs/fish-and-wildlife/sage-grouse>

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Lower Bar Photos (left to right):

US Fish and Wildlife, Rachel Woita, James Yule

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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and  
Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment  
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**Cooperating Agencies:**

United States Forest Service

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

State of Utah

Utah County

Department of War (including Utah Test and Training Range and Hill Air Force Base)

Daggett County

Beaver County

Emery County Public Lands

# Dear Reader Letter

In reply refer to:  
1610 (UT-930)  
Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning

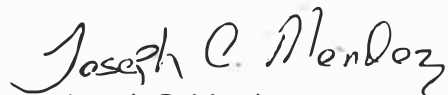
Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is pleased to announce the issuance of the Utah Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment for the Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning in Utah. This document includes both the Utah ROD and the Approved RMP Amendment for the Utah portion of the rangewide planning area. The Utah ROD and Approved RMP Amendment, as well as all associated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents, are available online on the BLM's National NEPA Register at: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016719/510>.

The Proposed RMP Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was released on November 15, 2024, and was subject to a 30-day protest period that ended December 16, 2024. Resolution of protests was delegated to the BLM Assistant Director for Resources and Planning on behalf of the BLM Director. The BLM received 60 unique protest letters during the 30-day protest period. The resolutions of the protests are summarized in the BLM Director's Protest Resolution Report: Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Proposed RMP Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement, which is available at: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/public-participation/protest-resolution-reports>.

Thank you for your interest in the Greater Sage-grouse RMP Amendment. There are numerous values and concerns associated with the management of greater sage-grouse habitat across the West. We remain committed to implementing the policies and conservation measures that will meet the BLM's multiple-use and sustained yield mandate, provide for the habitat needs to conserve greater sage-grouse, avoid the need to list under the Endangered Species Act, and minimize long-term regulatory burdens. Your continued involvement in the management of public lands in Utah is invaluable in ensuring BLM management will sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of BLM-administered lands for present and future generations.

Sincerely,



Joseph C. Mendez  
State Director, Acting  
Bureau of Land Management, Utah

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# Utah Record of Decision

## INTRODUCTION

This Utah Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment for Utah amends a subset of greater sage-grouse (GRSG) goals, objectives, allocations, and management direction in 14 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) RMPs in Utah. Following is a list of the plans by Utah BLM district that are amended:

### Green River District

- Vernal Resource Management Plan (2008)
- Price Resource Management Plan (2008)

### Color Country District

- Richfield Resource Management Plan (2008)
- Cedar/Beaver/Garfield/Antimony Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Pinyon Management Framework Plan (1978)

### Paria River District

- Kanab Resource Management Plan (2008)
- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Approved Resource Management Plan (2025)

### West Desert District

- Warm Springs Resource Management Plan (1987)
- House Range Resource Management Plan (1987)
- Pony Express Resource Management Plan (1990)
- Box Elder Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Randolph Management Framework Plan (1980)
- Park City Management Framework Plan (1975)
- Salt Lake District Isolated Tracts Planning Analysis (1985)

This Approved RMP Amendment builds on the work that was completed in BLM's 2015 and 2019 GRSG RMP Amendments and responds to the loss of habitat and the declining population of the GRSG.

Based on sagebrush distribution, GRSG have been historically distributed in all 29 Utah counties. Today, sage-grouse are found in 26 counties. Populations naturally fluctuate in Utah with peaks in populations occurring every eight to ten years. Overall population declines correspond with decreasing habitat quality and quantity seen throughout the West. In western Utah, GRSG are at highest risk from habitat loss and degradation associated with nonnative annual grass invasion, conifer encroachment, and related changes in fire risk while in eastern Utah they are at highest risk from habitat loss and disturbance associated with energy development.

Currently, the largest populations of GRSG in Utah are found in western Box Elder County; in Uintah County on Blue and Diamond Mountains; in Rich County; and in central Utah on Parker Mountain, which contains portions of Sevier, Piute, Wayne, and Garfield Counties. Smaller populations are found scattered in the central and southern parts of the state.

GRSG use a variety of habitats across the range in Utah to support their seasonal needs for breeding, summer, winter, and transitional habitats. GRSG habitat use in Utah includes zones from desert to alpine and subalpine areas. Background on the prior GRSG planning processes can be found in the Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Proposed RMP Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) in Chapter 1.2 GRSG Planning Background. This Approved RMP Amendment provides the BLM Utah with locally relevant management actions and allocations that achieve rangewide GRSG conservation goals consistent with the BLM's multiple use and sustained yield mission and in support of coordinated GRSG management efforts with federal, state, local, and Tribal partners.

The Utah Approved RMP Amendment amends language in existing RMPs relating to special status species (SSS), livestock grazing/range management, wild horses and burros, minerals resources, fluid minerals, locatable minerals, saleable minerals, non-energy leasable minerals, coal, mineral split-estate, utility scale solar and wind energy, and lands and realty (rights-of-way [ROWs]). This RMP Amendment identifies updated GRSG Habitat Management Areas (HMAs) that apply habitat conservation measures in areas where it will be most beneficial and effective to long-term GRSG conservation. Within these HMAs updated rangewide management direction for the following resource topics will be applied: utility scale solar and wind development; fluid, saleable, and non-energy leasable mineral development; major and minor ROW development; livestock grazing; wild horse and burros; predation; mitigation; disturbance cap; adaptive management; criteria based management for non-habitat; updated GRSG habitat objectives, updated GRSG lek definitions, and an updated monitoring framework. Additionally, Utah has also developed on a state-specific basis management direction for: General Habitat Management Areas (GHMAs) – specifically related to major ROWs, utility scale solar and wind, and fluid minerals (including geothermal).

GRSG in Utah range across most of the state in approximately 380 confirmed active sage-grouse leks. GRSG in Utah have limited distributions and small population sizes compared to other states within the GRSG range. Some of these differences required consideration of different management approaches at a local level and to address state-specific circumstances in contrast to rangewide approaches. In Utah, state-specific management direction was developed to respond to locally relevant habitat variability and circumstances in GHMA. GRSG HMA management in Utah is a result of different approaches to planning in the 2015 and 2019 Utah GRSG RMP amendments. In the BLM's 2019 GRSG Approved RMP Amendment, the BLM increased HMA alignment with the State of Utah's Sage-grouse Management Areas (SGMAs) and prioritized the importance of management prescriptions in Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMAs) in order to focus protection on seasonal habitats that support over 95% of GRSG populations in Utah. The Utah GHMA areas were removed in the 2019 planning process. During this RMP Amendment effort, BLM worked to increase HMA alignment with the State of Utah's GRSG priorities, working closely with the state to prioritize the importance of PHMA while retaining GHMA where it is associated with SGMAs, provides connectivity between PHMA, or provides opportunities for future habitat improvements. In addition, some areas of GHMA were determined to provide biologically import connectivity between locally proximate but separated PHMAs. As described in the **Rationale** section below and in the Approved RMP Amendment, management in these areas will be consistent with GHMA management direction, with the addition of providing specific management to maintain their connectivity characteristics.

Throughout this planning process, the BLM engaged with cooperating agencies, Tribes, and the public, as described below in the **Consultation and Coordination** section. The signing of this Utah ROD represents the conclusion of this GRSG planning process in the State of Utah.

This ROD approves the BLM's proposal to implement the management direction presented in the attached Approved RMP Amendment in the Utah decision area. This Approved RMP Amendment is largely based on the Proposed RMP Amendment in the Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Proposed RMP Amendment and Final EIS that was released on November 15, 2024, with adjustments and clarifications made during the Governor's Consistency Review process and to align with changes in regulation and policy, as described in the **Changes and Clarifications** section.

## DECISION AREA

The planning area is the geographic area within which the BLM will make decisions. A planning area boundary includes all lands regardless of ownership, but the BLM can only make decisions on public lands and federal mineral estate within the agency's jurisdiction. This rangewide amendment planning area includes all lands within the boundaries of BLM field offices that contain GRSG habitat, excluding the Bi-state distinct population segment (DPS) and the Columbia Basin DPS, which are addressed in other planning efforts. The planning area for this RMP Amendment includes portions of California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming, as shown in Map 1, in **Appendix I**, Maps and Tables.

The decision area includes the lands within the planning area for which the BLM has authority to make land use and management decisions, including areas where BLM administers subsurface minerals. In Utah, the decision area for this Approved RMP Amendment applies to BLM-administered areas with GRSG habitat, and the associated HMAs as shown in Map 2 in **Appendix I**, Maps and Tables. The HMAs in the Utah decision area includes approximately 3,238,610 acres of lands administered by BLM Utah (2,681,228 acres of BLM surface and 557,382 acres of subsurface) located in the following 23 Utah counties: Box Elder, Cache, Rich, Morgan, Summit, Wasatch, Duchesne, Daggett, Uintah, Carbon, Grand, Emery, Sanpete, Utah, Tooele, Juab, Sevier, Beaver, Piute, Wayne, Iron, Garfield, and Kane.

## DECISION

The decision is hereby made to approve the attached Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Approved RMP Amendment for Utah. This RMP Amendment was prepared under the regulations implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) (43 CFR Part 1600). An environmental impact statement was prepared for this RMP Amendment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969<sup>1</sup> and the BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.3-1-(b). The BLM selected the RMP Amendment after careful consideration of input from the Governor of Utah, cooperating agencies, Tribes, and the public.

The decisions contained in the RMP Amendment are expressed as goals, objectives, allocations, and management directions. The decisions identified in the RMP Amendment are final and effective when this ROD is signed. The decisions contained in the RMP Amendment recognize and are consistent with valid existing rights. Future BLM decisions, including those that authorize third-party actions, would also be consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law. The decisions in this Approved RMP Amendment are

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<sup>1</sup> The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA are rescinded, effective April 11, 2025. The BLM has complied with applicable procedures/ regulations, including DOI's procedures/regulations implementing NEPA at 43 CFR Part 46, to meet the agency's obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

planning-level decisions. Additional steps will be taken to implement on-the-ground activities and may require additional design, environmental review, mitigation, and monitoring. The BLM will prepare appropriate documentation where necessary to comply with NEPA when making implementation-level decisions.

The Proposed RMP Amendment / Final EIS did not reconsider all GRSG management actions from the 2015 and 2019 RMP Amendments consistent with BLM's planning criteria and purpose and need, detailed below. Management actions in the 2015 and 2019 RMP Amendments that are not amended will remain in place (refer to **Appendix 2**, Comparison of Prior Greater Sage-grouse RMP Management Direction with Approved RMP Amendment - Crosswalk).

## PURPOSE AND NEED

As required by NEPA, the BLM identified the purpose and need for this RMP Amendment and developed a range of alternatives to meet the purpose and need. The preliminary purpose and need statement in the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS was refined in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS in response to cooperating agency and public input, and reads as follows:

The BLM's purpose is to amend certain goals, objectives, allocations, and management direction for GRSG management in its RMPs to respond to updated scientific information and changing land uses and provide for consistent and effective rangewide conservation based on biological information that is responsive to locally relevant habitat variability. Following an internal review of the effectiveness of 2015 and 2019 RMP Amendment decisions, including the degree to which those decisions sufficiently addressed threats to GRSG habitats and continued population declines, while balancing the BLM's ability to manage public lands for other uses, and as informed by updated scientific findings and feedback received from Tribal, federal, state, and local agencies and the public during the scoping period, the BLM proposes to amend the following RMP elements:

- Clarifying the existing GRSG RMP goal
- GRSG habitat management area alignments to incorporate new science and improve alignment along state boundaries along with the associated major land use allocations, including management for non-habitat within habitat management areas
- Adoption of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) definition of "lek" and "lek status"
- Mitigation
- GRSG habitat objectives
- Disturbance caps
- Fluid mineral development and leasing objectives
- Fluid mineral leasing waivers, exceptions, and modifications (WEMs)
- Utility-scale solar and wind energy development
- ROWs
- Minimizing threats from predation
- Livestock grazing
- Wild horse and burro management
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

- Adaptive Management
- Increase consistency with the 2019 Utah Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-grouse

Some management concerns are localized to circumstances in individual states and the ecological diversity across the sagebrush ecosystem. As such, the purpose of this planning effort also includes amending specific RMP management actions associated with state-specific circumstances to facilitate GRSG habitat conservation efforts. Beyond the rangewide considerations detailed above, states considered additional targeted amendments to existing management direction. Each state determined the need to amend management actions independently and based on a review of updated scientific information, changing land uses, and locally relevant habitat variability. Management actions targeted for amendment in some states include saleable minerals, fire and fuels, vegetation and invasives, lands and realty actions, project screening, lek buffers, and interagency coordination. Inclusion of a management category for amendment in one state does not necessitate consideration of this category in other states or the consideration of the category rangewide. See Section 2.5 of the Final EIS, State-Specific Circumstances, for more information.

Section 102 of the FLPMA, as amended, establishes a congressional policy objective that<sup>2</sup> BLM manage public lands “in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values; that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use.” BLM policy further directs the BLM to proactively initiate conservation measures and to minimize or avoid potential adverse effects to prevent decline of sensitive species. Specifically, the BLM’s Wildlife and Fisheries Management Manual, M-6500, directs the BLM to “conserve rare, vulnerable, and representative habitats, plant communities, and ecosystems,” with specific objectives to “develop and implement plans to ensure that the characteristics of rare, threatened, or representative habitat types are maintained,” and to “collaborate with other agencies, the States, and private groups to ensure protection of the best representative habitats/ecosystem/plant communities for each area.” The BLM’s Special Status Species Management Manual, M-6840 (2008), states “the BLM shall designate Bureau sensitive species and implement measures to conserve these species and their habitats...to promote their conservation and reduce the likelihood and need for such species to be listed pursuant to the ESA.”<sup>3</sup>

The BLM is therefore considering amending RMPs to:

- Address continued GRSG habitat losses, which can contribute to GRSG population declines. While GRSG populations experience natural fluctuations, monitoring indicates the most recent nadirs (low point of population cycles) are lower than the prior nadirs in most states. The U.S. Geological Survey<sup>4</sup> analyzed state-collected lek data and reported estimated rangewide population declines of nearly 80 percent from 1966-2021 and of 41 percent from 2002-2021. While some GRSG populations are stable to increasing, over 87 percent of areas throughout the range had declining

<sup>2</sup> This sentence has been updated to more accurately describe Section 102 of the FLPMA. The purpose and need presented in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS read “Section 102 of the FLPMA, as amended, requires the BLM to manage public lands...”.

<sup>3</sup> The September 2024 revisions to Special Status Species Management Manual M-6840 were rescinded in December 2025. The associated quoted policy direction was therefore updated to reflect the language from the 2008 Manual. The intent of this statement, that it is BLM policy to minimize the need for listing under the ESA, has not changed.

<sup>4</sup> Coates, P.S., Prochazka, B.G., Aldridge, C.L., O'Donnell, M.S., Edmunds, D.R., Monroe, A.P., Hanser, S.E., Wiechman, L.A., and Chenaille, M.P., 2023, Rangewide population trend analysis for greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)—Updated 1960–2022: U.S. Geological Survey Data Report 1175, 17 p., <https://doi.org/10.3133/drl175>.



populations since 2002. The quantity and quality of available habitat, as well as non-habitat factors such as disruptive activities and prolonged drought can affect the size and trend of GRSG populations. Analyses of satellite data show sagebrush availability across all land ownerships declined by approximately 3 percent (1.9 million acres) between 2012 and 2018. Nearly 60 percent of the sagebrush losses (approximately 1.1 million acres rangewide) occurred on BLM-administered lands. In the years 2016-2024, over 9.2 million acres<sup>5</sup> in sage-grouse range were burned by wildfire. Wildfire results in the greatest amount of direct habitat loss compared to other threats. This loss of habitat limits GRSG populations to smaller areas from which to obtain the needed habitat characteristics of food and cover. Constraining populations into smaller habitat areas accentuates impacts from other threats, which can then affect population trends. The BLM's 2021 Greater Sage-Grouse Plan Implementation Rangewide Monitoring Report for 2015-2020<sup>6</sup> identified 42 population triggers that had been tripped through 2020. Identifying, if possible, and responding to causal factors where population triggers have been tripped is critical to manage habitat to support state population objectives. In addition, habitat triggers were tripped sixteen times, attributable to sagebrush loss due to wildfires. The Monitoring Report estimated habitat loss of less than one percent in GRSG PHMA rangewide due to anthropogenic disturbance, although losses due to wildfire were more extensive. The anthropogenic loss on BLM lands is less than what scientific literature has identified as the threshold where GRSG abandon leks (Kirol et al., 2020). Disturbance from infrastructure in GHMA and other state-specific habitat management area designations averaged approximately 1.58 percent. To help address the continued losses of and impacts to habitat, the BLM proactively conducted sagebrush vegetation treatments on over 5.8 million acres<sup>7</sup> from 2016-2024. These included conifer removal, installation of fuel breaks, invasive species removal, habitat restoration, riparian restoration, and habitat protection.

- Ensure habitat management areas and associated decisions incorporate recent relevant science to prioritize management where it will provide conservation benefit and durability when considering the effects of extreme weather conditions including drought. Since the 2015 and 2019 planning efforts, hundreds of peer-reviewed scientific publications on GRSG and management of their habitats have been published. Some of these new publications are consistent with science the BLM previously considered while others identify new information. Several provide new spatial information on important population and habitat parameters for GRSG. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) also compiled and summarized peer-reviewed journal articles, data products, and formal technical reports related to GRSG since January 2015 (Teige, et. al. 2023). The BLM considered this new information and relevant science in developing and analyzing proposed management on BLM-administered lands.

<sup>5</sup> Total acres across the range of GRSG, including the Bi-State and Columbia Basin populations that are not included in this planning effort. Acres include all burned areas within the sage-grouse range maps, not limited to the RMP identified habitat management areas or just areas of sagebrush and sagebrush associated habitats. Acres are also inclusive of all ownerships, not just BLM-administered lands.

<sup>6</sup> Herren, V., E. Kachergis, A. Titolo, K. Mayne, S. Glazer, K. Lambert, B. Newman, and B. Franey. 2021. Greater sage-grouse plan implementation: Rangewide monitoring report for 2015–2020. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Denver, CO.

<sup>7</sup> Acres include areas of treatment funded by the BLM. While these are largely on BLM-administered lands, funding often is used on non-BLM-administered lands adjacent to treatments on BLM-administered lands. In addition, these acres may include double-counting different treatments on the same acres (e.g., conifer removal, followed by seeding counts as two different types of treatments that may occur on the same acres).

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS and the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS considered a range of alternatives designed to meet the BLM's purpose and need to respond to updated scientific information and changing land uses and provide for consistent and effective rangewide GRSG conservation based on biological information that is responsive to locally relevant habitat variability (refer to Purpose and Need, Section 1.4.2 of the Final EIS). The Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS analyzed six alternatives. The Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS analyzed those same alternatives along with a seventh alternative, the Proposed RMP Amendment, which was developed using elements from the other alternatives and in response to public and cooperating agency comments on the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS.

The Proposed RMP Amendment alternative in the Final EIS included management that was within the range of the alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIS and did not represent new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns bearing on the proposed action or its impacts, could have been reasonably anticipated for consideration by the public, and was responsive to public and cooperating agency feedback received on the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS. Therefore, the BLM determined that adding the Proposed RMP Amendment between the Draft EIS and Final EIS did not necessitate supplementation.

Following is a summary of the alternatives analyzed in the Final EIS. Section 2.3, Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS describes alternatives that were considered but not analyzed in detail.

### **Alternative 1 (Applicable Decisions from the 2015 Approved RMP Amendment)**

Alternative 1 included the applicable decisions from the 2015 Approved RMP Amendments that are proposed for amendment under this planning effort. Due to the U.S. District Court of Idaho's preliminary injunction preventing implementation of the 2019 Approved RMP Amendments (refer to explanation in Alternative 2 summary below) the BLM is currently implementing the 2015 Approved RMP Amendment. This includes designation of some areas of PHMA as Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFA) with a recommendation to withdraw them from location and entry under the Mining Law of 1872. Additionally, each project resulting in disruption to or loss of GRSG habitat must be mitigated to provide a net conservation gain, which would require use of compensatory mitigation.

### **Alternative 2 – No Action (Applicable Decisions from the 2019 Approved RMP Amendment)**

Alternative 2 is the No-Action Alternative and included the applicable decisions from the 2019 GRSG ROD/Approved RMP Amendments except in Montana/Dakotas, which did not amend their RMPs in 2019. This is the No Action because it reflects the management language currently in the BLM's approved land use plans. The U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho has issued a preliminary injunction, preventing the BLM from implementing the 2019 amendments, but not vacating them or their RODs. Because the 2019 RODs/Approved RMP Amendments were not vacated, they are the existing approved management plans. Under this alternative the BLM would apply the management from the 2019 Approved RMP Amendment. SFAs would be removed from the BLM RMPs in all states except Oregon and Montana; these areas would still be managed with all the protections of PHMA but would no longer include a recommendation for withdrawal (including in the Oregon SFAs). For projects that result in disruption to or loss of GRSG habitat, projects would be managed to minimize or eliminate threats to GRSG, or to improve the condition of GRSG habitat across the planning area, only requiring compensatory mitigation if required by the State, federal law, or if volunteered by the proponent.

### Alternative 3

Alternative 3 provided the most protective measures to preserve GRSG and its habitat of the alternatives analyzed. Alternative 3 would update the Habitat Management Area (HMA) boundaries based on new information and science that has become available since the 2015 and 2019 planning efforts. All HMAs would be managed as PHMA. The BLM would close PHMA to new fluid mineral leasing, saleable minerals/mineral materials permits, and nonenergy leasable minerals leasing (development associated with existing permits and leases would not be precluded). PHMA would be recommended for withdrawal from location and entry under the Mining Law of 1872 and unavailable for livestock grazing. PHMA would also be ROW exclusion areas. Where there are currently designated wild horse and burro herd management areas overlapping PHMA, the wild horse and burro herd management area would become a Herd Area that is not managed for wild horses and burros. Under Alternative 3, the BLM would designate 32 GRSG habitat ACECs across the multi-state planning area.

For BLM Utah, Alternative 3 Included 365,182 acres of ACECs. Refer to Appendix 5 in the Final EIS for specific information.

### Alternative 4

Alternative 4 would update the HMA boundaries and associated management based on new information and science that became available since the 2015 and 2019 efforts. While many of the allocations would be similar to Alternatives 1 and 2, the HMAs are updated to reflect new science. In addition, management associated with some of the major minimization measures (e.g., disturbance cap and adaptive management) is adjusted to address cross-boundary coordination of shared populations, rangewide biological and managerial concerns based on monitoring, and experience gained from implementing management for GRSG since 2015. Alternative 4 allowed compensatory mitigation to be used under specific conditions. Additional compensatory mitigation may be required where habitat and/or population adaptive management thresholds have been met. Areas previously identified as SFAs are generally managed as PHMA. The primary difference between management of SFAs in the 2015 Plans and PHMAs in this planning effort is that PHMA would not include a recommendation for withdrawal or prioritization strategies for oil and gas leasing and grazing permit renewals. For projects resulting in disruption to or loss of GRSG habitat, they would be managed to at least achieve no net loss of GRSG habitat, which could include compensatory mitigation.

For BLM Utah, Alternative 4 included some variations from the rangewide management direction for GHMA. Specifically, management for GRSG, fire, livestock grazing, wild horses and burros, mineral resources, and lands and realty were adjusted to align with rangewide management direction (i.e. incorporation of no net loss, non-habitat, minor updates and re-calculation of acres due to HMA boundary changes, incorporation of GHMA references where 2019 removed GHMA). These specific management components can be found in MA-SSS-5, MA-SSS-6, MA-SSS-1, MA-FIRE-8, MA-LG-1, MA-LG-5, MA-WHB-2, Objective MR-1, MA-MR-20, MA-MR-24, MA-LR-8, MA-LR-9, MA-RE-1, MA-MR-1, MA-MR-4, MA-MR-12, MA-MR-14, MA-MR-16, MA-MR-23, and MA-LR-7 in Appendix 2 of the Final EIS.

### Alternative 5

Alternative 5 was identified as the preferred alternative in the Draft EIS. Alternative 5 considers other potential alignments of habitat management areas and associated management to try to balance GRSG conservation with public land uses. If state governments updated the GRSG management area boundaries in their specific state plans, the BLM considered those boundaries on public lands in Alternative 5. HMAs are similar to but refined from Alternative 4 and restrictions would generally be similar to Alternative 4. Alternative 5 considered options with fewer restrictions on resource uses and provided more opportunities

for considering compensatory mitigation to offset impacts on GRSG and its habitat than Alternative 4. Areas previously identified as SFAs are generally managed as PHMA. The primary difference between management of SFAs in the 2015 Plans and PHMAs in this planning effort is that PHMA would not include a recommendation for withdrawal or prioritization strategies for oil and gas leasing and grazing permit renewals. For projects resulting in disruption to or loss of GRSG habitat, similar to Alternative 4 they would be managed to at least achieve no net loss of GRSG habitat, which could include compensatory mitigation, but there would be more flexibility to when and how compensatory mitigation would be conducted.

For BLM Utah, Alternative 5 included some variations from the rangewide management direction, which are the same as described for Alternative 4 with the added clarification that the GHMA management would be applied to the Alternative 5 GHMA boundaries.

### **Alternative 6**

Under Alternative 6, management for all habitat management areas and the resource topics being considered in the range of alternatives would be the same as described for Alternative 5 except that under Alternative 6, 32 ACECs across the multi-state planning area are proposed for designation. The same ACECs proposed for designation under Alternative 3 would be considered but the management direction for these areas would be less restrictive compared to Alternative 3.

For BLM Utah, Alternative 6 included 365,182 acres of ACECs and variations from the rangewide decisions, which are the same as described for Alternative 4 with the added clarification that GHMA management boundaries are the same as the Alternative 5 GHMA boundaries.

### **Proposed RMP Amendment**

The Final EIS Proposed RMP Amendment increased protections for GRSG and its habitat from the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 5) while aligning some HMA boundaries with the State of Utah's existing SGMAs. The Proposed RMP Amendment identified PHMA as exclusion for solar and wind and open to fluid mineral leasing with major stipulations (no surface occupancy (NSO)) with specific exceptions. PHMA remained an avoidance area for major ROWs but the exceptions for allowing development are narrower than Alternative 5. Since the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS, the BLM has also increased protections in PHMA by adding additional detail on the processes and requirements for compensatory mitigation; site-scale assessments; adaptive management; and fluid minerals WEMs to promote rangewide consistency and ensure proper tracking.

For BLM Utah, the Proposed RMP Amendment included some Utah-specific considerations. For GHMA, the Proposed RMP Amendment's management is the same as described in Alternative 4 but applied to the Proposed RMP's GHMA boundaries. More broadly, management of GHMA, which was removed in 2019, was restored for GRSG, fire, livestock grazing, wild horses and burros, mineral resources, and lands and realty and were adjusted to align with rangewide management direction (e.g. incorporation of non-habitat), minor updates and re-calculation of acres due to HMA boundary changes, and incorporation of GHMA. These specific management components can be found in MA-SSS-5, MA-SSS-6, MA-SSS-1, MA-FIRE-8, MA-LG-1, MA-LG-5, MA-WHBB-2, Objective MR-1, MA-MR-20, MA-MR-24, MA-LR-8, MA-LR-9, MA-RE-1, MA-MR-1, MA-MR-4, MA-MR-12, MA-MR-14, MA-MR-16, MA-MR-23, and MA-LR-7 in Appendix 2 of the Final EIS.

## RATIONALE FOR DECISION

The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah provides management that best meets the BLM's purpose of addressing updated scientific information and changing land uses, including information and uses not considered or addressed in the BLM's 2015 and 2019 amendments, provides for consistent and effective rangewide GRSG conservation that is responsive to locally relevant habitat variability, and most closely conforms with the State of Utah's 2019 Greater Sage-grouse Management Plan. The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah also best meets the need to address GRSG habitat loss while providing for consideration of local habitat variability in Utah's diverse GRSG habitat patterns and the BLM believes this management approach is better than previous management. While GRSG populations experience natural fluctuations, monitoring indicates the most recent nadirs (low point of population cycles) are lower than the prior nadirs in most states. The BLM manages approximately half of the remaining GRSG habitats and between 2015 and 2020 nearly 60 percent (1.1 million acres) of all sagebrush losses (approximately 1.9 million acres rangewide) occurred on BLM-administered lands as a result of wildfire. The Approved RMP Amendment addresses this issue and provides new management that allows for the conservation of GRSG habitat while balancing the BLM's requirements to manage public lands for multiple uses in accordance with FLPMA. The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah responds to statutes, regulations, and national policy, including Section 102 of FLPMA, BLM's Wildlife and Fisheries Management Manual, M-6500 and BLM's Special Status Species Management Manual, M-6840; Utah-specific habitat conditions and threats; and State of Utah GRSG policies and management priorities including the 2025 State of Utah Resource Management Plan, State of Utah Administrative Code – R-634-003 – Compensatory Mitigation Program, and 2019 Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-grouse in Utah. The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah also reflects the high degree of collaboration and input received from the cooperating Federal, State, and local governments; the feedback received from Tribal governments; and from the over 39,000 public comments received on the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS. The Approved RMP Amendment provides the necessary protections for GRSG habitat in light of anticipated development threats and negative impacts from extreme weather conditions while also ensuring an appropriate balance of public land uses. For all the reasons included in this decision, the BLM believes the management approach in the Approved RMPA is better than the previous management set forth in the 2015 and 2019 amendments that is being amended.

The following sections describe the decision rationale for key components of the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah. This includes how these components incorporate updated science and changing land uses, reduce habitat loss on BLM-administered lands, and incorporate feedback from Tribal, federal, state, and local governments and the public. Combined, these amendments to the management plans encompass the BLM's effort to develop a plan that has durability across the GRSG range while responding to the specific habitat needs, development threats, and public land uses in the Utah portion of the planning area.

### Habitat Management Areas

The identified HMA boundaries reflect updated habitat information that are based on monitoring data and recent scientific literature and the input and collaboration with the State of Utah (refer to Map 3 and 4 in **Appendix I**). The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah includes updated HMAs so GRSG habitat management will be prioritized where it will provide the greatest conservation value for the species. While updating the HMAs boundaries, the BLM considered the most updated monitoring and scientific data (e.g., Coates et. al., 2021; Cross et. al., 2018; Cross et. al., 2022; Cross et. al., 2023; Doherty et. al., 2016; Oyler-McCance et. al., 2022; Row et. al., 2018; Palmquist et. al., 2021; Rigge et al., 2021; Zimmerman et. al., 2022) and coordinated closely with federal and state land management and wildlife management agencies, including the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR). The HMAs prioritize management in areas with the best



remaining habitat that supports GRSG populations most likely to persist. By focusing management to reduce habitat loss in the refined HMA areas, the BLM protects habitat that supports more than 90 percent of the breeding birds in Utah including some of the highest population percentages throughout the GRSG range. Management is less focused in areas already heavily impacted by development, have marginal habitat, or where no breeding GRSG populations remain. Within the updated HMAs, management direction to conserve GRSG habitat will be applied as appropriate to: utility scale solar and wind development; fluid, saleable, non-energy leasable mineral development; major and minor ROW development; livestock grazing; wild horses and burros; predation; mitigation; disturbance cap; adaptive management; criteria based management for non-habitat; and updated habitat objectives and lek definitions.

The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah identifies two rangewide habitat management area types: PHMA<sup>8</sup> and GHMA. PHMAs have the highest habitat value and maintain sustainable GRSG populations in breeding, late brood-rearing, winter concentration areas, and migration or connectivity corridors. GHMAs are lands that are or have the reasonable potential to become occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of PHMA, are managed to sustain GRSG populations, and/or provide connectivity between patches of locally proximate PHMA. In addition to the new scientific publications mentioned above, the PHMA and GHMA boundaries were also updated using telemetry information collected and maintained in coordination with the State of Utah, and input from the expertise and experience from local federal and state biologists, in coordination with the State of Utah, UDWR, and other cooperating agencies.

In the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah, PHMA boundaries include 5,414,822 total acres (1,853,744 acres of BLM surface and 442,117 acres of federal split-estate minerals) and GHMA boundaries include 1,662,235 total acres (827,484 acres of BLM surface and 115,265 acres of split-estate minerals). These HMAs form the cornerstone of focusing BLM's GRSG conservation efforts in the areas where they will be the most beneficial and effective.

PHMA was developed to align with the State of Utah's SGMA (7,454,285 total acres of SGMA), resulting in 5,213,235 total acres (69.93%) of the BLM's PHMA overlapping with a State SGMA and encompassing 96.5% of all active leks in Utah. Approximately 919,733 acres of State SGMA does not overlap any PHMA or GHMA. Those areas of BLM's PHMA and GHMA that fall outside of the State of Utah's SGMA boundaries were coordinated closely with the State of Utah, who is currently in the process of updating their SGMA boundaries during their State Greater Sage-grouse Management Plan revision. Approximately 201,587 acres (2.7%) of PHMA and 340,866 acres (4.6%) of GHMA are outside of the SGMA boundaries. The BLM's GHMA was identified using the State of Utah's opportunity habitat, areas outside of but connected to PHMA where active leks occur, habitat improvement projects where restoration was completed for the benefit of GRSG, and areas between PHMA where connectivity is important such as between PHMA in Hamlin Valley, Bald Hills/Panguitch, Carbon Porphyry Bench area, and Uinta Browns Park/Diamond Mountain areas.

Three general areas warrant specific rationale, as coordination with the state regarding the boundaries for these areas resulted in changes between the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and this Utah ROD.

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<sup>8</sup> As described in the **Changes and Clarifications** section below, in the rangewide Proposed RMP Amendment, the BLM identified areas in PHMA that would receive increased protections to support conservation of GRSG habitat by reducing impacts from highly probable resource threats, referred to as PHMA with limited exceptions. None of these areas were identified in the Utah portion of the planning area. Additionally, this distinct management approach is not included in the Approved RMP Amendment for any other state; these areas are all identified solely as PHMA in the various respective state Approved RMP Amendments.

### ***Sheeprocks and West Tavaputs***

The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah retains portions of Sheeprocks and West Tavaputs as PHMA. HMA boundaries in West Tavaputs area applies the same strategy for identifying PHMA that was used in the 2015 and 2019 Approved RMP Amendments – specifically using a lek-centered approach to include habitat within a four-mile buffer from active GRSG leks as PHMA while retaining other habitat as GHMA. This strategy was applied to the most recent data for active leks in this area, ensuring that all active leks and adjacent nesting and brood-rearing habitats in West Tavaputs are in PHMA.

Since the 2015 and 2019 GRSG Approved RMP Amendments, substantial monitoring data has been collected by the State of Utah, and the BLM has implemented vegetation treatments in the Sheeprocks area. In close coordination with the State of Utah and UDWR, the PHMA and GHMA boundaries in the Sheeprocks areas were refined. All areas of important/high-use habitats based on radio-collar data and areas of important seasonal habitats and restoration areas are included in HMAs, and all eleven active leks are included in PHMA.

### ***Elimination of GHMA in Certain Areas Outside of Utah's SGMA***

BLM GHMA outside of the State of Utah's SGMA boundaries were eliminated in three areas.

The GHMA in the South Slope/Blue Bench area was eliminated as it is primarily tribal and private land. While there are six active leks within this area, the BLM does not have any appreciable amount of surface or split mineral-estate lands in this area and therefore the BLM HMA management has virtually no impact on the GRSG populations. The Ute Indian Tribe manages GRSG in accordance with their Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Ordinance on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation.

The GHMA in Morgan and Summit County areas was eliminated as it is primarily private lands. While there are five active leks within this area, the BLM does not have any appreciable amount of surface or split mineral-estate lands in this area and therefore the BLM HMA management has virtually no impact on the GRSG populations.

In the Uintah Basin, there have previously been three separate, isolated, and small GRSG subpopulations within GHMA (Deadman's Bench, East Bench, and Book Cliffs). There are currently no known active leks in these three areas based on the most recent data shared by the UDWR. These areas have substantial levels of existing and potential development and associated impacts in the GHMA areas, and have no known genetic connectivity with PHMA (see 2020 Utah Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) Appendix 2; 2024 Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS Appendix 3). For all of these reasons, the GHMA was removed from these areas in this effort to prioritize GRSG management where breeding populations exist.

Under the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah, as was the case for the 2015 GRSG Approved RMP Amendment, GHMA is managed according to the land use allocations that were in the applicable RMPs that pre-date the 2015 GRSG Approved RMP Amendment. With the elimination of GHMA in these areas, the allocations will remain the same (i.e., the pre-2015 allocations). The only changes for these areas are that the BLM will not require buffers for active leks or require project-specific compensatory mitigation, unless that compensatory mitigation is required to comply with a state mitigation plan, program, or authority, or a federal law other than FLPMA. These changes have negligible impact on GRSG as there are no known breeding populations and no active leks.

### **GHMA Connected to PHMA**

GHMA in other parts of the state connected to PHMA was retained to provide for population connectivity across state borders, between locally proximate PHMA, to support habitat restoration projects, and other known areas of occurrence (e.g., seasonal habitat use). This strategy for GHMA mapping and management is based on an approach coordinated with the State of Utah and UDWR to address inconsistencies raised during the Utah Governor's Consistency Review process. There are no leks in GHMA (where BLM has jurisdiction) because PHMA boundaries were delineated to include all leks within these areas which prioritized the importance of management prescriptions in PHMA to focus protection on seasonal habitats that support over 95% of GRSG populations in Utah.

### **Allocations and Management Direction**

In developing the Approved RMP Amendment's allocations and management direction for PHMA and GHMA, the BLM considered the effects of the alternatives identified in the Final EIS (Chapter 4 in the Final EIS) and the feedback received from the public, cooperating agencies, and Tribal governments on the analyses in the Draft EIS. Based on the analyses and feedback received on the Draft EIS, based on the Governor's Consistency Review process on the Final EIS, and to improve alignment with Federal policies, the BLM adjusted management for PHMA to narrow the provided flexibilities, providing additional criteria for local managers to apply when considering projects in PHMA. The resulting allocations and management directions retain a consideration of the 2010 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determination that listing the GRSG under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) was "warranted but precluded" by other priorities. However, in 2015, new information about the status of the species, potential threats, regulatory mechanisms, and conservation efforts led the USFWS to determine the species was not warranted for listing. The allocations in the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah will continue to reduce the potential for habitat loss by avoiding surface disturbance in the highest priority areas. Management considerations, in addition to the allocations, provide the opportunity for local managers, in coordination with the applicable State of Utah agencies with expertise, to consider local habitat conditions when evaluating project proposals. Beyond these opportunities to consider local habitat conditions, the BLM's Approved RMP Amendment for Utah also increases protection in PHMA allocations and management from the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS Preferred Alternative by:

- changing the PHMA utility scale solar and wind allocations from avoidance to exclusion with specific exception criteria for potential ancillary solar development;
- expanding the definition of major ROWs to include transmission and distribution line ROWs and narrowing the exceptions for allowing development;
- before granting exceptions to the disturbance cap, the exception must receive BLM State Director concurrence, exceptions must be tracked, and conditions for voluntary mitigation must be met;
- updating GRSG habitat objectives to require the identification of multiple lines of evidence to determine overall habitat suitability when completing site-scale assessments;
- more explicitly defining what habitat and population inputs will be considered for adaptive management thresholds and clarifying and emphasizing that coordination with state wildlife agencies will occur; and
- clarifying the fluid minerals WEMs management direction to promote rangewide consistency and ensure proper tracking of WEMs.

The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah in this decision is based on the Proposed RMP Amendment in the Final EIS (with clarifications as noted in the Changes and Clarifications section), which incorporates management direction approaches from all of the alternatives analyzed in the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS. The allocations and management direction are designed to minimize surface disturbance to address habitat needs and development threats on public lands while allowing for consideration of public land uses where local habitat conditions allow for development while meeting the RMP goal and objectives. This use of restrictions with explicit and specific considerations of local conditions provides the best opportunity to meet the BLM's multiple use and sustained yield mission to manage for GRSG habitat needs while allowing compatible land uses, as appropriate with local circumstances. Chapter 4 of the Final EIS details the potential impacts of these types of actions on GRSG and their habitat, both for the Proposed RMP and the other alternatives from which the Approved RMP was developed.

Following is a description of the habitat management objectives and associated allocations and direction to achieve these objectives.

### ***GRSG RMP Goal and GRSG Habitat Objectives***

The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah clarifies the RMP goal for GRSG management and the associated habitat management objectives, making them consistent across the GRSG range and providing associated management direction for a consistent approach to promote the long-term durability of BLM's conservation efforts on public lands. The updated objectives identify what constitutes suitable GRSG habitat at multiple spatial scales, addressing the habitat characteristics needed for seasonal habitats, dispersal, and migration and the need to limit habitat disturbance and fragmentation. The updated habitat objectives identify the scale at which specific habitat components must be considered. Compared to the 2015 and 2019 habitat objectives, the updated objectives acknowledge that habitat characteristics vary based on spatial scale, and that the conditions that characterize suitable habitat at the site scale vary based on ecological conditions throughout the range. The management direction provides methods for assessing habitat suitability through the use of Habitat Assessment Framework (HAF) assessments. However, specific vegetation conditions that characterize suitable habitat are moved from the objective itself and are instead summarized from the best available and locally applicable literature in the Habitat Indicator Tables. Because of this, the Appendix 4 Habitat Indicators Table was updated for this effort and will be periodically reviewed to incorporate the best available science in coordination with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal agencies. Additionally, the values provided in the Appendix 4 Habitat Indicators Table, as updated, will be used for HAF assessments. The Approved RMP Amendment focuses the objective on rangewide management for suitable habitat, but allows for local adaptation for the specific vegetation conditions that define suitable habitat throughout a GRSG range with diverse vegetation, topography, and ecology to be informed and adjusted by local and continuing research. These objectives and management directions allow for the ability to rapidly respond to updated science and monitoring data, including data and information received from cooperating agencies, including the USFWS, the UDWR, and the BLM's ongoing monitoring efforts.

### ***Solar, Wind, Major ROWs, and Fluid Mineral***

Compared to the No Action Alternative 2, PHMA in the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah is still an exclusion area for utility scale solar and wind energy and there is still a no surface occupancy (NSO) allocation for fluid minerals. However, there are exceptions for solar energy generation that are ancillary to other approved uses (e.g., fluid mineral development, data centers), and exceptions for the fluid mineral development if specified criteria can be met. PHMA is an avoidance area for major ROWs where development would be avoided unless a few site-specific conditions could be demonstrated for when

development could be allowed. GHMA are open for utility scale solar and wind development, and fluid mineral categories are a mix of NSO around active leks, with seasonal limitations in buffered areas around leks (based on pre-2015 RMP allocations); because there are no active leks in GHMA, none of these fluid mineral stipulations are currently applicable. GHMA is open to major ROWs. The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah does include the avoidance of wind, solar, and major ROWs in the specific areas of GHMA between PHMA in the Hamlin Valley, Bald Hills/Panguitch, Carbon/Porphry Bench area, and Uinta-Browns Park/Diamond Mountain areas to retain the connectivity between the PHMA in these areas. Development could be authorized in these areas if the Authorized Officer can document that there would be no negative impacts to any PHMA habitats or important seasonal habitats in these areas. New ROWs in the remainder of GHMA could be considered if they apply the pertinent management for discretionary activities in. GHMA outside of the specific areas identified (i.e., between PHMA in Hamlin Valley, Bald Hills/Panguitch, Carbon-Porphry Bench, and Uinta-Browns Park/Diamond Mountain) does not include any new GRSG allocations, and the allocation for other land uses in those four specific areas are the same as the rest of GHMA in Utah.

The allocation for fluid minerals (including geothermal) is open to leasing subject to no surface occupancy (NSO unless otherwise closed), controlled surface use (CSU), and timing limitations (TL). Stipulations on new leases would limit impacts to PHMA and GHMA and are intended to reduce or avoid direct disturbance, minimize surface-disturbing activities, and conserve habitat and population connectivity. WEMs would provide flexibility for fluid minerals development during implementation on a case-by-case basis if specific criteria are met.

These allocations respond to threats to both PHMA and connectivity between PHMA areas, addressing the impacts to GRSG populations from habitat loss, habitat avoidance, and disturbance while also ensuring that where possible and consistent with GRSG conservation in the state these uses can be allowed.

In addition to the changes in fluid mineral allocations and WEMs, the over-arching fluid mineral objective no longer requires prioritization outside of PHMA and GHMA. Appendix C in the BLM's planning handbook (BLM-1601-1) identifies land use planning decisions for fluid minerals. A land use plan is to identify, "consistent with the goals and objectives for natural resources," areas that are 1) open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form; 2) open to leasing subject to moderate constraints such as seasonal and controlled use restrictions; 3) open to leasing subject to major constraints such as no-surface-occupancy (NSO); 4) closed to leasing. The handbook also notes, similar to language from the Energy Policy Act of 2005, that "when applying leasing restrictions, the least restrictive constraint to meet the resource protection objective should be used" (BLM-1601-1 Appendix C page 24). The combination of open to leasing subject to NSO stipulation and the prioritization objective created a situation that has been confusing to the public over whether PHMA is open to leasing or not, and with what stipulations. Additionally, the planning handbook describes how an implementation strategy—not the RMP itself—is the appropriate tool for the BLM to prioritize RMP decisions to help achieve desired outcomes, taking into account the availability of existing or anticipated staff and budget resources. Therefore removing the prioritization process from the RMP aligns with current BLM planning guidance. This approach is also consistent with recent amendments to the Mineral Leasing Act through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (P.L. 119-21, Sec. 50101) ("OBBBA"), which limit the BLM's discretion for leasing parcels nominated in expressions of interest. Section 50101(d) of the OBBBA directs the BLM, acting on behalf of the Secretary, to make parcels known or believed to contain oil or gas deposits available for leasing "not later than 18 months" after receipt of an expression of interest, provided that the BLM "determines that the parcel of land is open to oil and gas leasing under the approved resource management plan applicable to the planning



area in which the parcel of land is located that is in effect on the date on which the expression of interest was submitted.” Retaining the prioritization process following enactment of section 50101(d) would potentially confuse the public and, for parcels nominated in expressions of interest, would likely be inconsistent or in tension with this new statutory direction. Finally, the analysis in the FEIS shows that prioritization is unnecessary for the BLM to provide sufficient protection for greater sage-grouse. The prioritization process provides no certain or durable protection to PHMA, and the BLM is retaining the stipulations associated with surface occupancy and disturbance cap.

Moreover, not including specific leasing prioritization language or a specific leasing strategy in the RMP does not remove the RMP’s desired condition to manage public lands for suitable GRSG habitat at the HAF mid-, fine- and site-scales. Fluid mineral leasing would be considered in GRSG habitat management areas consistent with the Secretary’s discretion to consider leasing or not leasing available public lands under the Mineral Leasing Act (as amended), subject to the limits on that discretion resulting from the amendments to the Mineral Leasing Act through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. If lands are considered for lease, the action and any subsequent development would comply with applicable BLM regulations and policies, and conform to the RMP GRSG goals, objectives, stipulations, and management actions.

### ***Locatable, Nonenergy Leasable, Saleable Minerals and Materials, and Coal***

All HMAs are open to locatable mineral development in accordance with the 1872 Mining Law, unless already withdrawn. Within PHMA, no new nonenergy leasable mineral development is allowed but the expansion of existing operations is allowed. GHMA is open to nonenergy leasable mineral development with the application of state-specific minimization measures. There is no change in these allocations compared to what was presented for PHMA and GHMA in 2015 and 2019 Approve RMP Amendments. The only difference in this planning effort is the adjustment of HMAs for where these allocations are applied.

Similarly, PHMA is still closed for saleable mineral development but open for new free use permits and open for the expansion of existing pits. GHMA is still open for saleable mineral development with the application of state-specific minimization measures.

For coal, in PHMA and GHMA, the BLM will conduct the regulatory-required suitability process (unless one has already been conducted) to determine if the lease application is “unsuitable” for all or certain coal mining methods and will coordinate with the State of Utah in making the determination. There is no presumption that any HMAs are automatically considered “essential” habitat based on the coal unsuitability regulations, as not all HMAs are entirely GRSG habitat, but include areas of non-habitat interspersed through the HMA.

This mineral management direction responds to state-specific circumstances, input received from cooperating agencies and the public; the direction will reduce habitat loss or disturbance in PHMA habitat while allowing use with the application of appropriate minimization measures in GHMA thereby balancing necessary GRSG protections with public land use.

### ***Livestock Grazing***

The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah directs management of livestock grazing to meet or make progress toward meeting the Land Health Standard (LHS) for special status species (SSS), based on existing BLM regulations and associated policies. This provides the tools to manage livestock grazing in a fashion consistent with healthy sagebrush systems, which in turn provide suitable habitat for GRSG. For example, the use of targeted grazing to manage fuel loads and fuel continuity is an example of using livestock to protect valuable habitat. The management direction in the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah calls for considering GRSG habitat conditions when renewing permits or when developing allotment management plans (or the

functional equivalent) and other similar implementation planning. This includes considering ways of implementing range improvements such as fencing in a manner that is consistent with GRSG persistence. In PHMA, when fully processing grazing authorizations, where livestock grazing is found to be a significant causal factor in not meeting the SSS standard, the NEPA analysis will include an alternative that identifies specific thresholds and responses to maintain or move PHMA toward providing suitable GRSG habitat. The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah also provides a suite of GRSG specific design features and best management practices for consideration and use when conducting livestock grazing (refer to **Appendix 5**, Livestock Grazing Management Best Management Practices and Design Features).

The livestock grazing management direction was identified in response to cooperating agency and public feedback, updated scientific and monitoring data, and builds on and clarifies how the existing management direction for livestock grazing will continue to be implemented in manner that is also consistent with managing for healthy sagebrush systems, which provide GRSG habitat.

### ***Wild Horse and Burro Management***

The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah provides management direction for wild horse and burro management that provides specific direction regarding how to promote GRSG habitat conservation when applying the existing BLM policies and approaches for wild horse and burro management. Specifically, the management direction in Utah seeks to address areas in GRSG habitat where horses are a significant causal factor in not meeting LHS. Scientific literature has found that managing wild horses and burros at or below appropriate management levels minimizes negative impacts on GRSG population trends (Coates et al. 2021a, Beck et al. 2024). Where GRSG habitat overlaps with wild horse ranges, the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah calls for managing wild horse populations within the established range of appropriate management levels and to achieve or make significant progress toward achieving LHS. The management direction also directs the prioritization of wild horse gathers in PHMA unless removals are necessary in other areas to address higher priority issues, including herd health impacts.

The wild horse and burro direction was identified in response to cooperating agency and public feedback, updated scientific and monitoring data, and builds on and clarifies how the existing management direction for wild horses will be implemented in manner that conserves GRSG habitat.

### ***Mitigation, Disturbance Cap, Adaptive Management, Predation***

As part of the comprehensive approach to promoting GRSG conservation, the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah also updates the BLM's GRSG mitigation, disturbance cap, and adaptive management processes. These updates are responsive to public and cooperating agency feedback, changes in BLM policies, and experience the BLM has gained implementing these programs for the past ten years. For example, the BLM has learned that mitigation is most effective when it can be applied where the habitat and population impacts are occurring and has found the results of calculating the disturbance cap at the HAF fine-scale to be the most useful scale of analysis. For these same reasons, the Approved RMP Amendment also creates new management direction that addresses the predation risks associated with disturbance activities in GRSG habitat.

The mitigation direction in the Approved RMP Amendment adopts the mitigation language from Alternative 2, focusing on avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, and reducing GRSG impacts, but only considering compensatory mitigation when voluntarily offered by a proponent, required by a law other than FLPMA, or to meet a State recommendation or requirement. This change from the Draft EIS preferred alternative is to align more closely with BLM's statutory authority. This results in working with the States to maintain existing

habitat as the initial approach to GRSG habitat management, then working closely with State plans and authorities to address the potential for compensation. The Approved RMP Amendment retains the entire breadth of mitigation tools to be implemented through conformance with the RMP, applicable statutes, and consistent with state plans and policies. Prior to granting fluid mineral exception number 2 or an exception to the disturbance cap, the criteria noted in the RMP related to compensatory mitigation voluntarily offered by the proponent would need to be documented, including the need to benefit the affected populations; these clarifications were made in response to cooperating agency feedback, BLM's experience implementing mitigation, and updated policies and science (e.g., Coates et al. 2021b). Adopting this mitigation strategy more closely aligns with the BLM's mitigation authorities, FLPMA requirements for consistency with State plans, and reflects the primary mitigation approach of avoiding and minimizing impacts through application of RMP allocations.

Recognizing the threat to GRSG that occurs from habitat disturbance and loss, the Approved RMP Amendment updates the disturbance cap direction and sets a 3% cap at the project scale and 3% at the HAF fine-scale. When these disturbance caps are met, new infrastructure projects would be deferred to the extent allowable under applicable laws or valid existing rights. This means that the BLM would not apply the disturbance cap in a manner that would interfere with any valid existing rights. The Approved RMP Amendment directs how the disturbance cap calculation will be done and identifies disturbance cap exceptions and related criteria. Based on the BLM's experience implementing the 2015 disturbance cap, the lack of exceptions and the patchy nature of GRSG habitat in Utah, the 2015 disturbance cap disincentivized avoiding impacts to the best habitats and also disincentivized implementing habitat restoration projects to offset habitat loss due to disturbance. The exceptions and considerations provided in the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah adjust this approach, incentivizing the location of projects outside of GRSG habitat in PHMA and encouraging habitat treatments to reduce the disturbance cap percentage.

If during ongoing BLM and UDWR monitoring it is found that unanticipated effects to GRSG are occurring, despite the ongoing implementation of RMP Amendment direction from 2015, 2019, and this Approved RMP Amendment, this amendment provides a method for BLM to address those impacts before they become severe or irreversible through adaptive management. The adaptive management language was changed to improve consistent rangewide adaptive management. The BLM closely coordinated with the Western Governors Association Sage-grouse Conservation Task Force (Task Force) to better align the BLM's adaptive management process with state policies and programs to manage GRSG populations. States expressed a need to clarify how state adaptive management approaches would be incorporated into the BLM's adaptive management process. The BLM worked closely with the Task Force to develop an adaptive management approach that recognizes state governments' authority to manage GRSG populations while remaining consistent with the BLM's adaptive management process in the Oregon and Colorado Approved RMPAs. The adaptive management direction is based on consideration of the best available science, including updated science examining population trend anomalies (Coates et al., 2021) and data collected by the State of Utah's Division of Wildlife Resources. The adaptive management direction identifies preliminary thresholds based on the Coates et al publication, with checks to confirm trends from other population trend data and expertise from state wildlife agencies. The adaptive management approach also provides for responses and a process for coordinating with the UDWR to reduce and reverse impacts on GRSG and GRSG habitat. While the BLM is retaining the threshold limits for habitat loss or modification as in previous plans, this approach adjusts the scale to a more scientifically appropriate scale and within comparable spatial analysis units. Due to the mixed land ownership patterns throughout Utah, continued coordination between the BLM and State of Utah agencies, as well as local governments and landowners, is crucial to successful implementation. Such coordination efforts would be strengthened through development of a Memorandum

of Understanding (MOU), establishing shared responsibilities and expectations for monitoring and adaptive management. During implementation, BLM will consider developing MOUs with interagency teams to guide the use of best available science to coordinate with state authorities.

The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah also addresses the secondary impact to GRSG from predation when habitat disturbance occurs (USFWS 2023). The management direction for predation responds to public and cooperating agency feedback that the BLM needed to address this topic as part of this amendment effort. The Approved RMP Amendment requires the application of minimization measures to new and existing projects to minimize threats from supplementing food sources for predators that pose a threat to GRSG consistent with applicable law. In PHMA, for authorizations that require expanded, new, renewal, or non-routine maintenance of energy, mining, or transmission related infrastructure projects, the project proponent is required to submit a predator subsidy management plan. This plan should identify how the proponent will minimize habitat loss, the associated influx of predators, and a plan for reducing food subsidies for predators as a result of the project. The predator subsidy management plan will help BLM ensure that appropriate design features and mitigation measures are put in place to minimize potential negative impacts to GRSG. The BLM does not have authority over predator control; however, the BLM will continue to cooperate with other agencies should direct predator control be necessary. BLM Utah will specifically work with applicable agencies and the State of Utah to develop a MOU to address and reduce conflicts with ravens and other native and non-native predators throughout GRSG habitat, allowing the wide array of agencies with different jurisdictions related to predator management to work together to reduce this GRSG threat.

The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah for mitigation, disturbance cap, adaptive management, and predation provides BLM with a comprehensive suite of tools to ensure that GRSG conservation measures are effective, and BLM is able to be responsive to anticipated threats as well as unanticipated impacts.

### Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

In Utah, the BLM considered two areas for potential designation as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for GRSG habitat. These areas were first identified through both external nominations and internal rangewide and state-specific review processes that were subsequently evaluated by BLM biologists to determine if they met the ACEC relevance and importance criteria identified in 43 CFR 1610.7-2 (3)(i) and (ii). Appendix 5, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern for Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat, in the Final EIS contains information on the nomination and evaluation process. With input from cooperating agencies and the public, combined with the analyses in the Final EIS, the BLM identified the following two areas as meeting the relevance and importance criteria and included them, in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.7-2 (g) under Alternative 3 and Alternative 6 in the Final EIS as potential ACECs:

ACEC considered	Acres
Rich	132,924 acres
Box Elder	232,258 acres
<b>Total</b>	<b>365,182</b>

To be designated an ACEC, in addition to meeting the relevance and importance criteria, an area must also meet the special management attention criterion which is identified in 43 CFR 1610.7-2:

**(3) Special management attention.** *The important historic, cultural, or scenic values; fish or wildlife resources; natural systems or processes; or natural hazards potentially impacting life and safety require special management attention. “Special management attention” means management prescriptions that:*

*(i) Protect and prevent irreparable damage to the relevant and important values, or that protect life and safety from natural hazards; and*

*(ii) Would not be prescribed if the relevant and important values were not present. In this context, “irreparable damage” means harm to a value, resource, system, or process that substantially diminishes the relevance or importance of that value, resource, system, or process in such a way that recovery of the value, resource, system, or process to the extent necessary to restore its prior relevance or importance is impossible.*

To determine whether special management attention through ACEC designation is appropriate for these areas, the BLM considered a range of management direction that included two alternatives (Alternatives 3 and 6) that would designate the areas as ACECs and establish associated management direction, and five alternatives (Alternatives 1, 2, 4, 5, and the Proposed RMP Amendment) that would not designate these areas as ACECs. In Alternatives 3 and 6, the BLM considered different management strategies for the ACECs under consideration, with Alternative 3 generally providing the highest level of restrictions on development and other land uses and Alternative 6 providing a high level of restrictions, but allowing for slightly more opportunities for use (See FEIS Appendix 5, Table 5-2 for more detail). The BLM analyzed the potential effects to the relevant and important values of the GRSG habitat under all these alternatives.

The effects analysis provides the information that supports the determination that an ACEC designation is not needed to provide special management attention to protect and prevent irreparable damage to the relevant and important values identified for the areas as required by 43 CFR 1610.7-2(3). As such, the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah does not designate any ACECs. As detailed in Appendix 5 of the Final EIS, the BLM determined that management direction under the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah will protect and prevent irreparable damage to the relevant and important values of these potential ACEC areas through the PHMA management allocations and decisions.

The Approved RMP Amendment does not designate any ACECs. Under the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah, the 132,924-acre Rich and 232,258-acre Box Elder proposed ACEC areas will be managed as PHMA. As PHMA, these areas will be managed as exclusion for utility-scale solar and wind, closed to saleable minerals/material management and non-energy leasable mineral development, with exceptions, and avoidance for major ROWs. Further, new fluid mineral leasing in these areas will be subject to NSO stipulations, with WEMS. These protections will protect and prevent irreparable damage to the GRSG habitat in these areas; therefore, BLM determined that special management attention through ACEC designation is not necessary to protect the values of this area and is not warranted.

### **Rationale Conclusion**

Considered comprehensively, the HMA designations and the associated allocations and management direction in the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah best meet the purpose and need for this planning effort and other statutory and regulatory requirements. The BLM has used updated science, cooperating agency and public feedback, and BLM implementation experience to provide management direction that, when used in concert with existing GRSG management direction that is not being amended, will be applied to conserve GRSG habitat across the species’ range while being responsive to the habitat variability, threats, and public land uses in the Utah portion of the planning area.

### **CHANGES AND CLARIFICATIONS MADE BETWEEN PROPOSED RMP AMENDMENT/FINAL EIS AND APPROVED RMP AMENDMENT FOR UTAH/UTAH ROD**

The Approved RMP Amendment for Utah is largely based on the Proposed RMP Amendment in the Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Proposed RMP Amendment and Final EIS that was published on November

15, 2024, with some substantive changes and clarifications made as a result of coordination with the State of Utah during the Governor’s Consistency Review process and to improve alignment of state and federal legal authorities, policies, and programs.

The remainder of this section is separated into three sub-sections: 1) Clarifications Between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment for Utah/Utah ROD; 2) Non-Significant Changes Between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment for Utah/Utah ROD; and 3) Significant Changes Between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment for Utah/Utah ROD. The first two sections address clarifications and minor changes that are neither substantive nor significant, and therefore did not require that the BLM provide the public with further opportunity to comment, as discussed in 43 CFR 1610.2(f)(5) and 1610.5-1(b). The third section identifies changes that the BLM determined were substantive and significant, and that therefore were subject to a public notice and opportunity for comment. The BLM carefully reviewed each of the changes to determine if they would result in significant effects outside the range of effects analyzed in the Proposed RMPA/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The BLM has determined that the analysis described in the Proposed RMPA/Final EIS is inclusive of the effects that would occur because of these changed management actions and supplemental analysis under the NEPA is not needed. Consistent with 43 CFR 1610.2(f)(5) and 1610.5-1(b), substantive changes to the proposed management direction published in the Proposed RMP Amendment were published for public comment on September 2, 2025, for a 30-day comment period. A summary of the substantive comments received on the proposed changes and the BLM’s response can be found in Appendix 10 *Summary of Public Comments on the Proposed Changes*.

### **Clarifications Between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment for Utah/Utah ROD**

#### ***PHMA Allocations and Management Direction (Approved RMP Amendment Table 1):***

- **Fluid Minerals:** The BLM added “controlled surface use (CSU), and Timing Limitations (TL)” to the end of the fluid mineral allocation to better specify the conditions that fluid mineral development is subject to within PHMA, were the NSO to be excepted, modified, or waived. These conditions are not new and were previously described elsewhere in the Proposed RMP Amendment and previously in the stipulation appendix in the 2015 and 2019 Approved RMP Amendments. The full allocation now reads “Open to leasing subject to no surface occupancy (NSO) (unless otherwise closed), controlled surface use (CSU), and Timing Limitations (TL). Refer to the following NSO exceptions.”
- **Fluid Minerals Objective:** Changed “...avoid, minimize, and compensate for adverse impacts to GRSG habitat to the extent practical under the law...” to read “...avoid when practicable, then minimize and compensate for adverse impacts to GRSG habitat to the extent required under the law...” The change clarifies that complete avoidance (i.e., closure to leasing) was not the intent of this objective. The change clarifies that avoidance is an important tool, but it is just one of the tools to mitigate impacts to GRSG from fluid mineral development. The change of “practical” to “required” more accurately connects the mitigation tools in this objective to actual statutory requirements instead of just practicality. In addition, the italicized text that was included in the Final EIS was removed, as it was merely for the reader comprehension when comparing alternatives, which is no longer an issue in the Approved RMP Amendment.
- **Fluid Minerals Management Direction:** Renamed the Allocation section to read “Allocations for Unleased Lands” and moved it to directly precede the language for exceptions, modifications and waivers to more clearly associated the WEMs with the allocations/stipulations. In addition, moved the paragraphs associated with coordination with state agencies, application of WEMs in areas where

adaptive management thresholds are activated, and with applicable public review direction to be presented just once, under the “Allocations for Unleased Lands” header rather than repeating them under each applicable WEM. Also moved the Exception 1 paragraph related to land ownership patterns to be a stand-alone Exception 3, as it is unrelated to the other purposes noted in the rest of Exception 1. These and other editorial changes were made to decrease repetition and improve readability.

- **Non-energy Leasable Minerals:** “Apply required design features, best management practices, and minimization measures identified in the existing GRSG amendments (refer to **Appendix 2**)” was added as Management Direction. This direction was previously included in GHMA only and was inadvertently omitted from inclusion in PHMA in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS. BLM added this direction to clarify that the applicable HMA measures apply for non-energy leasable minerals projects in both PHMA and GHMA, consistent with the language in MA-SSS-3 and MA-SSS-5 (see **Appendix 2**).
- **Predation:** The BLM clarified that the intent of the management plan’s predation requirement was specifically for artificial/new subsidies for predators. The first sentence of Management Action 2 was adjusted from, “authorizations that require expanded, or new, or renewal of energy or transmission related infrastructure...” to “authorizations that require expanded, new, renewal, or non-routine maintenance of energy, mining, or transmission related infrastructure projects...” to better explain which projects require proponents to submit a predator subsidy management plan. A definition of “non-routine maintenance” was also added to the **Glossary, Appendix 6**. Specific to the Approved RMP Amendment in Utah, a sentence was added to Management Action 3 to identify that BLM-Utah will work with applicable agencies to develop a MOU to address and reduce conflicts with ravens and other native and non-native predators throughout GRSG habitat in Utah.
- **Disturbance Cap:** Added “anthropogenic” as a modifier to the management direction related to “direct habitat disturbance” to further clarify that the disturbance being considered in the cap is that associated with anthropogenic infrastructure developments. In addition, clarified the Disturbance Cap Denominator section in the fourth paragraph related to non-habitat and unsuitable habitat by replacing the word “otherwise” at the end of the first sentence with “areas of non-habitat or unsuitable habitat” and adding examples of processes and data to identify non-habitat and unsuitable habitat in the second sentence. These edits simply clarify otherwise less clear language. Finally, in the list of conditions associated with granting an exception to the disturbance cap, sub-bullets “d” and “f” were combined, as they addressed similar conditions, as well as the condition already stated in “a”.
- **Major ROWs:** BLM revised the language of the first major ROW avoidance criteria to provide clarity to the intent of criteria as it relates to MA-LR-1 in Appendix 2, which facilitates actions in RMP designated corridors for which they were established. RMP designated corridors may or may not contain infrastructure but impacts were previously analyzed when the RMP designated corridors were established. The sentence now reads “RMP designated corridors within PHMA are open to considerations of a new major ROW in the category of ROW for which the corridor was designated if the proposed authorization within the existing ROW corridor results in impacts similar to those already described in the environmental analysis to establish the corridor, including indirect disturbance to or disruption of adjacent seasonal habitats.”

In addition, second sentence of the exception language in sub-bullet “a” was moved to be a stand-alone sub-bullet “b” and was reworded to improve clarity of intent.

**GHMA Allocations and Management Direction (Approved RMP Amendment Table 2):**

- **Fluid Minerals:** The language from the Proposed RMP Amendment “**Allocation and Management Actions:** Same management direction as identified in 2015 and 2019 for all states except as noted in “State-Specific Differences” column was updated to read “**Objectives, Allocation, and Management Direction:** Same as identified in 2015 RMP Amendment.” This adjustment was made to reflect BLM’s intent that for BLM Utah RMPs, fluid mineral objectives, allocations, and management direction are not amended in GHMA in this Approved RMP Amendment.
- **Livestock Grazing:** BLM corrected a typo in the number of the management direction referenced in livestock grazing management direction, revising “Same as PHMA except RM-3 does not apply” to “Same as PHMA except RM-2 does not apply.”

**Glossary:**

- Definitions or clarifications to definitions were added into the glossary (e.g., General Habitat Management Areas, Priority Habitat Management Areas, Wild horse Appropriate Management Level, adding additional detail to BLM’s adoption of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA)’s lek definitions).

**Other:**

The BLM made several minor revisions to improve the clarity of the Utah-specific Approved RMP Amendment as compared to the Proposed RMP Amendment. These clarifications include:

- Additional detail when referencing previous GRSG-related RMP Amendments.
- Appendices were renumbered and small editorial changes were made to introductory text. Removed reference to PIM 2025-004 in **Appendix 5** Section 5.1.2 Best Management Practices for Livestock Grazing Management.
- Utah-specific modifications to rangewide text, previously described separately in the Proposed RMP Amendment, were integrated directly into the language in the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah. This includes direct edits to the text of objectives, allocations, and management direction, as well as additions of Utah-specific HMA direction.
- Portions of the maps that overlap the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument were updated for major ROWs, travel, and livestock grazing maps due to the January 2025 completion of the Grand Staircase/Escalante National Monument RMP.

**Non-Significant Changes Between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD****PHMA Allocations and Management Direction (Approved RMP Amendment Table 1):**

- **Edits to the GRSG Goal:** Replaced “Conserve, enhance, restore” with language directly from FLPMA, removed the reference to BLM manual 6500, and integrated the connectivity concept into a comma-list rather than a stand-alone sentence. These edits retain the desired condition sought in the original goal (habitat that supports connected, persistent and healthy populations), and improve alignment with FLPMA’s statutory language. The comma list of “conserve, enhance, restore” are all versions of management; splitting them out does not clarify the agency’s desired condition. These edits focus on the agency’s desired outcome, regardless of the most applicable managerial tool. Finally, as a special status species, GRSG are associated with the BLM’s 6840 manual, and not the



6500 wildlife and fisheries manual. Since these edits retain the original desired condition, the changes are not significant.

- **PHMA with Limited Exceptions:** The BLM is not including the identification of PHMA with limited exceptions and the associated PHMA with limited exceptions management direction identified in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS. In Utah there were no PHMA with limited exceptions, therefore, the change to PHMA with limited exceptions is irrelevant to the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah.
- **Fluid Minerals Management Direction:** Revised the first sentence of the second paragraph by removing the example and focusing on the outcomes being sought. Deleted the second sentence of the second paragraph as it merely provided some approaches that could be taken to achieve the outcomes from the first sentence (“to promote effective management and connectivity of seasonal habitats and PHMA to accomplish measurable GRSG conservation objectives”). The last sentence of the second paragraph was edited to improve clarity of intent, as the original wording was unclear. These edits relate to improving clarity or removing examples, and the underlying condition being sought has not changed, therefore these edits are not significant.
- **Fluid Minerals Allocations for Unleased Lands/Waivers, Exceptions, Modifications:** The text explicitly identifying a 30-day public review period prior to granting the NSO or disturbance cap waiver, exception and modification was revised. The new text states that “prior to granting a waiver, exception, or modification to any GRSG NSO stipulation or Disturbance Cap, the Authorized Officer shall comply with regulatory public review requirements, if applicable (see 43 CFR 3101).” This change is not significant because the BLM’s fluid mineral regulations in the cited section already requires Authorized Officers to provide at least a 30-day public review opportunity prior to granting exceptions (i.e., one-time waivers) and modifications for changes that involve “an issue of major concern to the public” or “...a change to a lease term or stipulation that is substantial...” Because this direction is already in regulation, there is no need to repeat it in the RMP, and its removal from the RMP results in no change to agency practice, therefore this change is not significant.

The text at the end of the first sentences in NSO Exceptions 1 and 2 that states “after documenting the review of available information associated with the site proposed for the exception” and “both internally compiled and as provided by state, county, and other local agencies, tribal governments, project proponents, other federal agencies or interested stakeholders” was deleted. This change was made to remove implementation process language that is not appropriate for inclusion in RMPs. The parties from which the BLM accepts information is guided by statute, regulation, and policy. Because the removed language is process (how something will be done, not what will be done), its removal is not significant as the standard that must be met to grant either exception remains.

The last sentence in the second criteria under the GRSG NSO Exception 2 was edited to remove an inconsistency between the exception text and the fluid minerals objective and allocation WEMs. The sentence originally noted that the exception could be granted if it was demonstrated that “the project cannot be avoided or minimized” and that “granting the mitigated exception would not result in adverse effects to GRSG seasonal habitats.” The BLM retains discretion to deny any and every exception, and therefore could always “avoid” the effects of a project. Following this thought process, the exception could never be granted, which is inconsistent with having the exception and the fluid mineral leasing objective of applying the full range of mitigation options. The language was revised to shift the focus for considering the exception to the standard that the mitigated exception, after applying avoidance, minimization, and voluntary compensatory mitigation, “would not result in

adverse effects to GRSG seasonal habitats.” Because the final condition of the two versions is the same, this change is not significant.

- **Livestock Grazing:** The BLM removed the second and third sentences in the second paragraph in Allocation RM-1. These sentences present a comma list of potential adjustments the BLM considers “in conformance with [BLM’s grazing] regulations.” The last sentence of Allocation RM-1 was then merged at the end of the retained sentence. The last sentence refers the reader to Appendix 5, which includes grazing best management practices, many of which include items from the deleted comma list. The deletion of these sentences is not significant due to the lack of RMP-decision, repetition of regulation and policy, and duplication in Appendix 5.

BLM revised the language in the third sentence of management direction RM-2 to better articulate the management direction’s consistency with BLM regulations and policy. The sentence now reads “Thresholds specific to GRSG habitat will be developed to make significant progress toward fulfillment of the LHS (43 CFR Part 4180.2 or subsequent changes to regulations or policy) and maintain or move PHMA toward providing suitable GRSG habitat (e.g., Table 4-1, **Appendix 4**). Thresholds and defined responses will be designed to address the HAF assessment that warranted the Land Health Evaluation finding, and consider ecological site potential, relevant locally specific conditions, and LH S.”

In addition, the sentence in RM-4 to “focus authorization...on projects that have a nominal or incidental effects” was removed due to the use of the unclear terms of focus, nominal and incidental. Based on experience implementing the 2015 ARMPAs, the use of these undefined and ambiguous terms results in confusion and inconsistency during implementation. The removal of this sentence is not significant, as the overall intent of RM-4 is retained in the absence of this sentence, specifically that “new...improvements should be placed along existing disturbance corridors in the least suitable habitat...”

The introduction of Appendix 5 was edited to clarify that the livestock grazing strategies, practices, or design features are presented as tools but are not required to be considered and dismissed for every action, as the required design features were from the 2015 ARMPA. In addition, the BMPs were edited to eliminate duplication of concepts and clarify implementation in coordination of livestock grazing practices with non-BLM agencies and landowners. For example, BLM’s limiting tall structures to decrease predation issues duplicates other GRSG management related to tall structures, as well as the predation language added in the Approved RMP amendment. Where BMPs duplicate management elsewhere in the document, they were removed. This is most evident in the deletion of section 5.1.5 that summarized principles from the BLM’s 2004 National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy. That section’s concepts are included in management actions in the Approved RMP Amendment and bullets in Appendix 5.

Finally, the management direction RM-6 was removed from the Approved RMP Amendment in Utah. This is consistent with the 2019 Approved RMP Amendment (Alternative 2) considered in 2019, so it is within the range of alternatives. It was removed to improve consistency with the State of Utah RMP. This change is not significant because nothing in RM-6 compels or requires the BLM to select a specific course of action if relinquishment occurs, only to consider a course of action, which the BLM already has authority to do under existing grazing regulations.

- Major Rights-of-Way Avoidance Criteria:** The second avoidance criteria for major ROWs initially read “the ROW can be routed through, or located within non-habitat or unsuitable habitat and lacks the ecological potential to become suitable habitat...” The language related to unsuitable habitat was removed to align with the exception language in the fluid mineral WEMs section. This change is not significant, as unsuitable habitat that ecologically cannot become suitable would not be habitat, which is already included in the category of non-habitat. In addition, the text of the second bullet also reads “ROWs shall not disrupt connectivity between habitat areas...” This was edited to read “ROWs shall minimize disruption of connectivity...” Completely eliminating any impact to connectivity movements can only be accomplished through not allowing any development. If that was the agency’s intent, the area would have been allocated as ROW exclusion. Since the intent of this action is to allow for consideration of development under narrow conditions, the text was changed to improve consistency with intent, while retaining the need to protect connectivity between populations.
- Mitigation:** The mitigation language from the Proposed RMP Amendment and Final EIS was updated to reflect the mitigation language from Alternative 2 in the Proposed RMP Amendment and Final EIS, with adjustments limited to removing references to the rescinded CEQ NEPA regulations. Recission of the 2024 version (6-142) of BLM Manual 6840 and reversion to the 2008 version (Rel – 6-125) changes the agency policy for compensatory mitigation related to special status species. Specifically, the 2024 version notes the land use plan should “...seek to achieve no net loss or net benefit outcomes for special status species...” No such language is in the 2008 version. The 2024 version also directs the BLM to “develop and implement compensatory mitigation...” In the 2008 version, the manual states management should be developed to “minimize or eliminate threats affecting the status of the species or to improve the condition of the species habitat.” There is only one sentence of the last option (of eight) to achieve this for BLM special status species that states “off-site mitigation may be used to reduce potential effects on Bureau listed species.” The change to the Approved RMP Amendment mitigation language is made to better align with the current special status species policies within the range of alternatives available. Because the intent of this plan amendment has consistently been to seek to avoid and minimize impacts first, with compensatory mitigation being a tertiary tool, the BLM’s clarification about how it will approach compensatory mitigation is not a significant change. Moreover, the BLM will continue to rely on the primary protective measures of fluid mineral NSO and a broader disturbance cap, requiring exceptions being met, including voluntary compensatory mitigation, before granting exceptions. For these reasons, changing the compensatory mitigation language is not a significant change.
- Disturbance Cap:** In the disturbance cap numerator section, the bullet for “military range facilities and infrastructure” was removed. Since implementing the 2015 disturbance cap, no areas in this category have been documented in PHMA. In addition, there are no acres of Department of War lands overlapping PHMA in Utah, Nevada, North Dakota, Montana, or Wyoming. As such, there is no potential for these types of disturbances. In Idaho and South Dakota, a small fraction of the total HMA acres where the disturbance cap applies are Department of War lands (12 acres in Idaho PHMA, 204 acres of South Dakota PHMA, and 11,143 acres of Idaho IHMA). In addition, if any infrastructure was constructed on these lands, it would be a fraction of the total acres. Given current and likely future potential for these types of disturbances, removing this bullet is not significant.
- Utility Scale Solar and Wind:** The allocation for both utility scale wind and solar development remains unchanged as exclusion; the exception criteria for the exclusion allocation were removed for both wind and solar. Given the nature of the updated GRSG habitat management areas and the

amount of land needed for utility scale wind and solar projects, including exceptions to the exclusion allocation is misleading. While there are areas of non-habitat and unsuitable habitat, they are generally small, non-contiguous patches. Combined with the known impacts of large solar and wind projects, and especially the indirect impacts of wind development on adjacent lands, there is very little likelihood that any areas could meet the exceptions. Therefore, removing these exceptions is not a significant change considering potential impacts to both GRSG and wind and solar development.

In the instance of smaller solar projects developed as ancillary support for other approved uses (e.g., mineral development, data centers), narrow exceptions consistent with the fluid mineral NSO exceptions were retained. Such developments can be used to electrify remote mineral developments and can be used in place of constructing powerlines. Any such developments, if proposed, would have similar impacts to those associated with fluid minerals development, so this change is not significant.

- **References to a “qualified biologist”:** Fluid mineral NSO exceptions 1 and 2 and major ROWs avoidance criteria refer to conditions being determined by a “qualified biologist” with no definition or education and experience standards for such. Rather than using this undefined term, it was changed to read “wildlife biologist” with the understanding that an individual with education and qualifications in wildlife biology will understand the scientific principles needed to perform the needed tasks.
- **References to specific positions for certain tasks:** Several management actions identified specific BLM positions to complete certain tasks. While all these required actions were retained, task assignments to a specific position were removed. The RMP is not the correct document to establish a delegated authority for specific tasks to specific positions. Beyond authorities specifically described in regulations – generally the “Authorized Officer” or “State Director” – the BLM will comply with agency defined delegations of authority when implementing the RMP. Since the various actions were all retained, there is no effect of removing the BLM position that implements an action.

#### **Appendix 2:**

- **Comparison of Prior Greater Sage-grouse RMP Management Direction with the Approved RMP Amendment, Utah RMPs:** The BLM updated **Appendix 2** specific to Utah to show a crosswalk comparison of what goals, objectives, and actions are changing compared to 2015 and 2019 Approved RMP Amendment actions, including full text associated with the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah. The BLM added a column showing the full text changes that are occurring as a result of the Approved RMP Amendment.

#### **GHMA Allocations and Management Direction (Approved RMP Amendment Table 2):**

- **GHMA-Connectivity:** The BLM removed the GHMA-Connectivity HMA type in response to concerns raised during the Utah Governor’s Consistency Review process. These areas were all retained as GHMA in the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah. In coordination with the State of Utah, the following four specific areas of GHMA did retain the avoidance allocations for utility scale solar and wind, and major ROWs that were previously identified for GHMA-Connectivity: Hamlin Valley, Bald Hills/Panguitch, Carbon-Porphyry Bench, and Uinta-Browns Park/Diamond Mountain. This change is not significant because the allocations are consistent with what was presented in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS with the exception of the Carbon-Emma Park area, which has very small amounts of BLM surface estate to which the allocation would have applied.

### **Significant Changes Between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD**

Two changes were made to the Proposed RMP Amendment during the Utah Governor's Consistency Review process. Section 202 of FLPMA and its implementing regulations require the BLM to develop, amend, and revise land use plans to be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent consistent with federal law and the purposes of FLPMA. This planning effort involved extensive coordination and consultation with State representatives, including modifying the RMPA to improve consistency with the Utah State plan.

These changes were within the range of alternatives considered in the Final EIS, and the BLM determined were substantially significant to warrant a public notice and comment period consistent with the BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-1(b). As a result, the BLM published a notice in the Federal Register on September 3, 2025, notifying the public of these changes and providing a 30-day comment period. The results of the comment period are described in the Public Involvement section below.

#### ***Habitat Management Area Boundaries, Maps, and Where Allocations are Applied:***

As a result of input from the State of Utah during the Governor's Consistency Review process, the BLM made changes to HMA boundaries for the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah. All the changes are within the range of alternative HMA boundaries considered in the Final EIS that was released on November 15, 2024. The updated HMA boundaries are a culmination of coordination efforts with the State of Utah and UDWR to address inconsistencies raised in the Utah Governor's Consistency Review process. Changes include some areas of PHMA that were adjusted to not have any HMA, some areas of GHMA that were adjusted to not have any HMA, some areas of PHMA that were adjusted to GHMA, and GHMA-Connectivity that was adjusted to GHMA. A map of the specific areas that were changed and the nature of the changes was provided for public review and is available on the project's ePlanning page (see Dear Reader Letter for address). While the only change was to the HMA boundaries (i.e., no additional changes to allocations associated with PHMA or GHMA), there was a related change to the acres identified in various allocation maps and tables since the HMAs to which the allocations applied were changed.

#### ***Adaptive Management:***

The adaptive management language was changed from the Proposed RMPAs for Idaho, Montana/Dakotas, Nevada/California, Utah, and Wyoming to improve consistent rangewide adaptive management. The BLM has closely coordinated with the Western Governors Association Sage-grouse Conservation Task Force (Task Force) to better align the BLM's adaptive management process with state policies and programs to manage GRSF populations. States expressed a need to clarify how state adaptive management approaches would be incorporated into the BLM's adaptive management process, and several states expressed concern with using the targeted annual warning system (TAWVS) model and a desire to use models maintained and controlled by state wildlife agencies for sage-grouse population calculations. The BLM worked closely with the Task Force to develop an adaptive management approach that recognizes state governments' authority to manage GRSF populations while remaining consistent with the BLM's adaptive management process in the Oregon and Colorado Approved RMP Amendments. The revised Adaptive Management language for Utah is included in Table I of the Approved RMP Amendment and Appendix 10. In response to public comments, the adaptive management appendix was updated to clarify that activation of habitat thresholds will be verified through the existing CFA process, that routine maintenance and operations of electric utilities is considered an exception to threshold responses, and that grazing permits may be renewed for the duration of the CFA while a CFA is ongoing.

## MITIGATION

The BLM has adopted all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm in the Approved RMP Amendment. In determining the scope of the planning effort, BLM identified habitat mitigation as an element of RMPs considered for amendment to meet the purpose and need of responding to updated scientific information and changing land uses and providing for consistent and effective rangewide conservation based on biological information that is responsive to locally relevant habitat variability. The BLM focused on habitat mitigation as sagebrush habitat fragmentation, loss and disturbance have been identified as the primary influences on GRSG population trends (Knick and Hanser, 2011). Therefore, as mitigation was within the scope of the RMP Amendment, the BLM considered a range of alternatives for mitigation strategies to best address the purpose and need and analyzed potential impacts of each alternative in the EIS (See FEIS Appendix 21 for more detail).

As described above, the BLM determined the management direction identified in the Proposed RMP Amendment, with the changes as described, in combination with the mitigation approach from Alternative 2, best meets the purpose and need and has decided to select it in this Approved RMP Amendment. The Approved RMP Amendment thus establishes the habitat objectives and management actions below and provides additional detail on the application of mitigation during project implementation (see Table 1 in the Approved RMP Amendment).

Consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the BLM's Resource Management Planning Regulations at 43 CFR 1610, and BLM policy in the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), all resource management authorizations and actions, and subsequent more detailed or specific planning must conform to the approved RMP. Therefore, by establishing this enforceable RMP direction, the BLM has adopted all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm.

## CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

### Tribal Government Consultation

There are nine potentially affected federally recognized Tribes who have an interest in the Utah portion of the planning area: the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation, the Hopi Tribe of Arizona, the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians of the Kaibab Reservation of Arizona, the Navajo Nation, the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians of Utah, Ute Tribe of Uinta and Ouray Reservation of Utah, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. BLM initiated Tribal consultation efforts in the preparation of this RMP Amendment and coordinated with all nine Tribes on the planning effort in accordance with BLM Manual 8130 (BLM 2004) and Handbook 1780 (BLM 2016a). The BLM contacted the Tribes by mail, email, and/or phone at multiple stages in the planning process (direct outreach, official Scoping period, Draft RMP Amendment and Draft EIS comment period, and during administrative review periods). Subsequent outreach continued through emails, phone calls, and meetings with Tribal personnel, as they have expressed interest.

In Utah, the BLM received one letter from the Ute Tribe of the Uinta and Ouray Reservation on April 14, 2024, requesting formal government-to-government consultation. As a result, the BLM attempted to schedule the requested meeting. However, the Tribe has been unable to meet with the BLM since their request. The BLM reached out on May 1, 2024, to inquire about times to meet with the Ute Business Committee at their convenience. Subsequent email exchanges on May 6, 9, and 14, 2024 with the Business Council secretary and Tribal attorney indicated a meeting date of June 12, 2024 at 3:00pm was available. On May 22, 2024, the BLM reached out to confirm the June 12, 2024, meeting and was informed the Business Council was not available that week. Following that cancellation, the BLM sought to reschedule with the

Business Committee and a date of July 10, 2024, at 1.30pm was selected. When calling to confirm that meeting date, the BLM was informed on July 2, 2024, that their selected meeting time was moved to 3.00pm which resulted in the BLM being unable to attend the meeting. Subsequent attempts to schedule a follow-up meeting with the Business Committee went unanswered.

On September 4, 2024, the BLM held an online information session for Tribal governments to provide an update on the development of the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS. Individuals from the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation and Moapa Band of Paiutes attended the informational meeting.

### **State Historic Preservation Office Coordination**

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and regulations at 36 CFR Part 800 govern the BLM's cultural resource management programs. The Approved RMP Amendment will not approve any site-specific actions on BLM-administered lands within the planning area. The BLM has determined that this RMP Amendment is the type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties. Consistent with 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1) the BLM has met its obligations for this undertaking under Section 106 of the NHPA, 54 U.S.C. § 306108. The BLM will satisfy the requirements of NHPA Section 106 for future implementation-level decisions, such as project proposals, including adequate consultation with State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs), Native American Tribes, and other interested parties, consistent with the alternative procedures set forth in the *Programmatic Agreement Among The Bureau of Land Management, The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers Regarding The Manner in Which The BLM Will Meet Its Responsibilities Under the National Historic Preservation Act* (National PA), and the *State Protocol Agreement Between The Bureau of Land Management and The Utah State Historic Preservation Office* (State Protocol Agreement).

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation**

Under Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, federal agencies must consult with USFWS when an action the agency carries out, funds, or authorizes may affect any federally listed or endangered species or its critical habitat. The Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS describes potential impacts on threatened and endangered species because of management actions proposed in the alternatives. The USFWS is a cooperating agency in this planning process. The BLM has met with the USFWS and provided them with drafts of proposed management direction for discussion and input.

The BLM initiated Section 7 consultation with the USFWS on August 14, 2023, before the release of the Proposed RMP Amendment/Draft EIS and requested concurrence on which species would require consideration during consultation. Over the ensuing months, regular meetings were held to identify the species that would be analyzed in the biological assessment, to address which actions could affect those species, and to determine whether the implementation of the Proposed RMP Amendment “may affect” the species for which this consultation occurred.

The BLM submitted the biological assessment to the USFWS on November 19, 2024, with an amendment submitted on December 6, 2024, for review on whether the plans would affect a federally listed, proposed, or candidate species. The USFWS evaluated the biological assessment and concurred with either a “no effect” or “may affect, but not likely to adversely affect” determination via memorandum for all states within the planning area on December 9, 2024. Based on revisions to BLM's Proposed RMP Amendment, summarized in the **Changes and Clarifications** section above, the USFWS provided a revised concurrence memorandum on January 8, 2025. On September 10, 2025 BLM provided an updated memo

and Biological Assessment for the GRSG Rangewide Planning effort and the Proposed Changes document. On October 22, 2025 USFWS provided a concurrence letter concluding informal consultation on BLM's Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Changes to Proposed RMPA for Idaho, Montana/Dakotas, Nevada/California, Utah, and Wyoming document. On December 8, 2025, the USFWS reviewed the changes made in response to public comments and DOI review and stated that they did not need to re-issue a concurrence memorandum. This memorandum is included as **Appendix 8** in this Approved RMP Amendment. The BLM will continue to implement the conservation measures identified by USFWS in 2015 during the formal consultation in Utah for Utah prairie dog for future consultations on project-level implementation actions.

### **Cooperating Agencies**

In December 2021 and January 2022, the BLM invited Tribal governments and state and local agencies with jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise to participate as cooperating agencies in the planning process. A cooperating agency can be a Tribe, federal, state, or local government agency with jurisdiction by law or special expertise that assists a lead federal agency in developing an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement (43 CFR 1610.3-1(b)). The BLM invited many cooperators to engage in this effort who either did not reply or chose not to participate.

Coordination with the cooperating agencies has included project presentations and working meetings discussing the purpose and need, new science, alternative strategies, range of alternatives, review of alternative text, meetings to review subsequent changes and to further refine the alternatives, and a review of the administrative Draft RMP Amendment/EIS. Since the release of the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS, the BLM has met with cooperating agencies to discuss their feedback on the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS and get their input on the development of the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and state-specific management direction. Cooperating agencies were provided an administrative draft of the Proposed RMP Amendment management direction for review. As a result of these reviews and the many state-level meetings with cooperating agencies, the BLM made many changes to the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS that improved the clarity of the document and addressed cooperating agency concerns.

Details on the full process followed for cooperating agency invitation, engagement and participation can be found in the Final EIS in Chapter 5, Section 5.4 Cooperating Agencies.

Federal cooperating agencies included the United States Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For BLM Utah, cooperating agencies include the State of Utah, Utah County, Department of War (including Utah Test and Training Range and Hill Air Force Base), Daggett County, Beaver County, and Emery County Public Lands. BLM Utah held virtual meetings on a bi-weekly basis with the cooperating agencies, and other topic-specific in-person meetings as appropriate throughout the planning process.

### **Governor's Consistency Review**

The BLM's planning regulations require that BLM RMPs and RMP Amendments be "consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans, and the policies and procedures contained therein, of other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and Indian Tribes, so long as the guidance and resource management plans also are consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of Federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands" (43 CFR 1610.3-2(a)).

The BLM provided the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS to the Governor of Utah on November 8, 2024, kicking off a 60-day consistency review as required by 43 CFR 1610.3-2(e). The governor's consistency



review period ended on January 7, 2025, and Governor Spencer Cox submitted a letter to the BLM Utah State Director raising several concerns and potential inconsistencies between the Proposed RMP Amendment and state policies. On January 17, 2025 the BLM Utah State Director sent a letter to Governor Cox responding to concerns and potential consistencies, largely retaining the actions from the November 2024 Proposed RMP Amendment but extending the offer to meet and coordinate on potential changes that could improve alignment with the state's plans. As provided for in the BLM's planning regulations, Utah Governor Cox appealed the BLM State Director's reply to the BLM Director in a letter dated February 14, 2025. The appeal letter reiterated the concerns raised in the original consistency letter from January 7 and requested BLM resolve the inconsistencies in favor of the state. In response to this appeal, the BLM Utah State Office re-engaged in conversations with the State of Utah, discussing and addressing each of the points from the consistency and appeal letters to develop solutions consistent with both federal requirements and state plans.

In addition to the formal Governor's consistency process, in February 2025 governors from several western states including Utah sent a joint letter to the acting Secretary of the Interior requesting allowance of BLM to continue collaborating and working with the states to address remaining issues. This request was consistent with the approach the BLM Utah State Office was applying in coordinating directly with the state.

As a result of the additional coordination meetings with the state, the BLM provided changes and clarifying language to the Approved RMP Amendment as described in the **Changes and Clarifications** section above. The BLM and the Governor's Office also committed to an ongoing dialogue on issues of interest to the State.

On October 3, 2025, the State of Utah submitted a comment letter on the BLM's *Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Changes to Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendments for Idaho, Montana/Dakotas, Nevada/California, Utah and Wyoming – September 2025*. In that letter the State of Utah reiterated the importance of consistency, noting that "it is...imperative for the BLM to cooperate with the State in the development of the BLM's sage-grouse plans and to ensure consistency with Utah's Conservation Plan." The State also noted that "the BLM Planning Changes, along with the changes previously reviewed by the State during this planning process, largely achieve that consistency and allow for a coordinated approach to managing GRSG." As a matter of concluding the concerns raised during the Governor's Consistency Review letter and subsequent appeal, the State of Utah's summary in their letter concludes that "the State supports the RMPA and the Planning Changes proposed by the BLM and finds that the issues raised in the State's Governor's Consistency Review have been appropriately addressed."

On October 22, 2025, the State of Utah submitted an additional letter on the BLM's *Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Changes to Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendments for Idaho, Montana/Dakotas, Nevada/California, Utah and Wyoming – September 2025* which states "the State hereby withdraws its appeal of the BLM's response to the Utah's Governor's Consistency Review and reaffirms that the issues outlined in the Governor's Consistency Review have been resolved."

Based on the correspondence received from the State of Utah, there are no remaining issues to address from the Governor's Consistency Review letter, or the subsequent appeal letter.

## **RMP AMENDMENT MONITORING**

RMP monitoring is the process of tracking the implementation of RMP decisions (implementation monitoring) and collecting data/information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of RMP decisions (effectiveness monitoring) in meeting the purpose and need of the plan or plan amendment. Monitoring

strategies for GRSG habitat and populations must be collaborative, as habitat occurs across jurisdictional boundaries. As part of the 2015 GRSG Amendment effort, the BLM developed a Monitoring Framework to provide consistent approaches to monitor planning actions across the range (BLM 2015a). In 2021 the BLM published the *Greater Sage-grouse Plan Implementation Rangewide Monitoring Report for 2015-2020* with the results of implementing the 2015 monitoring framework. As part of this amendment process, the BLM revisited the approaches in the monitoring framework, updating it based on lessons learned over the past ten years. The updated monitoring framework is in **Appendix 3**. The BLM's monitoring efforts will continue in partnership with federal and state fish and wildlife agencies.

Monitoring data is used to draw conclusions on whether management actions are being implemented, and if they are helping to meet the stated goals and objectives. Conclusions are then used to recommend whether to continue current management or to identify what changes may need to be made to better meet goals and objectives. The BLM would use land use plan evaluations to determine if the decisions in the RMP Amendment, supported by the accompanying NEPA analysis, may need to be amended in light of new information and monitoring data. Its evaluations would follow the protocols established by the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), Manual 1735 Inventory and Monitoring of Ecological Resources, or other appropriate guidance in effect at the time the evaluation is initiated.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

In addition to the extensive collaboration with federal, state, local, and Tribal governments and cooperating agencies detailed above, the BLM provided numerous opportunities for public involvement throughout the development of the RMP Amendment and EIS. The Approved RMP Amendment and Final EIS were substantially shaped based on input provided by the public.

### **Project Website**

The BLM maintains a national GRSG conservation website (<https://www.blm.gov/programs/fish-and-wildlife/sage-grouse>) as part of its efforts to maintain and restore GRSG habitat on public lands. The site is intended to help the public learn how the BLM is working on maintaining and restoring GRSG habitat. It includes background information related to government and BLM roles in GRSG conservation. In addition to the national GRSG conservation website, the BLM established a National NEPA Register website with information related to this planning effort at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016719/510>. Throughout the planning process, the BLM maintained both websites to include the most current information, and share background documents, information on public meetings, contact information, and all relevant planning and NEPA-related documents.

### **Scoping Process**

The formal public scoping process for the Proposed RMP Amendment/Draft EIS began on November 22, 2021, with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to amend RMPs and prepare an EIS in the *Federal Register* (Vol. 86 No. 222). The NOI notified the public of the BLM's intent to develop an RMP Amendment for the management of GRSG and initiated the public scoping period, which closed on February 8, 2022. In January 2022, BLM hosted two virtual public meetings, during which BLM provided opportunities to become involved, learn about the project and the planning process, and participate in a question-and-answer session where participants were able to ask BLM specialists questions and receive live responses. During the comment period, the BLM received 258 total submissions containing 1,865 unique comments. The issues identified during public scoping and outreach helped inform the development of the alternatives and the resource issues analyzed in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Draft EIS.

### **Draft RMP Amendment/EIS Comment Period**

The BLM released the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS for a 90-day comment period from March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, through June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Thirteen public meetings were held, including two virtual meetings and eleven in-person meetings throughout the planning area. Over 39,000 submissions were received, including approximately 6,000 individual comments. The BLM has also initiated and/or participated in over 80 meetings with Tribes; federal, state, and county cooperating agencies; and interest groups between the issuance of the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS and Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS. The BLM considered all public comments and responded to all substantive comments in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS (refer to Appendix 22, Draft RMP Amendment/EIS Public Outreach and Responses to Substantive Public Comments in the Final EIS). The high level of public comments and high level of stakeholder coordination significantly shaped the RMP Amendment.

### **Final EIS Availability Period and Proposed RMP Amendment Protest Period**

The BLM released the Proposed RMP Amendment and Final EIS on November 8, 2024, and published an associated Federal Register Notice (89 FR 90311) on November 15, 2024. The Final EIS was also identified in the Environmental Protection Agency's November 15, 2024 EIS Availability Federal Register Notice (89 FR 90280).

The public was invited to submit protests on the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS. The protest period was 30 days, from November 15 to December 16, 2024. The BLM received 60 unique protest letters.

The planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2 outline the requirements for filing a valid protest. Resolution of protests is delegated to the BLM Assistant Director for Resources and Planning whose decision on the protest is the final decision of the U.S. Department of the Interior (43 CFR 1610.5-2(b)) consistent with the BLM Delegation of Authority Manual (MS-1203 Delegation of Authority). The BLM evaluated all protest letters to determine which protest letters were complete and timely, and which persons have standing to protest. Four letters were complete and timely but were dismissed because the people who submitted the letters did not have standing to protest. The remaining 56 letters were complete and timely and were from parties who had standing to protest. Of these, 50 letters contained valid protest issues.

After careful review of the report by the BLM's Assistant Director for Resources and Planning, the Assistant Director concluded that the BLM followed the applicable laws, regulations, and policies and considered all relevant resource information and public input. The Assistant Director documented and addressed the valid protest issues in a protest resolution report: BLM Director's Protest Resolution Report: Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Proposed RMP Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement which has been posted on the BLM's website<sup>9</sup>.

### **Changes to the Proposed RMP Amendment**

During the Utah Governor's consistency review process, several changes were made to improve consistency with state plans. The BLM determined that two of the changes (HMA adjustments and changes to the adaptive management language), while within the range of alternatives considered in the Final EIS, were a significant enough change from the Proposed RMP Amendment and Final EIS to warrant a public notice and comment period as required by the BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-1(b). In compliance with the regulations, the BLM published a notice in the Federal Register on September 3, 2025, notifying the public of these changes and providing a 30-day comment period.

<sup>9</sup> All valid protest issues were denied.

The BLM carefully reviewed each of the changes to determine if they would result in significant effects outside of the range of effects analyzed in the Proposed RMPA/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The BLM determined that the analysis described in the Proposed RMPA/Final EIS is inclusive of the effects that would occur because of these changed management actions and supplemental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act is not needed. A summary of the substantive comments received on the proposed changes and the BLM's response can be found in Appendix 10, GRSG Rangwide Planning Comment Response Appendix.

### **ONGOING ACTIONS**


The BLM has numerous ongoing reviews of proposed projects, ranging from proposals for which the BLM has just received an application to those where the BLM is nearing a decision. The extent to which this Approved RMP Amendment for Utah will apply to these ongoing projects will depend on the stage of the project in the NEPA review and decision-making process. To maintain the orderly administration and management of the public lands, the BLM will be consistent with the Approved RMP Amendment unless the BLM has a Draft EIS or Environmental Assessment for the project before the publication of the Approved RMP Amendment. The decision for such projects and any subsequent authorizations associated with the approval (such as the issuance of an ROW authorized by a decision) may be exempted from the requirements of this effort's approved GRSG planning decision. The BLM has the discretion to apply the Approved RMP Amendment to projects that are substantially underway and will seek input from the project proponent prior to exercising such discretion.

### **AVAILABILITY OF THE APPROVED RMP AMENDMENT**

The Utah ROD and the Approved RMP Amendment for Utah may be obtained online on the BLM's National NEPA Register at: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016719/510>. Limited print copies are available upon request from the BLM Utah State Office, 440 West 200 South, Suite 500, Salt Lake City, UT 84101.

### **APPROVAL**

I hereby certify that BLM has considered all alternatives, information, analyses, and objections submitted by state, Tribal, and local governments, and public commenters for consideration by BLM and cooperating agencies in developing the environmental impact statement. In consideration of the foregoing, I approve the Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Resource Management Plan Amendment for Utah.



Joseph C. Mendez  
State Director, Acting  
Bureau of Land Management, Utah

# Utah Approved RMP Amendment

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## Goal

Manage lands in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, ecological, and environmental values that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals, and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and uses consistent with Section 102 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (as amended). Manage GRSG habitat to support habitat connectivity and persistent, healthy populations, consistent with BLM's Special Status Species (SSS) Management Policy (BLM-M-6840) and in coordination and cooperation with state wildlife agencies and appropriate state authorities.

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## HABITAT MANAGEMENT AREA ALIGNMENTS

The BLM applies its management allocations and management direction for GRSG within Habitat Management Areas (HMAs). Although the BLM has identified and mapped the HMAs to encompass multiple land ownerships, reflecting the wide-ranging ecological needs of GRSG, the management allocations and management direction that follow only apply to BLM-administered lands, including areas where BLM administers subsurface minerals. Following are the rangewide HMA categories. Utah has no other Utah-specific HMA. Refer to maps and tables in **Appendix I, Maps and Tables**.

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### Rangewide Habitat Management Areas

**Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA)** have the highest value to maintaining sustainable GRSG populations and can include breeding, late brood-rearing, winter concentration areas, and migration or connectivity corridors. The BLM intent for these areas is to maintain and enhance habitat conditions that will support persistent and healthy GRSG populations through management to minimize habitat loss and degradation. Areas are delineated using State of Utah Sage-grouse Management Area (SGMA) data or maps and other resource information that the BLM has identified in coordination with respective state and federal agencies. HMAs are delineated as approximate boundaries and representations of habitat, and therefore there may be areas of non-habitat contained within these boundaries.

**General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA)** are lands that are, or have the potential to become, occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of PHMA, managed to sustain GRSG populations. These areas are defined differentially by state wildlife management agencies, but generally are of poorer GRSG habitat quality with reduced occupancy when compared to PHMA. Some state wildlife agencies have identified areas of GHMA as important for restoration, connectivity, or seasonal habitats. The intent for GHMA is to maintain habitat conditions to support GRSG populations consistent with the state agency designations of recovery, connectivity, or seasonal habitats. HMAs are delineated as approximate boundaries and representations of habitat and therefore include potential or unoccupied habitat and may contain areas of non-habitat.

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**Table 1. Priority Habitat Management Area (PHMA) Allocations and Management Direction**

This table identifies the allocations and management direction and that will be applied in PHMA. The table describes if the 2025 Approved RMP Amendment is amending the “objective”, “allocation”, or “management direction” for the resource topic identified. In some instances, the Approved RMP Amendment addresses all three of these planning categories for a resource topic while in other resource topics only one or two of the categories are amended. All three planning categories are identified for each resource topic and if it is not being amended it will be identified as “N/A”, not applicable. In those “N/A” instances, the 2015 or 2019 Amendment decision is not being proposed for amendment and remains in place. The existing 2015 and 2019 Amendment decisions are described in **Appendix 2**. Several management actions refer to existing laws, regulations, policies, or technical references. The citations in this document are based on the versions current as of ROD publication; the most current versions of these various references would be used during implementation (e.g., in 2025 the Habitat Assessment Framework is TR-6710-1 dated 2015; updated versions of the HAF or its equivalent would be applied to all actions that reference the HAF).

Maps that show where the allocations and management direction apply can be found in maps in **Appendix I, Maps and Tables**.

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
<p><b>Fluid Minerals (including geothermal)</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Manage fluid mineral leasing and development (including geothermal) in GRSG habitat management areas to avoid when practicable, then minimize and voluntarily compensate for adverse impacts to GRSG habitat to the extent required under the law and BLM jurisdiction.</p> <p><b>Management Direction:</b>  <b>Development in Areas Already Leased:</b>  When considering exploration and development on areas leased for fluid mineral resources in PHMAs, application of measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate potential impacts will be considered through completion of the requirements at 43 CFR Part 3162.5 (Environmental Review) and 36 CFR Part 228.108 (Surface Use Requirements). Such measures may include existing lease stipulations, project design, operator-committed measures, RMP required design features (RDFs), and local conditions of approval (COAs).</p> <p>The BLM will work with project proponents and the state wildlife agency to promote effective management and connectivity of seasonal habitats and PHMA to accomplish measurable GRSG conservation objectives. Surface use rights associated with existing leases will be recognized and respected. For proposed operations in PHMA, the Surface Use Plan of Operations (refer to 43CFR Part 3162.3-1(f)) shall address, at a minimum, the applicable RDFs in the RMP. RMP-defined project features reducing GRSG impacts not utilized in the Surface Use Plan of Operations based on site-specific or project-specific considerations shall be noted in the project file, along with a rationale for not including them. The BLM will evaluate whether each conservation measure is reasonable and consistent with surface use rights as part of the environmental review process (see 43 CFR Part 3101.12).</p> <p><b>Allocations for Unleased Lands:</b> Open to leasing subject to no surface occupancy (NSO) (unless otherwise closed), controlled surface use (CSU), and Timing Limitations (TL). Refer to the following NSO exceptions.</p> <p>To approve waivers, exceptions or modifications based on any of the listed criteria, after coordination with the appropriate State agency, the Authorized Officer must document that the proposed action satisfies the listed criteria. If the State agency does not concur with granting the exception, the Authorized Officer must provide rationale for how the criteria are met considering the information the State provides.</p> <p>If the area associated with the proposed development seeking the exception or modification (e.g., well pad, compressor station) is in an area in which one of the adaptive management thresholds has been activated (refer to Adaptive Management Section), no exceptions or modification would be considered until the</p>

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**Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA**  
**Objective/Allocation/Management Direction**

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causal factor analysis is completed. If the causal factor analysis concludes fluid minerals is or could contribute to the threshold being activated or not recovering, no exception or modification would be granted. If the analysis is inconclusive on cause, exceptions or modifications could be considered. Waivers are excluded from this consideration.

Prior to granting a waiver, exception, or modification to any GRSG NSO or Disturbance Cap fluid minerals stipulation, the Authorized Officer shall comply with regulatory public review requirements, if applicable (see 43 CFR 3101).

**GRSG No Surface Occupancy (NSO) Exceptions**

- a) **Exception 1** - The Authorized Officer may consider and grant an exception to the NSO stipulation within 0.6 miles of active leks in PHMA if it is demonstrated that development and surface occupancy **has no direct impacts to or disruption of GRSG or its habitat** based on:
    - I. The location of the proposed authorization is determined to be non-habitat (refer to **Appendix 6, Glossary**), does not provide important connectivity between habitat areas (as determined by a wildlife biologist and confirmed by the BLM using methods such as the HAF and coordinated with the appropriate state authority), and the project includes RDFs to prevent indirect disturbance to or disruption of adjacent seasonal habitats, regardless of distance from the active lek, that may impair their biological function; **OR**
    - II. Topography/areas of non-habitat create an effective barrier to impacts (e.g., protected from visual and audible disturbances to GRSG and its habitat); **OR**
    - III. By co-locating the proposed authorization with existing disturbance, no additional impacts would be realized above those already associated with the existing similarly sized infrastructure, including indirect disturbance to or disruption of adjacent seasonal habitats that may impair their biological function.
  - b) **Exception 2** - The Authorized Officer may consider and grant an exception to the NSO stipulation associated with the remainder of PHMA beyond 0.6 miles from active leks if it **would not result in adverse effects to GRSG seasonal** habitats based on **one** of the following criteria:
    - I. The criteria presented in Exception #1. **OR**
    - II. The proposed project seeking the exception would not result in adverse effects to GRSG seasonal habitats based on site-specific information and application of the full range of mitigation tools (e.g., avoidance, minimization, voluntary compensation), as documented by a wildlife biologist and confirmed by the BLM. Proponents may demonstrate no adverse effects by mitigating residual impacts using voluntary compensatory mitigation. To grant this exception based on the use of voluntary compensatory mitigation, the compensation project must be completed and habitat functionality documented before the exception is granted. The compensation must also provide offsetting benefits to the population being impacted.
  - c) **Exception 3** - An exception could be considered if the proposed location on public lands would be undertaken as an alternative to a similar action occurring on a nearby non-public lands parcel (e.g., due to ownership patterns), and development on the public parcel in question would eliminate impacts on more important and/or limited GRSG habitat (e.g., wet meadows, brood-rearing habitat) on the non-public nearby parcel; this exception must also include measures sufficient to allow the BLM to conclude in its documenting analysis that such benefits will endure for the duration of the proposed action's impacts on public lands (e.g., confirmation of an easement).
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**GRSG NSO Modifications**

The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a modification to the fluid mineral lease NSO stipulation, allowing for surface occupancy only where:

- 1) an exception is granted, as described above, for the primary disturbance (e.g., well pad, compressor station), **AND**
- 2) the potential associated infrastructure related to the development is not individually precluded by other actions (e.g., roads, pipelines, power lines that could otherwise be considered through a ROW).

While the NSO stipulation could be modified for these additional developments, they must still comply with other GRSG management actions (e.g., mitigation, disturbance cap, minerals/energy density, seasonal restrictions, RDFs.) if an exception to the NSO is granted.

**GRSG NSO Waiver**

The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a waiver of the NSO stipulation on an existing lease after documenting, in coordination with the appropriate State agency, that the lease with the GRSG NSO stipulation is no longer in PHMA. This would only be applicable on leases that were issued when the parcel was in PHMA, then the PHMA boundaries were subsequently adjusted through the appropriate planning process.

**GRSG Disturbance Cap Exceptions and Waivers**

For fluid mineral (including geothermal) disturbance cap exceptions and waivers, follow the direction for Disturbance Cap exceptions and conditions section.

**Disturbance Cap Modifications**

None.

**Disturbance Cap Waivers**

The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a waiver of the stipulation on an existing lease if the area mapped as PHMA when the lease was issued is no longer mapped as such through the appropriate planning process.

**GRSG Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Exception**

The Authorized Officer may consider and provide temporary relief from seasonal constraints (identified in the 2015 and 2019 Approved RMP Amendments, refer to **Appendix 2**) by granting an exception after documenting the review of available information, including best available science, associated with the site proposed for the exception. This direction applies in PHMA, GHMA, and all other state identified HMAs. While the BLM considers information from all sources, the state wildlife agency can provide information directly associated with GRSG use, including, if available, whether GRSG populations are not using the seasonal habitat during that year's seasonal life cycle period. Based on this information and recommendation, and documented variability in seasonal conditions (e.g., early/late spring, long/heavy winter), use patterns, or other applicable information the Authorized Officer may consider a one-time exception if development associated with it will not have direct/indirect negative impacts on GRSG populations and/or their habitat.

**Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Modifications**

The BLM can grant modifications to seasonal restrictions if the BLM, in coordination with the state wildlife agency and other appropriate state authorities, on a case-by-case basis, determines that granting the modification would not adversely impact the population being protected. The Authorized Officer may grant a modification to the dates and areas associated with seasonal timing restrictions after documenting the review of available information associated with the site proposed for the modification based on one of the criteria described below:

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- 1) The geographic and temporal conditions demonstrate that any modification (shortening/extending seasonal timeframes) is justified on the basis that it serves to better protect or enhance GRSG and its habitat than if the strict application of seasonal timing restrictions are implemented. Under this scenario, modifications can occur if one or more of the following conditions can be documented:
  - a. A proposed authorization is expected to have beneficial or neutral impacts on GRSG and its habitat.
  - b. Topography or other factors eliminate direct and indirect impacts from visibility and audibility to GRSG and its habitat.
  - c. There are documented local variations that indicate the seasonal life cycle periods are different than presented.
- 2) Modifications are needed to address an immediate public health and/or safety concern in a timely manner (e.g., maintaining a road impacted by flooding).

**Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Waiver**

The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a waiver of the stipulation on an existing lease if the area that was mapped as a GRSG habitat management area (regardless of type) when the lease was issued is no longer mapped as such through the appropriate planning process.

**Tracking Waivers, Exceptions, or Modifications**

Refer to **Appendix 3**, Greater Sage-grouse Monitoring Framework, Measure 6 for tracking requirements.

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**Saleable Minerals/Mineral Materials**


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**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Closed, but open for new free use permits and open for the expansion of existing pits.

**Management Direction:** N/A

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**Nonenergy Leasable Minerals**


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**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Closed to new leases but allow expansion of existing operations.

**Management Direction:** Apply required design features, best management practices, and minimization measures identified in the existing GRSG amendments (refer to **Appendix 2**)

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**Coal**


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**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** N/A

**Management Direction:**

Unless a suitability process has already been conducted that considered GRSG HMAs, at the time an application for a new coal lease or lease modification is submitted to the BLM, the BLM will determine whether the lease application area is “unsuitable” for all or certain coal mining methods pursuant to 43 CFR Part 3461.5. Coordination with the appropriate state agency and the determination of “essential habitat” for maintaining GRSG as per the suitability criteria at 43 CFR Part 3461.5(o)(1) will consider site-specific information associated with lease nomination areas as part of the unsuitability process.

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**Locatable Minerals**


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**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Open, unless currently withdrawn.

**Management Direction:** N/A

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**Objective/Allocation/Management Direction**

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**Major Rights-of-Way**

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**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Avoidance for new major Rights-of-Way (ROWs: linear features such as overhead transmission lines, distribution pipelines, and large non-linear surface disturbing projects. Refer to **Appendix 6**, Glossary).

**Management Direction:**

If during consideration of a proposed project-level authorization for a ROW action, the determination of whether it is a major or minor ROW is questioned, with supporting rationale, the Authorized Officer, in consultation with the BLM State Office lead(s), will make the final determination.

Authorizations may be granted if one of the criteria below and the additional conditions are met.

**Major Rights-of-Way Avoidance Criteria:**

- 1) RMP designated corridors within PHMA are open to consideration of a new major ROW in the category of ROW for which the corridor was designated if the proposed authorization within the existing ROW corridor results in impacts similar to those already described in the environmental analysis to establish the corridor, including indirect disturbance to or disruption of adjacent seasonal habitats; **OR**
- 2) The ROW can be routed through, or located within, non-habitat . Non-habitat will be determined by a wildlife biologist and confirmed by the BLM using criteria such as the HAF and coordinated with state wildlife agencies and other appropriate state authority. ROWs shall minimize disruption of connectivity between habitat areas and should be designed to prevent indirect disturbance to or disruption of adjacent seasonal habitats (as disclosed in the environmental analysis);
  - a. Applicants must clearly demonstrate to the Authorized Officer, in consultation with the BLM State Office lead(s) that no viable alternatives exist for placement of facilities outside the avoidance area prior to analyzing placement within an avoidance area.
  - b. ROWs may be placed in PHMA if doing so reduces the risk of wildfire, decreases risk to human health and safety, or meets national security needs. The ROW must be the minimum necessary to achieve the ROW's purpose and would not otherwise be viable in an area that is "open" to ROWs; **OR**
- 3) The proposed location on federal lands would be undertaken as an alternative to a similar action occurring on a nearby non-federal lands parcel, and development on the public parcel in question would eliminate impacts on more important and/or limited GRSG habitat (e.g., wet meadows, brood-rearing habitat) on the non-federal nearby parcel. The ROW must be the minimum necessary to achieve the ROW's purpose and would not otherwise be viable in an area that is "open" to ROWs.

*If one or multiple of the avoidance criteria can be met, the ROW must also meet the following conditions in order to be permitted in PHMA:*

- a) Micro-siting while developing the major ROW is required to limit impacts and maintain connectivity corridors between seasonal habitats. This includes using topography and non-habitat as effective barriers to adverse impacts and co-location with existing, similarly sized, infrastructure; **AND**
- b) Where the development of the major ROW is outside a designated corridor, apply minimization measures (e.g., disturbance cap, seasonal constraints, tall structure limitations, RDFs, nest and perch deterrents); **AND**
- c) Residual direct and indirect impacts would be mitigated consistent with state mitigation policies or requirements as applicable.

If requiring mitigation both inside and outside of RMP-designated corridors disincentivizes location in the designated corridor or another route that has lesser impacts to GRSG, the Authorized Officer may consider adjusting the mitigation requirement if doing so reduces impacts to GRSG compared to an alignment that otherwise requires mitigation (e.g., development in an RMP-designated corridor that has existing transmission lines already present). The Authorized Officer shall coordinate with the applicable state agencies to ensure compliance with compensatory mitigation to the extent required by state policies or regulations.

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**Minor Rights-of-Way****Objective:** N/A**Allocation:** Avoidance as per direction in the 2015 GRSG plan amendment.**Management Direction:** N/A**Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)**

No ACECs designated.

**Livestock Grazing**

**Objective (RM-1):** Manage livestock grazing in GRSG habitat in a manner that meets or makes progress toward meeting Utah Land Health Standard (LHS) 3 (“desired species, including native, threatened, endangered, and special-status species, are maintained at a level appropriate for the site and species involved”), and applies the guideline that addresses “restoring, maintaining, or enhancing habitats of...special status species to promote their conservation” (43 CFR Part 4180.2(e)(9) or subsequent changes to regulations or policy).

**Allocation (RM-1):** The presence of GRSG HMAs would not affect whether an area is available for livestock grazing.

During livestock grazing authorization renewals, Allotment Management Plan (or its functional equivalent) development, or other appropriate implementation-level planning, BLM will follow all applicable livestock grazing regulations including 43 CFR Subpart 4120 – Grazing Management and 43 CFR 4180.2 Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration or any subsequent revisions, and the best management practices and design features in **Appendix 5**.

**Management Direction**

**RM-1:** During the Land Health Assessment (LHA) process, use the criteria identified in the Sage-Grouse HAF (BLM-TR-6710-1 - Stiver et al. 2015 – as revised) and other BLM approved methodology to provide multiple lines of evidence (consistent with BLM Manual 1283) for determining whether vegetation structure, condition, and composition are meeting or making significant progress towards meeting the LHS Utah Standard 3. This includes referencing appropriate Ecological Site Descriptions (ESD), associated State and Transition Model (STM) and existing ecological condition information. For GRSG, the standard would generally be met when vegetation conditions provide for suitable GRSG habitat at the HAF site-scale (refer to **Table 4-1, Appendix 4**), based on existing ecological condition, ecological potential, and existing vegetation information.

Where the LHS Utah Standard 3 (specific to GRSG) is not being met – as indicated by an unsuitable site-scale HAF assessment relative to site potential – and current livestock grazing is a significant causal factor (43 CFR Part 4180, BLM H-4180-1 or subsequent changes to regulations or policy), adjustments to livestock grazing practices and activities will be made at the authorization, allotment or activity plan level and in accordance with applicable regulations (43 CFR Part 4180.2 or subsequent changes to regulations or policy). Any adjustments to livestock grazing will be made based on current ecological potential according to ESD, associated STM, and existing ecological state.

**RM-2:** In PHMA, when fully processing livestock grazing authorizations where the LHS Utah Standard 3 is not being met (specific to GRSG habitat), and current livestock grazing has been identified as a significant causal factor (43 CFR Part 4180, BLM H-4180-1 or subsequent changes to regulations or policy), the NEPA analysis must include in at least one alternative with specific thresholds and defined responses that would be included in the terms and conditions of the livestock grazing authorization if that alternative were selected.

One or more defined responses will allow the Authorized Officer to consider adjustments to livestock grazing during the term of the authorization that have already been analyzed in a NEPA document. Thresholds specific to GRSG habitat would be developed to make significant progress toward fulfillment of the

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LHS (43 CFR Part 4180.2 or subsequent changes to regulations or policy) and maintain or move PHMA toward providing suitable GRSG habitat (e.g., **Table 4-1, Appendix 4**). Thresholds and defined responses will be designed to address the HAF assessment that warranted the Land Health Evaluation finding, and consider ecological site potential, relevant locally specific conditions, and LHS.

**RM-3:** During the livestock grazing authorization renewal process, evaluate all existing livestock management range improvements with respect to their effect on GRSG and GRSG habitat. Consider removal or modification of projects that negatively affect GRSG or GRSG habitat. Range improvements needed for management of sensitive species habitat or other sensitive resources should be maintained but consider implementing improvements in a manner less impactful to GRSG (Refer to **Appendix 5** for Livestock Grazing Management Best Management Practices and Design Features).

**RM-4:** Range improvements are defined as any activity or program relating to rangelands which is designed to improve forage, change vegetative composition, control patterns of use, provide water, stabilize soil and water conditions and provide habitat for livestock and wildlife. Design new range improvement projects to enhance livestock distribution or management and to control the duration, timing and intensity of grazing. They may include application of new technologies such as voluntary virtual fencing. In PHMA, any new structural range improvements should be placed along existing disturbance corridors or in the least suitable habitat, to the extent practicable, and are subject to appropriate design features (**Appendix 5**) and NEPA.

**RM-5:** Identify fences in high-risk areas in coordination with the state wildlife agency or other appropriate state authority. Priority should be given to areas within 1.2 miles of an active lek (Christiansen 2009; Stevens 2011) or other areas identified as important seasonal habitats or areas of GRSG concentration. Evaluate if the fence is needed and/or meets BLM wildlife friendly fencing standards (BLM H 1741). If the fence is unnecessary, remove it. If the fence is needed to support management, mark fences with high visibility fence markers in high risk or important areas (Christiansen 2009; Stevens 2011). Where marking fences does not reduce fence-related GRSG mortality, modify fences. Modification could include re-routing, altering construction materials, using seasonal drop fencing, or limiting perching of predators. New fences within high-risk areas would only be authorized if at least one of the following criteria is met:

- a) It is consistent with the overall RMP GRSG objective; **OR**
- b) Local terrain features shield nearby habitat or reduce the habitat importance; **OR**
- c) The fence is constructed with high visibility markers to reduce GRSG strikes.

Evaluating existing fences to assess mortality risk is recommended in all GRSG habitats.

**Wild Horse**

**Objective: N/A**

**Allocation: N/A**

**Management Direction:**

**Management Action 1:**

Where wild horses overlap with GRSG:

- a. Manage wild horse populations within the established range of Appropriate Management Levels (AML); **AND**
- b. Incorporate GRSG habitat objectives into wild horse management (e.g., herd management area plans, AML) monitoring, and gather prioritization, with prioritization of such activities in PHMA, then GHMA; **AND**
- c. Prioritize gathers in GRSG PHMA unless removals are necessary in other areas to address higher priority issues, including herd health impacts.

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**Management Action 2:** Manage wild horse herd management areas in GRSG habitat (or portions of the herd management area overlapping or within GRSG habitat) within the established AML ranges to achieve and maintain GRSG habitat objectives and achieve or make significant progress towards achieving LHS, considering the full suite of approaches to maintain AML, including fertility control and non-reproducing, or partially non-reproducing herds.

**Management Action 3:** If GRSG site-scale habitat objectives are not being met in PHMA and GHMA, evaluate AMLs and adjust, if necessary, through the NEPA process where wild horse use is identified as significant causal factor to not meeting LHS, or is a factor in the area not meeting the GRSG habitat objectives.

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**Predation**

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**Objective:** Reduce predation from increased numbers of predators resulting from anthropogenic disturbance and habitat loss and function.

**Allocation:** N/A

**Management Direction:**

**Management Action 1:** Apply minimization measures and BMPs to new, existing, and renewal of authorizations and activities to minimize threats from predators shown to pose a threat to GRSG, consistent with applicable law. This includes, but is not limited to stopping, slowing, and/or discouraging the incursion of predators, increased levels of predators, or predators expanding into new areas. Minimization measures and BMPs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Limit the footprint for all proposed projects to the smallest area necessary to achieve the project objectives in order to reduce habitat loss.
- b. Place project components within existing disturbance areas whenever possible to minimize habitat loss.
- c. Eliminate or minimize external food resources from anthropogenic sources (e.g., trash resources from human activities, road killed animals, carcass dumps).
- d. Reduce or prevent opportunities for raven and raptor perching and nesting through such measures as nest/perch deterrents and regular maintenance of the nest/perch deterrents.

**Management Action 2:** For authorizations that require expanded, new, renewal, or non-routine maintenance of energy, mining, or transmission related infrastructure projects as identified in Table 3-4 in **Appendix 3**, Greater Sage-grouse Monitoring Framework) in PHMA and IHMA, the project proponent is required to submit a predator subsidy management plan (plan) to minimize influx and support of predators as a result of the project. (Refer to Glossary for definition of “non-routine maintenance”.) The requirement to prepare a plan could be waived as a result of site-specific circumstances and with State Director concurrence. The plan shall be coordinated with state and Federal agencies (e.g., USFWS and APHIS) as appropriate. The plan will:

- a. Outline how the project will be designed to minimize threats to GRSG beyond the natural range of variability from predators;
- b. Describe project design features to reduce or eliminate predator subsidies (e.g., reducing raven and raptor perching and nesting by burying powerlines, removing trash food subsidies, minimizing infrastructure, locating any necessary structures out of line of site of breeding and nesting habitat, using tubular non-branching material for structures);
- c. Describe and outline the coordination and concurrence with state and Federal agencies, if appropriate (e.g., USFWS, APHIS). The project proponent may participate in non-lethal control of predators (e.g., removal of raven nests before eggs are present) with the written consent and permits from the appropriate agency and as determined at the site-specific analysis;
- d. Include a monitoring strategy to assess efficacy of the predator subsidy management plan and GRSG population response.

**Management Action 3:** The BLM will collaborate with appropriate state agencies, other landowners, federal agencies (e.g., USFWS, APHIS), and Tribal governments, as appropriate and consistent with BLM policy, in their efforts to minimize impacts from predators on GRSG, including providing needed

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authorizations to support predator management actions. Consistent with the current State of Utah GRSG plan, the BLM will work with the applicable agencies to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to address and reduce conflicts with ravens and other native and non-native predators throughout GRSG habitat in Utah.

**Application of Habitat Objectives**

**Objective:**

**Objective SSS [X]:** Within GRSG habitat management areas provide suitable habitat by managing for connected mosaics of sagebrush and associated communities that provide for seasonal habitats, dispersal, and migration, while limiting widespread anthropogenic disturbances and fragmentation. This objective will be accomplished by applying RMP land use allocations and management actions among HMAs, proactive habitat treatments, and project-level application of mitigation (refer to Mitigation direction in this Approved RMP Amendment) for internal and external project proposals.

**Objective SSS [Y]:** Manage GRSG habitat management areas to provide seasonal habitats at the HAF site-scale (Level 4) by providing for habitat characteristics that support seasonal habitat needs, including adequate protective cover and food needed to survive and reproduce. Seasonal habitats may include areas where sagebrush is the current dominant vegetation type, sagebrush is a primary shrub species within the various states of the ecological site, or dominated by other vegetation types but still provides GRSG habitats, such as mesic areas. This objective will be accomplished through the combination of RMP land use allocations and management actions and restoration based on ecological potential, current vegetative condition, and existing seasonal values and the project-level application of mitigation (refer to Mitigation direction in this Approved RMP Amendment) for internal and external project proposals.

**Allocation:** N/A

**Management Direction:**

**Management Action SSS [X1]:** Assess the suitability of GRSG habitat at HAF mid- and fine-scales (HAF Levels 2 and 3, respectively) based on the methods in the Sage-grouse HAF (Stiver et al. 2015, BLM TR 6710-I, as revised; see **Appendix 4**).

**Management Action SSS [X2]:** Design and implement projects that will maintain or improve habitat suitability, availability, and connectivity, based on site location, existing seasonal values, and habitat needs using the results of mid- and fine-scale habitat assessments and other complementary research, tools, or information and in coordination with partners across land management jurisdictions.

**Management Action SSS [Y1]:** Assess suitability of GRSG habitat at the HAF site-scale (Level 4) based on the methods in Sage-grouse HAF (Stiver et al. 2015, BLM TR 6710-I, as revised; **Appendix 4**) utilizing current geographically applicable research on seasonal habitat requisites of GRSG (see **Appendix 4**). Updates to seasonal habitat indicators and ESDs will be developed locally and coordinated with partners (see **Appendix 4**).

**Management Action SSS [Y2]:** Maintain, improve, or restore the suitability of GRSG seasonal habitats using the Habitat Indicators Table (see **Appendix 4**) to inform measurable project objectives during implementation-level planning for BLM-permitted and BLM-initiated site-specific actions in HMAs, in coordination with applicable partners. Use the results of site-scale habitat assessments and other best available information to inform management decisions and the design and implementation of habitat projects.

**Mitigation**

**Objective:** In GRSG HMAs, manage activities that result in habitat loss and degradation to improve the condition of GRSG habitat across the planning area. Exceptions to this mitigation standard for GRSG shall be made for vegetation treatments to benefit Utah prairie dog.

**Allocation:** None

**Management Direction:**

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**Management Action: (Utah MA-SSS-3A)**

In PHMA, when undertaking BLM management actions, and, consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, when authorizing third-party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation, the BLM will achieve the planning-level GRSG management goals and objectives through implementation of mitigation and management actions. Under this Proposed Plan Amendment, management would be consistent with the GRSG goals and objectives, and in conformance with BLM Manual 6840, Special Status Species Management. In accordance with BLM Manual 6840, the BLM will undertake planning decisions, actions and authorizations “to minimize or eliminate threats affecting the status of [GRSG] or to improve the condition of [GRSG] habitat” across the planning area. Exceptions to this mitigation strategy for GRSG shall be made for vegetation treatments to benefit Utah prairie dog.

Compensation, which involves replacing or providing substitute resources for the impacts (including through payments to fund such work), would be considered only when voluntarily offered by a proponent, required by a law other than FLPMA, or to meet a State recommendation or requirement. Therefore, consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, when considering third-party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation, the BLM will consider compensatory mitigation actions only as a component of compliance with a State mitigation plan, program, or authority; when required by a federal law other than FLPMA; or when offered voluntarily by a project proponent. Accordingly, before authorizing third-party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation in PHMA or State of Utah SGMAs, the BLM will complete the following steps:

- 1) Notify the appropriate State of Utah agency to determine if the State of Utah requires or recommends any additional mitigation – including compensatory mitigation – under State regulations, policies, or programs related to the conservation of GRSG;
- 2) Recommend to the project proponent that it coordinate with the appropriate State of Utah agency to ensure it complies with all applicable State requirements relating to its proposal;
- 3) Consider the State’s recommendations – if the State of Utah determines that there are unacceptable residual impacts on GRSG or its habitat and compensatory mitigation is required as a part of State policy or authorization, or if a proponent voluntarily offers mitigation, the BLM will incorporate that mitigation into the BLM’s NEPA and decision-making process;
- 4) The BLM will ensure mitigation outcomes are consistent with the State of Utah’s mitigation strategy and principles outlined in the State’s Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-Grouse, including, but not limited to:
  - a) Creating, restoring and/or protecting functional habitat or habitat corridors to offset the impacts of unavoidable disturbance to GRSG habitat,
  - b) In most cases, compensatory mitigation projects should be completed before the project triggering mitigation occurs,
  - c) Compensatory mitigation projects should account for the risk that the mitigation may fail or not persist for the full duration of the project it is intended to offset,
  - d) Compensatory mitigation projects should provide habitat that is in place for at least the duration of the project it is intended to offset.

Project-specific analysis will be necessary to determine how a compensatory mitigation proposal addresses impacts from a proposed action. The BLM will cooperate with the State to determine appropriate project design and alignment with State policies and requirements, including those regarding compensatory mitigation. The BLM will defer to the appropriate State authority to quantify habitat offsets, durability, and other aspects used to determine the recommended compensatory mitigation action.

The BLM will not deny a proposed authorization in GRSG habitat solely on the grounds that the proponent has not proposed or agreed to undertake voluntary compensatory mitigation. In cases where waivers, exceptions, or modification may be granted for projects with a residual impact, voluntary compensatory mitigation consistent with the State’s management goals can be one mechanism by which a proponent achieves the RMPA goals, objectives, and waiver, exception, or modification criteria. When a proponent volunteers compensatory mitigation as their chosen approach to address residual impacts, the

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BLM can incorporate those actions into the rationale used to grant a waiver, exception, or modification. The final decision to grant a waiver, exception, or modification will be based, in part, on criteria consistent with the State's GRSG management plans and policies.

In short, the BLM would focus on avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, and reducing impacts over time. Compensation would be considered only when voluntarily offered by a proponent, required by a law other than FLPMA, or to meet a State recommendation or requirement. The BLM commits to cooperating with the State to analyze applicant-proposed, state-recommended, or state-imposed compensatory mitigation to offset residual impacts. The BLM remains committed to achieving the planning-level management goals and objectives identified in this ROD and the 2015 ARMPA by ensuring GRSG habitat impacts are addressed through implementing mitigating actions consistent with the governing RMP.

### **Disturbance Cap**

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** N/A

**Management Direction:**

If direct habitat anthropogenic disturbance from existing and proposed infrastructure developments exceeds either:

- 1) 3% at the project scale (refer to description below) or
- 2) 3% at the HAF fine-scale habitat selection area;

New infrastructure projects would be deferred to the extent allowable under applicable laws, or valid existing rights:

- a. until such time as the percentage of habitat disturbance in the areas has been reduced below the cap threshold through restoration of existing disturbance to meeting habitat objectives or increasing the amount of suitable habitat through restoration, or
- b. redesigned to not result in additional surface disturbance (co-location), redesigned to move it outside of habitat in PHMA (refer to non-habitat criteria in this table), or redesigned to move it outside PHMA.

### **Disturbance Cap Calculation**

#### Numerator

The disturbance cap calculation is limited to the following specific activities, whether existing projects or new proposals (refer to **Appendix 3** for additional details on how these items would be monitored):

- Oil and gas wells and development facilities
  - Coal mines
  - Wind developments (e.g., towers, sub-stations)
  - Solar fields
  - Geothermal development facilities
  - Mining (active locatable, nonenergy leasable and saleable/mineral material developments)
  - Roads; transportation features with a maintenance intensity of level 3 or 5 – (BLM Technical Note 422 – Roads and Trails Terminology, 2006 or as updated) and does not include two-tracks
  - Railroads
  - Power lines
  - Communication towers
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- Other vertical infrastructure, as well as developed rights-of-way with habitat loss (e.g., pipelines)

In addition to the specific activities listed above, the following additional activities will be incorporated into the numerator at the project scale:

- Coal bed methane ponds
- Meteorological towers (e.g., wind energy testing)
- Nuclear energy facilities
- Airport facilities and infrastructure
- Hydroelectric plants/facilities (at the project scale)

Where such data are available, this disturbance is measured by the footprint of direct disturbance of the PHMA area where habitat is removed (including staging areas, dispersed structures, parking lots, and equipment storage areas), or by the distance between the outermost lines for transmission lines. A disturbed area is included in the numerator until it has been restored to provide equal or improved habitat function as was provided by the area before the disturbance. When considering new project proposals, any project associated with the above list that has been approved/authorized but not yet constructed should be treated as though it were already constructed when calculating the disturbance cap to account for authorized but not yet constructed disturbance. No other activities or actions beyond those listed above are included when calculating the cap (e.g., wildfire, agriculture, vegetation treatments, residences, barns, fencing or range improvements, etc.). BLM will coordinate with state agencies and use available HAF and land health data in determining if the habitat function of an area has been restored.

Consistent with the BLM's responsibility to consider cumulative impacts when making decisions for activities on public lands, the disturbance percentage includes acres from the above disturbances regardless of land ownership, where such data are available. This will only inform decision-making on public lands and cannot impact private property rights.

Wildfire and agriculture would not be included in the numerator at the HAF fine-scale.

**Denominator**

At the project scale, the assessment area (denominator) is determined by identifying the extent of the GRSG PHMA that supports the GRSG population potentially affected by the proposed project that is also located in PHMA ; it is not to be limited to the area where indirect impacts are anticipated. The project scale denominator should include the PHMA used by the potentially affected local GRSG population, including the associated seasonal habitats and the transition zones between those habitats within PHMA associated with where the project is proposed.

If sufficient monitoring information is not available to identify the portions of the PHMA used by the potentially affected local GRSG population, identify project level boundaries using an approach similar to the DDCT approach developed by the State of Wyoming: 1) Determine potentially affected active leks by placing a 4-mile buffer around the proposed area of physical disturbance related to the proposed project. All active leks located within the 4-mile project buffer and within PHMA will be considered affected by the project. 2) Next, place a 4-mile buffer around each of the affected active leks. 3) All PHMA within the 4-mile project buffer, combined with the 4-mile lek buffer(s), creates the project analysis area for each individual project, absent other monitoring data. If there are no active leks within the 4-mile project buffer, the project scale analysis area will be that portion of the 4-mile project buffer within PHMA. "Pending leks" and other similarly defined state-based lek categories can be considered as active leks based on inclusion from the state wildlife agency or appropriate state authority.

At the HAF fine-scale, denominator is the acres of PHMA within the boundaries of the HAF fine-scale habitat delineation area. Calculation of the 3% cap would include all acres of PHMA in the fine-scale area as the denominator.

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At either scale, all areas in PHMA will be included in the denominator unless specific information documents areas of non-habitat or unsuitable habitat (e.g., assessment process described in the Criteria Based Management for Non-habitat section, seasonal habitat maps for the HAF fine-scale assessment area, areas that are unsuitable for all seasonal habitats using HAF site-scale techniques). These areas are treated neither as habitat nor disturbance, which results in the area being removed from the denominator piece of the formula.

The denominator includes all lands, regardless of land ownership, to help the BLM consider the cumulative impacts of disturbances on GRSG when considering projects on public lands.

**Disturbance Cap Exceptions**

Authorized Officer may consider projects on public lands that could result in exceeding the disturbance cap across all ownership at the **project scale** only if the project meets the criteria for one of the following categories of exceptions and also meets the following conditions applicable to that exception:

**Categories for Disturbance Cap Exceptions:**

- a. If the disturbance is associated with the renewal or re-authorization of existing infrastructure in previously disturbed sites or expansions of existing infrastructure that do not result in new direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on GRSG and its habitat, and is documented.
- b. If a technical team evaluates and concludes site-specific GRSG habitat and population information, combined with project design elements – including voluntary compensatory mitigation, indicates the proposed project is expected to improve the condition of GRSG habitat within the proposed project analysis area. The technical team should consist of, at a minimum, a BLM field office biologist and a biologist from the appropriate state agency. The methods, rationale, and data used in developing recommendations shall be retained as part of the project record.
- c. If the disturbance is within an RMP designated utility corridors, the disturbance cap may be exceeded if site specific NEPA analysis indicates doing so will decrease impacts to GRSG habitat in comparison to siting a project outside the designated corridor. This exception is limited to projects that fulfill the use for which the corridors were designated (e.g., transmission lines, pipelines) and the designated width of a corridor will not be exceeded as a result of any project co-location. The disturbance cap cannot exceed 3% at the HAF fine-scale. A plan amendment would be required for the development of new corridors and, as necessary, would need to appropriately address any changes in the disturbance cap.
- d. If the environmental review document(s) explains how the GRSG RMP goals and objectives will be met, including avoidance first (e.g., locating the proposed projects outside PHMA, colocation within footprint of existing disturbance), then minimization (including application of RDFs, etc.) with appropriate documentation. The environmental review document must also consider the cumulative effects of other exceptions granted in adjacent project scale units. If avoidance is not possible and minimization does not address all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, voluntary compensatory mitigation can be considered, in coordination with the appropriate state agency.

**If one or more of the exception criteria can be met, the activity associated with the disturbance must also meet all of the following conditions in order to be permitted:**

- a. All disturbance cap exceptions MUST have concurrence from the State Director.
  - b. If the exception relies on voluntary compensatory mitigation, and also in compliance with state authorities :
    1. The mitigation must be completed prior to the disturbance that results in the exceedance of the disturbance cap and provide the same or better value habitat based on site limitations, or better based on site limitations,
    - AND**
    2. The compensation must be implemented in the same HAF fine-scale unit as the potential development. Consideration may be given to providing compensatory mitigation in adjacent fine-scale HAF areas if doing so will more effectively provide the offsetting benefit.
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- c. If proposed disturbance cap exception is requested in an area that has met one of the adaptive management thresholds, no exceptions to the disturbance cap at the project scale would be considered until the causal factor analysis is completed and the cause identified and corrected unless the disturbance is needed for the protection of human life and safety.
- d. Disturbance cap exceptions (either Project or HAF fine scale) will be tracked and considered in analyses for any proposed development within an appropriate biological area. All requests for the use of compensatory mitigation to exceed the disturbance cap should be reviewed by the technical team for likelihood of success and efficacy of offsetting impacts to the affected habitats and associated populations.
- e. There would be no exceptions to the 3% PHMA disturbance cap at the **HAF fine-scale** in any state unless:
  - i. The disturbance is needed for the protection of human life and safety.
- f. In the event of a conflict between the project scale and HAF fine-scale disturbance caps, the Authorized Officer may consider and grant an exception to the disturbance cap at the HAF fine-scale if, in coordination with the appropriate state agency, it is determined that the impact to GRSG of the habitat disturbance resulting in the disturbance cap being met is better assessed at the project scale.
- g. Apply the disturbance cap to the extent consistent with applicable law and valid existing rights.

**Adaptive Management**

**Objective:** Address unanticipated negative impacts to Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) from changes in habitat conditions before consequences become severe or irreversible.

**Allocation:** N/A

**Management Direction:**

**Management Action:** The BLM will implement adaptive management per the following Management Action to inform appropriate responses to the loss or degradation of GRSG habitat on BLM-administered lands. Where the State has an adaptive management process as part of the State's GRSG management plan, program, policy, regulation, or authority, the BLM will participate in and implement the most recent State adaptive management process, consistent with the framework outlined in **Appendix 9**. If a State is developing an adaptive management process, the BLM will participate in developing that process and, as appropriate, any state-level interagency adaptive management team.

The BLM must consider the best available information about GRSG habitat and population status, which includes the States' data and other available science. States have ownership over managing GRSG populations and therefore lead the collection of GRSG population monitoring data and determination of population status (e.g., increasing, decreasing, or stable). The States' population monitoring is important for informing effective GRSG habitat management on BLM-administered lands.

In coordination with State GRSG authorities and state-level interagency adaptive management teams, BLM will produce an annual summary of GRSG habitat conditions and population status, adaptive management thresholds, and any associated adaptive management responses and decisions for BLM-administered lands. This will be completed by a mutually agreed-upon date. BLM's annual summaries will include population status input and recommendations from State GRSG authorities. BLM will coordinate with State GRSG authorities regarding management decisions made in response to adaptive management thresholds and subsequent causal factor analyses and will make decisions for the management of BLM managed surface lands and mineral estate. If no adaptive management thresholds are identified during a given year, an annual review of habitat and population status by state-level interagency adaptive management teams (including State GRSG authorities) is nonetheless encouraged.

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**Objective/Allocation/Management Direction**


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Consistent with State GRSG adaptive management processes and the Federal Land and Policy Management Act (“FLPMA”), the BLM will implement GRSG adaptive management framework outlined in **Appendix 9** in coordination with state-level interagency adaptive management teams.<sup>10</sup>

**Criteria Based Management for Non-Habitat**


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**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** No allocation identified but allocations can be affected if non-habitat criteria are met

**Management Direction** (can affect HMA allocation and management direction, see Tables above):

Habitat management areas include areas where the BLM will apply goals, objectives, and management actions for conservation of GRSG. The HMAs are identified using inventory data on habitat use and occupancy and reflect the dynamic nature of the vegetation communities that make-up GRSG habitat. The HMA boundaries are not identified using survey-grade assessments (e.g., comprehensive on-the-ground surveys and edge verifications) and, in some states, are the result of large-scale modeling. Therefore, not every acre within an HMA boundary may be GRSG habitat. Additionally, because GRSG habitat use and occupancy and vegetation communities are dynamic, the BLM will use up-to-date high-quality information, including field investigations, to make adjustments to the management actions to be applied within identified HMA boundaries. In accordance with existing law, regulation and policy, inventories will continue to be conducted to provide information on GRSG habitat and distribution (BLM Manual 6840).

Non-habitat consists of areas that lack the ecological potential to provide principal habitat components necessary to support GRSG. In the mapped GRSG HMAs, there may be areas of non-habitat and where conformance with the RMP would not support GRSG conservation. Refer to definitions for existing habitat, potential habitat, and non-habitat in **Appendix 6, Glossary**). If, during consideration of a project level authorization within GRSG PHMA and GHMA, potential non-habitat is identified by the BLM, a project-specific review should be conducted by a wildlife biologist or reviewed and accepted for confirmation by the BLM. This review should use published, scientific methods (preferably more than one) for identifying GRSG habitat (e.g., Stiver et. al. 2015 [as revised], ESDs and associated STMs) and be coordinated with the appropriate state agencies. Any discrepancies between the mapped GRSG HMAs and the site-specific conditions will be disclosed, with supporting data (e.g., vegetation monitoring, STMs, ESDs) and analyzed as a component of the NEPA process. However, indirect and direct impacts to adjacent GRSG populations and their habitats, including potential habitat still need to be considered when planning and authorizing projects in these non-habitat areas.

All management objectives and decisions associated with each management area type will apply unless all the following criteria are documented:

1. Project is proposed in verified non-habitat.
  2. There are no indirect impacts to adjacent habitat or individual or populations of GRSG occupying these adjacent areas due to project design and required design features (e.g., minimize noise, preclude tall structures, require perch deterrents, etc.), as demonstrated in the project’s NEPA document. Indirect impact consideration includes the following:
    - (I) The project does not impact connectivity,
      - i. Within or between populations; or
      - ii. Between seasonal habitats (e.g., nesting, early brood rearing, winter,); or
      - iii. Within or between existing habitat.
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<sup>10</sup> The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires the BLM, to “resolv[e], to the extent practical, inconsistencies between Federal and non-Federal Government plans,” and achieve consistency with State and local plans to the maximum extent that the BLM finds to be consistent with the laws governing public lands. 43 USC 1712(c)(9). See also 43 CFR 1610.3-1.

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3. Any project related access through/across GRSG habitat as verified through site-specific field checks only occurs on existing routes, and the proposed action would not include new roads or upgrades to roads that would change the vehicle use, vehicle type, or traffic volume during the applicable season of GRSG use, subject to valid existing rights, throughout all stages of the proposed project.
4. Coordination with the appropriate state and federal agency biologists and other appropriate staff has been documented. If coordination is not possible the reasons and attempts at coordination will be documented.

All proposed actions, including those in the same area, would need to undergo individual analysis to confirm the criteria are met prior to authorization. Exempting a proposed project from the management actions that would otherwise be required in a GRSG habitat management area identified on the maps in this Approved RMP Amendment because the proposal has been determined to be in non-habitat, based on the above criteria, would not change the GRSG habitat management area boundaries as identified in the RMP.

The determination to exempt a proposed project from the management actions that would otherwise be required in the GRSG habitat management area identified in maps in this Approved RMP Amendment, when supported by science and consistent with the criteria above, may only be made by the Authorized Officer. If the coordinating federal and/or state wildlife biologists do not concur with the Authorized Officer, then the determination will be at the discretion of the BLM State Director.

**Definition of Lek**

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** N/A

**Management Direction:** Use the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) lek definitions (Cook et. al., 2022). (Refer to **Appendix 6**, Glossary). Unless otherwise specifically noted, when language in the RMPs uses the term “lek” it applies to the WAFWA definition for “active lek.”

**Utility Scale Solar**

Utility scale solar projects are projects with nameplate capacity (theoretical output registered with authorities) of 5 megawatt (MW) or higher that deliver electricity to the electricity transmission grid (refer to **Appendix 6**, Glossary).

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Utility scale solar testing and development is excluded from all PHMA; development as ancillary support for other approved uses (e.g., mineral developments, data centers) could occur if one of the exceptions can be met.

**Management Direction:**

**Exception Criteria**

Apply Exception Criteria as defined in the Fluid Mineral Lease Exceptions.

**Utility Scale Wind**

Utility-scale wind projects are projects larger than 1 megawatt (MW) (refer to **Appendix 6**, Glossary).

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Exclusion for utility scale wind testing and development (including met towers).

**Management Direction:**

**None**

**Table 2. General Habitat Management Area (GHMA) Allocations and Management Direction**

This table identifies the allocations and management direction and that will be applied in GHMA. The table describes if the Approved RMP Amendment is amending the “objective”, “allocation”, or “management direction” for the resource topic identified. In some instances, the Approved RMP Amendment addresses all three of these planning categories for a resource topic while in other resource topics only one or two of the categories are amended. All three planning categories are identified for each resource topic and if it is not being amended it will be identified as “N/A”, not applicable. In those “N/A” instances, the 2015 or 2019 Amendment decision is not being proposed for amendment and remains in place. The existing 2015 and 2019 Amendment decisions are described in **Appendix 2**.

Maps that show where the allocations and management direction apply can be found in maps in **Appendix I, Maps and Tables**.

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**Approved RMP Amendment for GHMA  
Allocation and Management Direction**

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**Utility Scale Solar**

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Open with GHMA minimization measures described in MA-SSS-5 (as amended below), to maintain habitat supporting GRSG populations consistent and concurrent with state agency habitat designations (e.g., restoration, connectivity, seasonal, or other), and to preclude negative impacts to any adjacent PHMA habitats.

Portions of GHMA between PHMA in Hamlin Valley, Bald Hills/Panguitch, Emma Park Porphyry Bench, and Uinta Mountains (Browns Park/Diamond Mountain): Avoidance. Development could be authorized if the Authorized Officer can document that there would be no negative impacts to any PHMA habitats or important seasonal habitats in connectivity areas. New ROWs in the remainder of GHMA could be considered if pertinent management for discretionary activities in GHMA identified in MA-SSS-5 (as amended) are applied.

**Management Direction:** N/A

**Utility Scale Wind**

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Open with GHMA minimization measures described in MA-SSS-5 (as amended below), to maintain habitat supporting GRSG populations consistent and concurrent with state agency habitat designations (e.g., restoration, connectivity, seasonal, or other), and to preclude negative impacts to any PHMA habitats.

Portions of GHMA between PHMA in Hamlin Valley, Bald Hills/Panguitch, Emma Park Porphyry Bench, and Uinta Mountains (Browns Park/Diamond Mountain): Avoidance. Development could be authorized if the Authorized Officer can document that there would be no negative impacts to any PHMA habitats or important seasonal habitats in connectivity areas. New ROWs in the remainder of GHMA could be considered if pertinent management for discretionary activities in GHMA identified in MA-SSS-5 (as amended) are applied.

**Management Direction:** N/A

**Fluid Minerals (including Geothermal)**

**Management Objective, Allocation, and Management Actions:** Same as identified in 2015 except as noted below.

GHMA is subject to existing planning decisions (pre-2015 management plans), which varies by office, including closed to fluid minerals leasing, NSO, controlled surface use (CSU), and timing limitation (TL) stipulations and open to leasing, subject to standard stipulations.

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## Approved RMP Amendment for GHMA Allocation and Management Direction

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### **NSO Exception**

The Authorized Officer may grant an exception if an environmental record of review determines that the action, as proposed or conditioned, would not impair the function or utility of the site for the current or subsequent seasonal habitat, life-history, or behavioral needs of GRSG due to site-specific terrain and habitat features, such as topographic features that would reduce the habitat impacts by shielding nearby habitat from disruptive factors.

An exception could also be granted if it can be demonstrated by a wildlife biologist and confirmed by the BLM, based on site-specific information (using state mitigation tools such as Habitat Equivalency Analysis or Habitat Quantification Tool, or other state mitigation programs), that the impacts anticipated by the proposed activity would be offset through mitigation developed in coordination with the appropriate State agency that meets principles of GRSG compensatory mitigation identified in the RMP.

### **NSO Modification**

The Authorized Officer may grant a modification after a review of available information, and in coordination with the applicable state agency, documents that a portion of the NSO area is nonessential, or it is identified through scientific research or monitoring that the existing area is inadequate or overly protective for maintaining the function or utility of the site for the seasonal habitat, life-history, or behavioral needs of the GRSG, including but not limited to reproductive display, daytime loafing/staging activities, and nesting. Both direct and indirect impacts from a potential modification should be considered.

### **NSO Waiver**

This stipulation may be waived for a specific lek if, in coordination with the appropriate state agency, it is determined that the GRSG lek that was active has been classified as inactive as determined by the WAFWA definitions and confirmed by the appropriate state agency. Prior to waiving the stipulations, surveys should confirm that the lek is inactive and not moved to another location in the vicinity. Any changes to this stipulation will be made in accordance with the land use plan and/or the regulatory provisions for such changes.

### **Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Exception**

The Authorized Officer may consider and provide temporary relief from seasonal constraints by granting an exception after documenting the review of available information associated with the site proposed for the exception. This direction applies in PHMA, GHMA, and all other state identified HMAs. While the BLM considers information from all sources, the state wildlife agency can provide information directly associated with GRSG use, including whether GRSG populations are not using the seasonal habitat during that year's seasonal life cycle period. Based on this information and recommendation, and documented variability in seasonal conditions (e.g., early/late spring, long/heavy winter), use patterns, or other applicable information the Authorized Officer may consider a one-time exception if development associated with it will not affect GRSG habitat use.

### **Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Modifications**

The BLM can grant modifications on a case-by-case basis to seasonal restrictions if the BLM, in coordination with the state wildlife agency and other appropriate state authorities determines that granting the modification would not adversely impact the population being protected. The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a modification to the dates and areas associated with seasonal timing restrictions based on the criteria described below after documenting the review of available information associated with the site proposed for the modification, if the geographic and temporal conditions demonstrate that any seasonal modification (is justified on the basis that it serves to better protect or enhance GRSG and its habitat than if the strict application of seasonal timing restrictions are implemented. Under this scenario modifications can occur if one or more of the following conditions can be documented:

- A proposed authorization is expected to have beneficial or neutral impacts on GRSG and its habitat.
  - Topography or other factors eliminate direct and indirect visible and audible impacts to GRSG and its habitat.
  - There are documented local variations that indicate the seasonal life cycle periods are different than presented.
  - Modifications are needed to address an immediate public health and safety concern in a timely manner (e.g., maintaining a road impacted by flooding).
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**Approved RMP Amendment for GHMA  
Allocation and Management Direction**

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**Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Waiver**

The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a waiver of the stipulation on an existing lease if the area that was mapped as a GRSG habitat management area, regardless of type, when the lease was issued is no longer mapped as such through the appropriate planning process.

**Saleable Minerals/Mineral Materials**

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Open.

**Management Direction:** Apply state-specific minimization measures identified in MA-SSS-5 (as amended below).

**Nonenergy Leasable Minerals**

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Open.

**Management Direction:** Apply state-specific minimization measures identified in MA-SSS-5 (as amended below).

**Coal**

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** N/A

**Management Direction:**

Unless a suitability process has already been conducted that considered GRSG HMAs, at the time an application for a new coal lease or lease modification is submitted to the BLM, the BLM will determine whether the lease application area is "unsuitable" for all or certain coal mining methods pursuant to 43 CFR Part 3461.5. Coordination with the appropriate state agency and the determination of essential habitat for maintaining GRSG as per the suitability criteria at 43 CFR Part 3461.5(o)(1) will consider site-specific information associated with lease nomination areas as part of the unsuitability process identified above.

**Locatable Minerals**

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Open, unless currently withdrawn.

**Management Direction:** N/A

**Major Rights of Way**

**Objective:** N/A

**Allocation:** Open with applicable state minimization measures from MA-SSS-5 (as amended below), to maintain habitat supporting GRSG populations consistent with state agency habitat designations (e.g., restoration, connectivity, seasonal, or other), and to preclude negative impacts to PHMA habitats.

Portions of GHMA between PHMA in Hamlin Valley, Bald Hills/Panguitch, Emma Park Porphyry Bench, and Uinta Mountains (Browns Park/Diamond Mountain): Avoidance. Development could be authorized if the Authorized Officer can document that there would be no negative impacts to any PHMA habitats or important seasonal habitats in GHMA connectivity areas. New ROWs in the remainder of GHMA (non-connectivity) could be considered if pertinent management for discretionary activities in GHMA identified in MA-SSS-5 (as amended) are applied.

**Management Direction:** N/A

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Allocation and Management Direction**

**Minor Rights-of-Way****Objective:** N/A**Allocation:** Open with applicable state mitigation requirements from MA-SSS-5 (as amended below).**Management Direction:** N/A**Livestock Grazing**

Same as PHMA except RM-2 does not apply.

**Wild Horse and Burro**

Same as PHMA.

**Mitigation**

Same as PHMA

**Predation**

Same as PHMA except Management Action 2 does not apply.

**Disturbance Cap**

No GHMA disturbance cap management direction.

**Adaptive Management**

Same as PHMA

**Lek Definitions**

Same as PHMA

**Criteria Based Management Direction for Non-Habitat**

Same as PHMA

**Special Status Species****Objective:** N/A**Allocation:** N/A**Management Direction:****MA-SSS-5:** In GHMA, apply the following management for discretionary actions that can result in habitat loss and degradation:

- A- **Existing Management:** Implement GRSG management actions included in the existing RMPs and project specific mitigation measures associated with existing decisions.
- B- **Mitigation:** Refer to Mitigation section in **Mitigation**
- C- **Buffers:** In undertaking BLM management actions, and consistent with valid and existing rights and applicable law in authorizing third-party actions, the BLM will assess and address impacts within the lek buffer-distances identified in the US Geological Survey Report Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage- Grouse – A Review (Open File Report 2014-1239; Manier et al. 2014) in accordance with Appendix B, Applying Lek-Buffer Distances (Utah 2019 Approved RMP Amendment).

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**Approved RMP Amendment for GHMA  
Allocation and Management Direction**

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**D- Required Design Features/Best Management Practices:** In GHMA, apply the fluid mineral RDFs that are associated with GHMA identified in Appendix C (Utah 2015 Approved RMP Amendment) when authorizing/permitting site-specific fluid mineral development activities/projects.

The applicability and overall effectiveness of each RDF cannot be fully assessed until the project level, once the project location and design are known. Because of site specific circumstances, some RDFs may not apply to some projects and/or may require slight variations. All variations in RDFs will require that at least one of the following be demonstrated in the NEPA analysis associated with the project/activity:

- A specific RDF is documented to not be applicable to the site-specific conditions of the project/activity (e.g. due to site limitations or engineering considerations). Economic considerations, such as increased costs, do not necessarily require that an RDF be varied or rendered inapplicable;
- An alternative RDF, state-implemented conservation measure, or plan-level protection is determined to provide equal or better protection for GRSG or its habitat;
- A specific RDF will provide no additional protection to GRSG or its habitat.

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**MA-SSS-6: Sage-Grouse Management Outside PHMA**

Outside PHMA, implement GRSG management actions included in the RMPs and project-specific mitigation measures associated with decisions that predated the 2015 amendments.

Proposed projects within State of Utah SGMA and USFWS PACs, as well as adjacent to PHMA outside these areas, will consider impacts on GRSG and may implement measures to mitigate impacts on GRSG populations within adjacent PHMA when preparing site-specific planning and environmental compliance documents.

Outside of PHMA, but within SGMAs and PACs, avoid removal of sagebrush and minimize development that creates a physical barrier to GRSG movement; these areas may be used by GRSG to connect to other populations or seasonal habitat areas.

Exceptions shall be made for vegetation treatments to benefit Utah prairie dog, where the landscape will be managed for both species.

Outside of PHMA, but within SGMAs and PACs, consider noise and permanent structure stipulations around leks.

Outside PHMA, after analyzing the impacts using the buffer distances identified in Appendix B (Utah 2019 Approved RMP Amendment) from a lek that is located in PHMA, portions of State of Utah opportunity areas will be managed with the following allocations:

- Fluid minerals will be open for leasing with CSU stipulations (noise and tall structures).
- Lands ROWs, permits, and leases will be avoided, applying avoidance criteria for noise and tall structures.

Avoid siting wind energy development in opportunity areas within the buffer distances identified in Appendix B (Utah 2019 Approved RMP Amendment) from active GRSG leks that are in PHMA, if the lek buffer analysis as identified in Appendix B (Utah 2019 Approved RMP Amendment) shows that siting wind energy development in opportunities areas will impact lek persistence within PHMA.

Outside of PHMA, avoid and minimize effects from discrete anthropogenic disturbances in areas that have been treated with the intent of improving or creating new GRSG habitat. Evaluate conditions in the treated area to determine if it is providing habitat for GRSG and if additional measures are necessary to protect the habitat.

Outside of PHMA, provide that acres of GRSG seasonal habitat (based on best available maps, then confirmed to be regularly used by GRSG Grouse to sustain one or more seasonal habitat requirements through coordination with the appropriate State of Utah agency and through on-the-ground information) that is lost to habitat degradation actions (Appendix C, Table C.2 of the Utah 2015 ROD/Approved RMP Amendment) are replaced by creating/improving GRSG habitat within PHMA.

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<p>The following management actions include a reference to GHMA, usually just pointing to the GHMA polygons or in a prioritization approach (see <b>Appendix 2</b>, Utah existing GRSG management):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MA-SSS-1</li> <li>• MA-FIRE-8</li> <li>• MA-LG-1</li> <li>• MA-LG-5</li> <li>• MA-WHB-2</li> <li>• Objective MR-1</li> <li>• MA-MR-20</li> <li>• MA-MR-24</li> <li>• MA-LR-8</li> <li>• MA-RE-1</li> </ul>	<p>Same management direction as described in the 2015 plan but with the inclusion of the changes described within this <b>Approved RMP Amendment GHMA Allocations and Management Direction 3 (Table 2)</b>. Any conflict in direction would default to the management direction described above.</p>
<p>The following management actions include a reference to GHMA, only include a reference to GHMA that references application of MA-SSS-5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MA-MR-1</li> <li>• MA-MR-4</li> <li>• MA-MR-12</li> <li>• MA-MR-14</li> <li>• MA-MR-16</li> <li>• MA-MR-23</li> <li>• MA-LR-7</li> </ul>	<p>Same management direction as described in the 2015 plan but with the amended MA-SSS-5 language described above and the updated GHMA boundaries.</p>

# Appendices

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## **APPENDIX 2 – COMPARISON OF PRIOR GREATER SAGE-GROUSE RMP MANAGEMENT DIRECTION WITH APPROVED RMP AMENDMENT FOR UTAH**

## **APPENDIX 3 – GREATER SAGE-GROUSE MONITORING FRAMEWORK**

## **APPENDIX 4 – GREATER SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS**

## **APPENDIX 5 – LIVESTOCK GRAZING BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND DESIGN FEATURES**

## **APPENDIX 6 - GLOSSARY**

## **APPENDIX 7 – REFERENCES**

**APPENDIX 8 - U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE SECTION 7 CONCURRENCE MEMO**

**APPENDIX 9 – BLM ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

**APPENDIX 10 – PROPOSED CHANGES COMMENT RESPONSE APPENDIX**