

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES.1 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directs the United States (US) Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop and periodically revise or amend its resource management plans (RMPs), which guide management of BLM-administered lands. The National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA) directs the US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service) to develop and periodically revise or amend its land and resource management plans (LRMPs), which guide management of National Forest System lands. These two agencies' plans will be referred to generically as land use plans (LUPs) throughout the remainder of this document.

The BLM and Forest Service Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) Proposed Plan provides a layered management approach that offers the highest level of protection for GRSG in the most valuable habitat. Land use allocations in the Proposed Plan would limit or eliminate new surface disturbance in Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA), while minimizing disturbance in General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA).¹ In addition to establishing protective land use allocations, the Proposed Plan would implement a suite of management tools, such as disturbance limits, GRSG habitat objectives and monitoring, mitigation approaches, adaptive management triggers and responses, and other protective measures throughout the range. These overlapping and reinforcing conservation measures will work in concert to improve and restore GRSG habitat condition and provide consistency in how the BLM and Forest Service will manage activities in GRSG habitat in the planning area.

¹ In the Proposed LUPA and Final EIS, GRSG habitat nomenclature has been changed from Core Areas to Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA) and Non-Core Sage Grouse Habitat to General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA).

ES.1.1 Rationale for the Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy and Land Use Plan Amendment

This land use plan amendment is the result of the March 2010 US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) 12-Month Finding for Petitions to List the GRSG (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) as Threatened or Endangered (75 *Federal Register* 13910, March 23, 2010). In that finding, the USFWS concluded that GRSG was “warranted, but precluded” for listing as a threatened or endangered species. A “warranted, but precluded” determination is one of three results that may occur after a petition is filed by the public to list a species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This finding indicates that immediate publication of a proposed rule to list the species is precluded by higher-priority listing proposals; that is, a species should be listed based on the available science, but listing other species takes priority because they are more in need of protection.

The USFWS reviewed the status of and threats to the GRSG in relation to the five listing factors provided in Section 4(a)(1) of the ESA. Of the five listing factors reviewed, the USFWS determined that Factor A, “the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the habitat or range of the GRSG,” and Factor D, “the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms,” posed “a significant threat to the GRSG now and in the foreseeable future” (75 *Federal Register* 13910, March 23, 2010). The USFWS identified the principal regulatory mechanisms for the BLM and Forest Service as conservation measures in LUPs.

The Wyoming GRSG Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) is one of the 15 LUP revisions and amendments and environmental impact statements being prepared by the BLM and Forest Service as part of the National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy (BLM 2011).² These documents provide a set of management alternatives focused on specific conservation measures across the range of the GRSG (see **Figure ES-1**, Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy Boundaries).

Science-based decision making and collaboration with state and local partners are fundamental to the National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy. The 15 GRSG LUP/EISs address threats to GRSG identified by state fish and wildlife agencies, the BLM National Technical Team, and the USFWS in the context of its listing decision and the Conservation Objectives Team (COT) report. The COT report was prepared by wildlife biologists from state and federal agencies and provides a blueprint for the overall conservation approach set forth in the BLM and Forest Service GRSG LUP/EISs (USFWS 2013).³ Where consistent with conservation objectives, the GRSG LUP/EISs adopt unique state- and stakeholder-developed approaches and priorities. Additional science-based

² BLM (US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management). 2011. Instruction Memorandum 2012-044, BLM National. Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Planning Strategy. Washington, DC. December 27, 2011.

³ USFWS (US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service). 2013. Greater Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) Conservation Objectives: Final Report. USFWS, Denver, CO. February 2013.

reviews by the US Geological Survey and related scientific literature provided further guidance on specific issues that arose in developing the final BLM and Forest Service GRSG LUP/EISs. In addition, regular meetings with the Western Governors Association Sage-Grouse Task Force provided additional opportunities for coordination with member states.⁴

Figure ES-1



ES.1.2 Description of the Planning Area and Habitat Management Areas

The planning area is the geographic area within which the BLM and Forest Service will make decisions during this planning effort. The planning area boundary includes all lands regardless of jurisdiction. The Wyoming GRSG LUPA planning area covers 38,854,460 acres of federal, state, and private lands in Albany, Campbell, Carbon, Converse, Crook, Fremont, Goshen, Laramie, Lincoln, Natrona, Niobrara, Platte, Sublette, Sweetwater, Teton, Uinta, and Weston counties in Wyoming. Of the total area, 15.8 million acres are BLM-administered and National Forest System federal surface/federal mineral estate

⁴ The Western Governors Association Sage-Grouse Task Force works to identify and implement high priority conservation actions and integrate ongoing actions necessary to preclude the need for the GRSG to be listed under the ESA. The Task Force includes designees from the 11 western states where GRSG is found as well as representatives from USFWS, BLM, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Forest Service, United States Geological Survey, and Department of the Interior.

lands, and an additional 6.5 million acres are non-federal surface/federal mineral estate to be covered by LUPA decisions.

While the planning area consists of all lands regardless of ownership, decisions resulting from the Wyoming GRSG LUPA/EIS would apply only to BLM-administered and National Forest System lands, including surface and split-estate lands with BLM-administered subsurface mineral rights. **Chapter 3**, Affected Environment, describes the current resource and resource use conditions in the planning area.

GRSG habitat on BLM-administered and National Forest System lands in the decision area consists of lands allocated as PHMA and GHMA (**Figure ES-2**, Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Areas – Wyoming GRGS LUPA/EIS and **Table ES-I**, Habitat Management Areas in the Wyoming GRSG Planning Area). PHMA and GHMA are defined as follows:

- PHMA (4,894,900 acres): BLM-administered and National Forest System lands identified as having the highest value to maintaining sustainable GRSG populations. The boundaries and management strategies for PHMA are derived from and generally follow the Core Area boundaries identified in the Draft LUPA/EIS. PHMA was identified in coordination with the State of Wyoming. Areas of PHMA largely coincide with areas identified as Priority Areas for Conservation in the COT report.
- GHMA (5,951,300 acres): BLM-administered and National Forest System lands that require some special management to sustain GRSG populations, but that are not as important as PHMA. GHMA was identified in coordination with the State of Wyoming.

The planning area includes other BLM-administered and National Forest System lands that are not allocated as habitat management areas for GRSG. These lands would be managed according to the existing, underlying land use plan for the area.

The Proposed Plan also identifies specific Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFAs) (1,196,000 acres), which are a subset of PHMA. The SFAs were derived from GRSG “stronghold” areas described in a USFWS memorandum to the BLM and Forest Service titled *Greater Sage-Grouse: Additional Recommendations to Refine Land Use Allocations in Highly Important Landscapes* (USFWS 2014). The memorandum and associated maps provided by the USFWS identify areas that represent recognized “strongholds” for GRSG that have been noted and referenced as having the highest densities of GRSG and other criteria important for the persistence of the species.

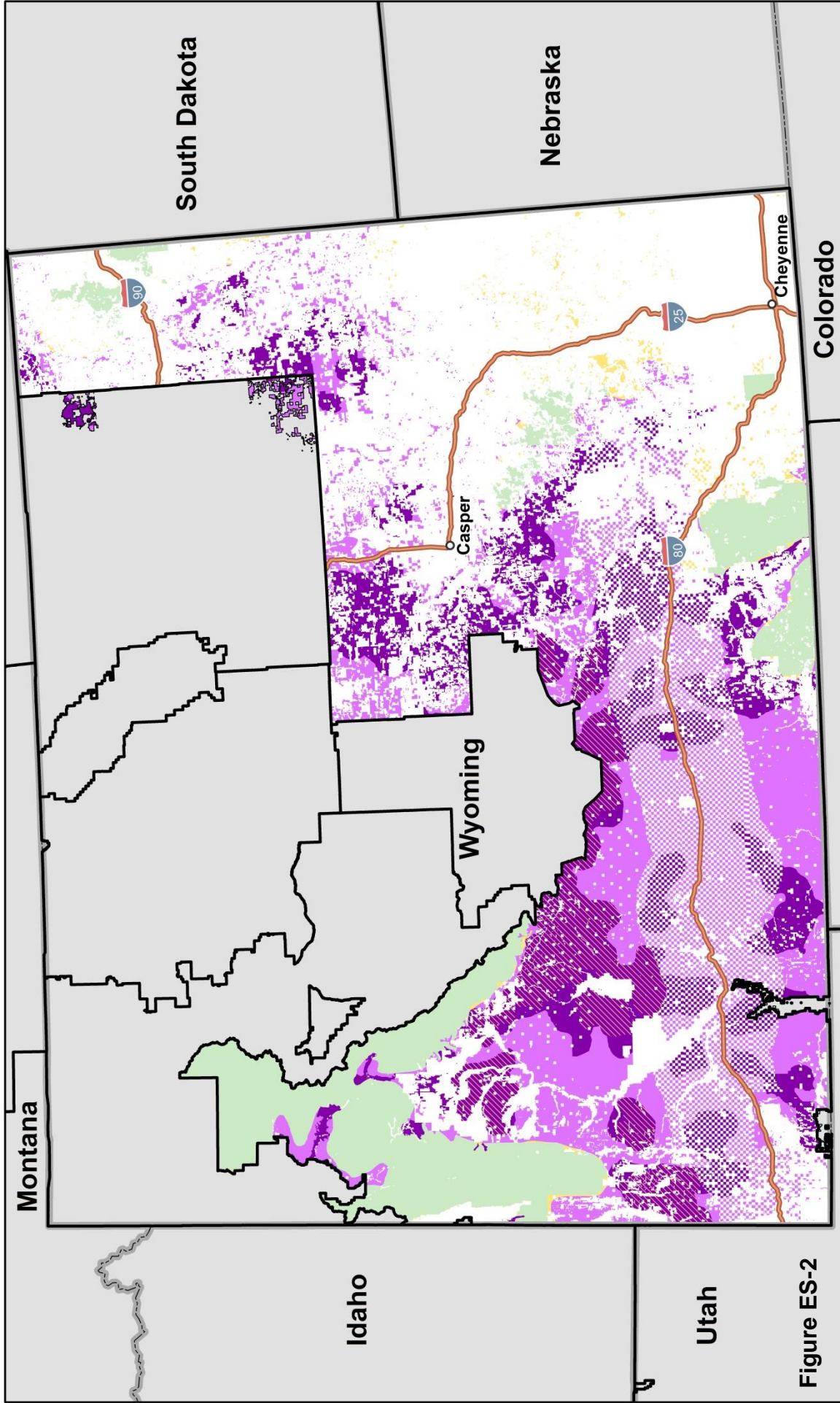
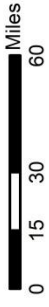


Figure ES-2

Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Areas - Wyoming GRSG LUPA/EIS

- BLM/National Forest System Sagebrush Focal Areas
- BLM/National Forest System Priority Habitat Management Areas
- BLM/National Forest System General Habitat Management Areas
- Other BLM Lands
- Other National Forest System Lands
- Private, State, and Other Federal Lands
- EIS Boundary
- State Boundary



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.

**Table ES-1
Habitat Management Areas in the Wyoming GRSG Planning Area**

Habitat Management Area	Acres of BLM-administered/National Forest System Lands	Percent of BLM-administered/National Forest System Lands in Planning Area
PHMA	4,894,900	30
GHMA	5,951,300	37
Other BLM-administered/ National Forest System lands	5,308,600	33

ES.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose for the LUPA is to identify and incorporate appropriate conservation measures to conserve, enhance, and restore GRSG habitat by reducing, eliminating, or minimizing threats to that habitat. The major threats identified by the USFWS in the March 2010 listing decision that apply to the Wyoming Sub-region include:

- Wildfire – loss of large areas of GRSG habitat due to wildfire.
- Invasive Species – conversion of GRSG habitat to invasive annual grass (e.g., cheatgrass) dominated plant communities.
- Conifer Invasion – encroachment of pinyon and/or juniper into GRSG habitat.
- Infrastructure – fragmentation of GRSG habitat due to human development activities such as rights-of-way (ROWs) and renewable energy development.
- Grazing – loss of habitat components due to improper livestock, wild horse and burro, and large wildlife use.
- Hard Rock Mining – fragmentation of GRSG habitat due to mineral exploration and development.
- Oil and Gas Development – fragmentation of GRSG habitat due to mineral exploration and development.
- Human Uses – fragmentation of GRSG habitat and/or modification of GRSG behavior.

This LUPA with associated EIS is needed to respond to the USFWS's March 2010 "warranted, but precluded" ESA listing petition decision (75 *Federal Register* 13910, March 23, 2010). The USFWS identified inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms as a significant factor in its finding on the petition to list the GRSG. In its listing decision, the USFWS noted that changes in management of GRSG habitats are necessary to avoid the continued decline of GRSG populations. Changes in land allocations and conservation measures in the BLM and Forest

Service LUPs provide a means to implement regulatory mechanisms to address the inadequacy identified by USFWS.

ES.3 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed federal action is the Proposed Plan, which identifies resource management actions in accordance with the multiple-use and sustained-yield mandates of FLPMA and the requirements in NFMA. The proposed action is also intended to provide a consistent framework for managing GRSG and its habitat on BLM-administered and National Forest System lands. The alternatives, including the Proposed Plan, comprise desired future outcomes and a range of management actions, allowable uses, and land use allocations that guide management on BLM-administered and National Forest System lands. The Proposed Plan Amendment (see **Section ES.6**, Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Proposed Plan and Environmental Effects), represents the agencies' approach for addressing the purpose and need.

ES.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE LUPA/EIS

ES.4.1 Scoping

The BLM and Forest Service initiated the LUPA and EIS process on May 28, 2010, with the publication in the *Federal Register* of a Notice of Intent to begin a planning effort for the Casper, Kemmerer, Newcastle, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs RMPs. A second NOI on December 9, 2011 opened the second public scoping period for the addition of the National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy to the amendment effort and the addition of the Forest Service to the planning process to amend the LRMPs for the Bridger-Teton National Forest, Medicine Bow National Forest, and Thunder Basin National Grassland Planning Units.

Publication of the NOIs initiated the scoping process and invited affected and interested agencies, organizations, and the general public to participate in determining the scope and issues to be addressed by alternatives and analyses in the EIS. Six public scoping meetings were conducted during the first scoping period in June 2010. Five additional public scoping meetings were held during the second scoping period in early 2012. The scoping meetings provided the public with an opportunity to learn and ask questions about the project and the planning process and to submit their issues and concerns to the BLM and Forest Service. In addition to members of the BLM and Forest Service Interdisciplinary Team, about 140 people attended the 11 scoping meetings. The BLM and Forest Service collected comments from the public during the scoping meetings and throughout the scoping periods.

The final Scoping Summary Report, available online at <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse.html>, prepared in conjunction with all the GRSG LUPAs, summarizes the scoping and issue-identification process and describes 13 broad issue categories identified during the scoping process.

ES.4.2 Cooperating Agency Collaboration

Throughout this planning effort, the BLM and Forest Service have engaged with multiple federal, state, and local government agencies and Native American tribes. Consistent with the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) and FLPMA and the Forest Service Manual 1920 and NFMA, cooperating agencies share knowledge and resources to achieve desired outcomes for public lands and communities within statutory and regulatory frameworks. A total of 46 agencies and tribes agreed to participate as cooperating agencies in the LUPA process. The BLM and Forest Service met with and provided relevant information to cooperating agencies throughout the planning process. For more information, see **Chapter 5**, Consultation and Coordination.

ES.4.3 Development of the Draft LUPA/EIS

Development of Management Alternatives

In accordance with NEPA and the CEQ implementing regulations (40 CFR 1500), the planning team considered public input and developed a reasonable range of alternatives for the Draft LUPA/EIS.

The planning team developed five unique alternatives, including one No Action Alternative and four action alternatives, which were subsequently analyzed in the Draft LUPA/EIS. Each of the preliminary action alternatives was designed to:

- Address the 13 range-wide GRSG planning issues
- Address the 26 planning issues raised specifically in scoping for this effort
- Fulfill the purpose and need for the LUPA
- Meet the multiple-use and sustained-yield mandates of FLPMA and requirements in NFMA
- Respond to USFWS-identified issues and threats to GRSG and its habitat, including specific threats identified in the COT report

Collectively, the four action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, D, and E) analyzed in the Draft LUPA/EIS offered a range of possible management approaches for responding to the purpose and need as well as the planning issues and concerns identified through public scoping. While the overarching goal of the long-term conservation of GRSG and its habitat is the same across alternatives, each alternative contains a discrete set of objectives and management actions, which if selected as the final plan, would constitute a unique LUPA.

Publication of Draft LUPA/EIS

Public Comment Period

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Wyoming GRSG Draft LUPA/EIS was published in the Federal Register on December 27, 2013, initiating the 90-day public comment period. The comment period ended on March 27, 2014. The

BLM and Forest Service held six public meetings in February 2014. Written public comments were reviewed and considered by the BLM and Forest Service.

Comment Analysis

During the public comment periods, the BLM and Forest Service received thousands of written comments by mail, email, and submissions at the public meetings. Comments covered a wide spectrum of thoughts, opinions, ideas, and concerns. Upon receipt, the BLM and Forest Service reviewed the comments, grouped similar substantive comments under an appropriate topic heading, and evaluated and wrote summary responses addressing the comment topics. The response indicated whether or not the commenters' points would result in new information or changes being included in the Final LUPA/EIS. In many circumstances, public comments prompted changes to the Draft LUPA/EIS. **Appendix O** provides a detailed description of the comment analysis methodology and an overview of the public comments received.

ES.5 LUPA/EIS ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

ES.5.1 Alternative A

Under Alternative A, neither the BLM nor the Forest Service would develop new management actions to protect GRSG habitat. Management of existing threats to GRSG populations and habitat, such as infrastructure, invasive species, grazing, mineral development, and wildfire, would continue in accordance with existing land use planning documents.

ES.5.2 Alternative B

Alternative B is based on the conservation measures developed by the NTT planning effort in IM No. WO-2012-044. As directed in the IM, the conservation measures developed by the NTT must be considered and analyzed, as appropriate, through the land use planning process and NEPA by all BLM state and field offices that contain occupied GRSG habitat. Under this alternative, a surface disturbance cap of 3 percent per 640 acres is considered within GRSG priority habitat.

All GRSG priority habitat areas would be designated as GRSG conservation Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)/Special Interest Areas (SIAs). Allotments not meeting standards due to livestock grazing in GRSG priority habitat would incorporate a light grazing management strategy utilizing a 20 to 30 percent forage allocation for livestock.

Alternative B would reduce surface disturbance and disruptive activities in priority GRSG habitat. The protection of priority sagebrush habitat could provide GRSG the undisturbed, contiguous habitat necessary for the species to maintain or improve population numbers. Management would close GRSG priority habitat to oil, gas, and CBNG leasing, wind energy, and other minerals. Additional management for livestock grazing could allow for greater achievement of Wyoming Standards for Rangeland Health or the Forest Service

equivalent and provide improved habitat for special status species, especially those that inhabit riparian and wetland areas. Larger lek buffers and restrictions to the density of disturbance for surface-disturbing activities to protect GRSG priority habitat would protect more land, especially sagebrush habitat, from surface-disturbing activities, habitat loss, and fragmentation.

ES.5.3 Alternative C

Alternative C is the most restrictive approach to GRSG conservation. This alternative emphasizes improvement and protection of habitat for GRSG and is applied to all occupied GRSG habitat. Alternative C would limit commodity development in areas of occupied GRSG habitat and would close or designate portions of the planning area to some land uses. Under this alternative, a surface disturbance cap of 3 percent per 640 acres is considered within GRSG priority habitat.

All GRSG priority habitat areas and Audubon Important Bird Areas would be designated as GRSG conservation ACECs/SIAs. Livestock grazing would be prohibited within GRSG priority habitat.

Alternative C would reduce surface disturbance and disruptive activities in priority GRSG habitat, and in some cases general habitat (oil, gas, CBNG, ROWs, wind). The protection of priority and general sagebrush habitat could provide GRSG the largest area of undisturbed, contiguous habitat necessary for the species to maintain or improve population numbers. Closing priority habitat to livestock grazing could allow for improved habitat. Larger lek buffers and restrictions to the density of disturbance for surface-disturbing activities to protect GRSG habitat would protect more land, especially sagebrush habitat, from surface-disturbing activities, habitat loss, and fragmentation. Overall, Alternative C would provide the greatest protection of sagebrush habitat among all the alternatives.

ES.5.4 Alternative D

This alternative increases the potential for development and resource use, with reduced GRSG habitat protections. Protective measures would be applied to GRSG habitat. Under this alternative, a surface disturbance cap of 9 percent per 640 acres is considered within GRSG core habitat.

Alternative D could have impacts from surface-disturbing activities that are similar to Alternative A. In some cases, such as ROWs and wind energy, Alternative D protects all core GRSG habitat. Other management could provide protection of GRSG core habitat from wind development by reducing habitat loss, fragmentation, and direct impacts from wind turbines and overhead structures. Impacts from surface-disturbing activities such as livestock grazing and other mineral development could lead to loss, alteration, and fragmentation of habitat and displacement of GRSG.

ES.5.5 Alternative E (Proposed Plan)

The Proposed Plan is a variation of the Preferred Alternative analyzed in the Draft LUPA/EIS. Alternative E generally increases conservation of physical, biological, and heritage and visual resources compared to current management. Alternative E also emphasizes moderate constraints on resource uses, while applying specific reclamation and mitigation requirements to reduce impacts on resource values. Alternative E limits motorized vehicle use to designated roads and trails, and vegetation resources would be managed to maintain contiguous blocks of native plant communities. Alternative E places additional stipulations on oil and gas-related surface disturbances within certain areas.

Alternative E identifies protective measures for GRSG habitat consistent with the State of Wyoming Core Area Strategy. Alternative E generally applies greater restrictions on surface disturbance and disruptive activities to protect sensitive wildlife habitats, including occupied GRSG leks, than Alternative A. Disturbance in PHMA under Alternative E would also be limited to 5 percent, subject to valid existing rights. The disturbance cap would apply to all anthropogenic disturbances and would be measured at project scales.

ES.6 GREATER SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT MANAGEMENT PROPOSED PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In consideration of public comments, best science, cooperating agency coordination, and internal review of the Draft LUPA/EIS, the BLM and Forest Service developed the Proposed Plan for Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management (Proposed Plan). The Proposed Plan represents the BLM and Forest Service's proposed approach for meeting the purpose and need consistent with the agencies' legal and policy mandates.

The BLM and Forest Service Proposed Plan addresses threats to GRSG and its habitat identified by the USFWS in the March 2010 listing decision that apply to the Wyoming GRSG planning area as well as threats described in the COT report. The Proposed Plan seeks to provide greater regulatory certainty for management actions intended to conserve the GRSG (see **Table ES-2**, Key Components of the Wyoming GRSG Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats). In making its determination of whether the GRSG is warranted to be listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA, the USFWS will evaluate the degree to which the land use planning decisions proposed in this LUPA/EIS address threats to GRSG and its habitat.

The Proposed Plan would maintain and enhance GRSG populations and habitat. The Proposed Plan would apply management actions, subject to valid existing rights, to other uses and resources, such as:

- Establishing screening criteria and conditions for new anthropogenic activities in PHMA and GHMA designed to achieve net conservation gain

- Providing a framework for prioritizing areas in PHMA and GHMA for wildfire, invasive annual grass, and conifer treatments
- Reducing habitat disturbance and fragmentation through limitations on surface-disturbing activities
- Adapting to resource and use changes through monitoring and adaptive management

The Proposed Plan would also establish screening criteria and conditions for new anthropogenic activities to ensure a net conservation gain to GRSG in PHMA. The Proposed Plan would reduce habitat disturbance and fragmentation through limitations on surface-disturbing activities, while addressing changes in resource condition and use through monitoring and adaptive management.

The Proposed Plan is built upon the foundation for GRSG management established by and complementary to the Governor's Executive Order 2011-05, Greater Sage Grouse Core Area Protection (Core Area Strategy) (Wyoming Office of the Governor 2011), by establishing similar conservation measures and focusing restoration efforts in the same key areas most valuable to the GRSG.

For a full description of the Proposed Plan, see **Chapter 2**.

Table ES-2

Key Components of the Wyoming GRSG Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats

Threats to GRSG and its Habitat (from COT Report)	Key Component of the Wyoming GRSG Proposed Plan
All Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Adaptive Management Plan, which provides regulatory assurance that unintended negative impacts to GRSG habitat will be addressed before consequences become severe or irreversible. • PHMA: Require and ensure mitigation that provides a net conservation gain to GRSG. • Monitor implementation and effectiveness of conservation measures in GRSG habitats according to the Habitat Assessment Framework. • Apply Required Design Features (RDF) when authorizing actions in GRSG habitat. (BLM only) • Prioritize the leasing and development of fluid mineral resources outside GRSG habitat. (BLM only) • Incorporate RDFs as land use plan guidelines. (Forest Service only) • Work with the operator to locate fluid mineral development outside GRSG habitat. (Forest Service only)
All development threats, including mining, infrastructure, and energy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Implement an anthropogenic disturbance cap of 5% at the project-area scale. • PHMA: Implement a density cap of an average of 1 energy and mining facility per 640 acres. • PHMA: Surface occupancy and surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited on or within a 0.6-mile radius of the perimeter of occupied

Table ES-2
Key Components of the Wyoming GRSG Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats

Threats to GRSG and its Habitat (from COT Report)	Key Component of the Wyoming GRSG Proposed Plan
	GRSG leks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GHMA: Surface occupancy and surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited on or within a 0.25-mile radius of the perimeter of occupied GRSG leks.
Energy Development—Fluid Minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Open to fluid mineral leasing subject to No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulation within 0.6 miles of an occupied lek, and Timing Limitation (TL) stipulation from March 15 to June 30. • GHMA: Open to fluid mineral leasing subject to NSO within 0.25 miles of an occupied lek and TL stipulations.
Energy Development—Wind Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for wind energy development with special stipulations)
Infrastructure – major Rights-of-Way (ROW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for major ROWs with special stipulations)
Infrastructure – minor ROWs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for minor ROWs with special stipulations)
Mining—locatable minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFAs: 252,160 acres would be recommended for withdrawal from the General Mining Act of 1872, subject to valid existing rights. 894,060 acres would be considered for future recommendation for withdrawal from mineral entry, based on risk to GRSG and its habitat from conflicting locatable mineral potential and development.
Mining—coal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA is essential habitat for GRSG for purposes of the suitability criteria set forth at 43 CFR 3461.5(o)(1).
Livestock Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize the review and processing of grazing permits/leases in SFAs followed by PHMA. (BLM only) • Adjust grazing management to move towards desired habitat conditions consistent with ecological site capability. (Forest Service only) • The NEPA analysis for renewals and modifications of grazing permits/leases will include specific management thresholds, based on the GRSG Habitat Objectives Table, Land Health Standards, and ecological site potential, to allow adjustments to grazing that have already been subjected to NEPA analysis. (BLM only) • Consider closure of grazing allotments, pastures, or portions of pastures, or managing the allotment as a forage reserve as opportunities arise under applicable regulations, where removal of livestock grazing would enhance the ability to achieve desired habitat conditions. (Forest Service only) • Prioritize field checks in SFAs followed by PHMA to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of grazing permits. (BLM only)
Free-Roaming Equid Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Review and consider amending BLM Herd Management Area Plans to incorporate GRSG habitat objectives and management considerations for all BLM herd management areas.

Table ES-2
Key Components of the Wyoming GRSG Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats

Threats to GRSG and its Habitat (from COT Report)	Key Component of the Wyoming GRSG Proposed Plan
Range Management Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow range improvements which do not impact GRSG, or which provide a conservation benefit to GRSG such as fences for protecting important seasonal habitats.
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Do not construct new recreation facilities.
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Fuels treatments would be designed and implemented with an emphasis on protecting existing sagebrush ecosystems and enhancing and protecting future sagebrush ecosystems. (BLM only) • Protection of GRSG habitat should receive high consideration, along with other high values, when positioning resources. (Forest Service only)
Nonnative, Invasive Plants Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated vegetation management would be used to control, suppress, and eradicate, where possible, noxious and invasive species. Manage weed treatments to maintain and improve GRSG habitat.
Sagebrush Removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Maintain a minimum of 70 percent of lands capable of producing sagebrush with 10 to 30 percent sagebrush canopy cover. • All BLM use authorizations will contain terms and conditions regarding the actions needed to meet or progress toward meeting the habitat objectives for GRSG.
Pinyon and/or Juniper Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove conifers encroaching into sagebrush habitats, prioritizing occupied GRSG habitat.
Agricultural Conversion and Ex-Urban Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain the majority of PHMA in federal management.

ES.7 SUMMARY

Since the release of the Draft Wyoming GRSG LUPA/EIS, the BLM and Forest Service have continued to work closely with a broad range of governmental partners, including the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, the USFWS and US Geological Survey in DOI, Indian tribes, governors, state agencies, and county commissioners. Through this cooperation, the BLM and Forest Service have developed the Proposed Plan that, in accordance with applicable law, achieves the long-term conservation of GRSG and its habitat..

Conservation of the GRSG is a large-scale challenge that requires a landscape-scale solution that spans 11 western states. The Wyoming GRSG LUPA/EIS achieves the consistent, range-wide conservation objectives as outlined below. Additionally, the Wyoming GRSG LUPA/EIS aligns with the State of Wyoming's priorities and land management approaches consistent with conservation of GRSG.

Minimize additional surface disturbance. The most effective way to conserve the GRSG is to protect existing, intact habitat. The BLM and Forest Service aim to reduce habitat fragmentation and protect key habitat areas. The Wyoming GRSG LUPA/EIS minimizes surface disturbance on over 10 million acres of BLM-administered and National Forest System lands by allocating lands as PHMA and GHMA with decisions that aim to conserve GRSG habitat.

Disturbance in PHMA under the Proposed Plan would be limited to 5 percent, subject to valid existing rights. The disturbance cap would apply to all anthropogenic disturbances and would be measured at project scales. In the event disturbance exceeds 5 percent, new authorizations would be subject to the disturbance management protocol.

The BLM and Forest Service also updated the Proposed Plan to reflect new GRSG state conservation strategies, including recent State Executive Orders. The objectives of these documents are consistent with the State of Wyoming's Core Area Strategy, which is designed to protect GRSG and its habitat within core areas using a suite of tools and mechanisms that work in concert to conserve GRSG by reducing habitat loss and fragmentation through lek buffers, disturbance limits, excluding activities, and a sophisticated mapping utility to monitor the amount and density of disturbance.

Improve habitat condition. While restoring lost sagebrush habitat can be very difficult in the short term, particularly in the most arid areas, it is often possible to enhance habitat quality through purposeful management. The Wyoming GRSG LUPA/EIS commits to management actions that are necessary to achieve science-based vegetation and GRSG habitat management objectives established in the Proposed Plan.

For mitigation, the BLM would coordinate with the Wyoming Sage Grouse Implementation Team for application of the “avoid, minimize, compensate” process to ensure anthropogenic activities result in a net conservation gain for GRSG habitat. The Proposed Plan also includes a process for monitoring and adapting to changing conditions on the landscape. Using monitoring data for population and sagebrush canopy cover, the adaptive management strategy would apply more restrictive management where there is a consistent downward trend. The cause of the downward trend (e.g., anthropogenic disturbance, fire, disease, etc.) would be identified through monitoring data.

Reduce threat of rangeland fire to sage-grouse and sagebrush habitat. Rangeland fire can destroy sagebrush habitat and lead to the conversion of previously healthy habitat into landscapes dominated by invasive species. The Wyoming GRSG LUPA/EIS incorporates Secretarial Order 3336 and sets forth protocols to improve the BLM and Forest Service's ability to protect GRSG habitat from damaging wildfire.

The Proposed Plan also incorporates sagebrush ecosystem resistance and resilience concepts to prioritize landscape-level habitat restoration, fire operations, and post-fire recovery projects. The Proposed Plan would provide the planning-level framework for more detailed implementation-level assessments that address the threat of fire, invasive annual grasses, and conifer encroachment in GRSG habitat throughout the planning area.