

Sagebrush Ecosystem Program

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STATE OF NEVADA
Sagebrush Ecosystem Program

SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL
STAFF REPORT
MEETING DATE: April 8, 2014

DATE: April 7, 2014
TO: Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Members
FROM: Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team
Telephone: 775-684-8600
THROUGH: Tim Rubald, Program Manager
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SUBJECT: Proposed revisions to the Priority Areas for Conservation (PACs) to be submitted to the USFWS.

SUMMARY

This agenda item presents proposed revisions to the Nevada PACs to be submitted to the USFWS.

PREVIOUS ACTION

None.

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the USFWS developed the Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Objectives: Final Report (COT Report) that provides recommended conservation objectives and measures to focus efforts to achieve effective conservation for the species. A key component of that report is the identification of Priority Areas of Conservation (PACs), which are described as key habitats that are essential for sage-grouse conservation. States were requested to submit PACs to the USFWS for inclusion in the report. The State of Nevada submitted the 2012 Sage-grouse Management Areas (SGMAs) that were developed as part of the 2012 Governor's Sage-grouse Advisory Committee.

In the past year, the State of Nevada has developed a Draft Management Categories Map (February 2014) using more scientifically rigorous modeling techniques. To this end, the State is interested in providing the USFWS revised PACs that are based on the best available science and are consistent with the State's new management categories.

The SETT, NDOW, BLM, USFS, and USFWS have had several discussions to develop the revised PACs. The updated PACs have been derived from the DRAFT Core,

Priority, and General Management Categories and broken into distinct polygons based on population delineations. Specifically, for the northeastern and northwestern portion of the state, the DRAFT Core and Priority Management Categories were used. For the central portion of the state, the DRAFT Core, Priority, and General Management Categories were used. General Management was included in this region to account for needed connectivity in a naturally heterogeneous landscape. Additionally, the West Pershing Population was not included as part of the PACs due the very low populations and limited quality habitat in this region.

These areas represent the priority areas for conservation in Nevada. All agencies are in agreement that this provides the best understanding of PACs in Nevada.

If the Council approves the revised PACs (to be called 2014 Nevada PACs), the SETT will provide a letter and accompanying GIS data file to the USFWS requesting that the 2013 Nevada PACs be replaced with the revised 2014 Nevada PACs. The USFWS will the presumably use the 2014 Nevada PACs in analysis and determination for the proposed listing decision.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Council adopt the proposed revisions to the Nevada PACs and provide direction to the SETT to submit a request letter and GIS data file to the USFWS.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Council agree with the staff recommendation, a possible motion would be: “Motion to adopt the proposed revisions to the Nevada PACs and for the SETT to submit a request letter asking for the change, and appropriate data to the USFWS”

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Map of the proposed Nevada 2014 Revised PACs.

ln:TR

Proposed Nevada 2014 Revised Priority Areas for Conservation (PACs)

