

Sagebrush Ecosystem Program

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STATE OF NEVADA
Sagebrush Ecosystem Program

SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL
STAFF REPORT
MEETING DATE: January 23-24, 2014

Tim Rubald, Program Manager
John Copeland, Forestry/Wildland Fire
Melissa Faigeles, State Lands
Kelly McGowan, Agriculture
Lara Niell, Wildlife

DATE: January 17, 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: Presentation of the Habitat Suitability Model and Map

SUMMARY

Dr. Peter Coates will present the draft habitat suitability model and map for greater sage-grouse in Nevada.

PREVIOUS ACTION

April 22, 2013. The Council directed staff to proceed in development of the habitat suitability model, working with Dr. Peter Coates of the USGS.

BACKGROUND

Dr. Coates has followed the methods and process to develop the draft habitat suitability model and map as he outlined in a presentation to the SEC at the March 27, 2013 Council Meeting. A very concise, non-technical version of these methods were provided in staff report to the Council at the May 31, 2013 Council Meeting.

This is a draft version of the model and map. The USGS is contracted to produce a final map by December 31, 2014 through continued refinement of input data layers, additional data as it becomes available, and through feedback from a review team, the Expert Review Team, that the SETT established to provide technical review.

In addition, the BLM has indicated that it will need the State Alternative maps by the end of February 2014. The USGS may pursue additional refinements, prior to that submittal date, following a meeting with the Expert Review Team that is to be scheduled for early February 2014.

This is a habitat map. Note that Agenda Item 8 of this Council meeting will address the development of a management map through development of management categories and proposed revisions to the Sage-grouse Management Areas.

FISCAL IMPACT

The USGS is under contract for \$845,000 through DCNR, NDOW, and BLM to develop a habitat suitability model and map for greater sage-grouse in Nevada for the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council could make a motion to adopt the draft habitat suitability map for greater sage-grouse in Nevada as the greater sage-grouse habitat map for the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program, with the understanding that another minor round of revisions may occur prior to inclusion into the State Alternative of the EIS before February 28, 2014, keeping in mind the expectation that a final map is anticipated approximately December 2014. Any revisions to the habitat map would be brought to the Council for approval.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Council agree with the staff recommendation, possible motions would be:

1. “Motion to accept the draft Habitat Suitability Map of Greater Sage-grouse in Nevada as the habitat map for the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program.” Or
2. “Motion to accept the current draft Habitat Suitability Map of the Greater Sage-grouse in Nevada as the habitat map for the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program, recognizing that additional refinements may be conducted from availability of additional input data or feedback from the Expert Review Team to improve the product for submittal to the BLM/USFS under Nevada’s alternative E before the next SEC meeting.”

Motion number 2 is the preferred action.

Attachments:

Dr. Peter Coates presentation on this agenda item will contain the draft map and will be provided as a separate item for the Council Meeting.