

## Greater Sage Grouse Amendments Implementation



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## Forest Plan Amendments

- 16 National Forest plans were amended in the Great Basin (Intermountain) region.
- Amendments defined conservation actions to address threats identified by USFWS in each of the defined habitat areas.

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## Habitat Management Areas

- **Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA)**  
Identified as having the highest habitat value for maintaining sustainable GRSG populations; includes Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFAs)
- **General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA)**  
Occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of PHMA where some special management would apply to sustain GRSG populations
- **Other Habitat Management Areas (OHMA)**  
Unmapped habitat in that are within the planning area and contain seasonal or connectivity habitat areas

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## Habitat Management Areas

- **Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFAs)**  
Areas identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that represent recognized “strongholds” for greater sage-grouse  
➤ Are a sub-set of PHMA.

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## Ten-Year Habitat Improvement Objectives

ACRES			
FOREST	MECHANICAL <sup>1</sup>	PRESCRIBED FIRE <sup>2</sup>	GRASS RESTORATION <sup>3</sup>
Boise	1000	2000	0
Caribou-Targhee-Curlew	3000	2000	3000
Salmon-Challis	5000	1000	0
Sawtooth	7000	1000	7000
Beaverhead-Deerlodge	0	0	0

ACRES			
FOREST	MECHANICAL <sup>2</sup>	PRESCRIBED FIRE <sup>3</sup>	GRASS RESTORATION <sup>4</sup>
Humboldt-Toiyabe Total	202000	0	43000
Population Area 15	200000	0	26000
Population Area 26	2000	0	17000

ACRES			
FOREST	MECHANICAL <sup>2</sup>	PRESCRIBED FIRE <sup>3</sup>	GRASS RESTORATION <sup>4</sup>
Ashley	10000	0	2000
Dixie	13000	1000	7000
Fishlake	7000	0	1000
Mant-La Sal	3000	0	4000
Utah-Wasatch-Cache	9000	0	0

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## Ten-Year Habitat Improvement Objectives

FOREST	ACRES		
	MECHANICAL <sup>2</sup>	PRESCRIBED FIRE <sup>3</sup>	GRASS RESTORATION <sup>4</sup>
Humboldt-Toiyabe Total	202000	0	43000
Population Area 13	200000	0	25000
Population Area 26	2000	0	17000

H-T is 73% of the Regional Work

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## Implementation Guides:

- NO NEW POLICY
- Implementation is a Process
- “Living” Versions 1.0, 1.2, 2.0...
- General for consistency
- Allows flexibility at the field level
- Do not re-define or complicate Plan
- Defer to Deciding Official on the ground
  
- Posted at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/science-technology/fish-wildlife-plants/sage-grouse/implementation-guide>

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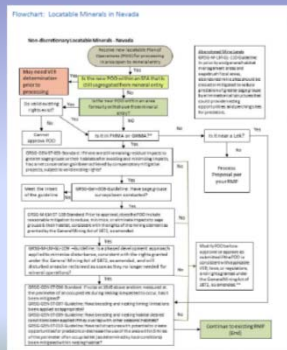
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## Implementation Guides

- Often very short
- Flow charts
- Refer to RODs




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### Implementation Guides:

- Completed Implementation Guides on the Website Include:
  - Minerals
  - Anthropogenic Disturbance
  - Habitat and Vegetation
  - Fire
  - Recreation
  - Roads
  - Lands and Realty
  - Grazing coming soon...

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### Hot Topics: Grazing

- Breeding & Nesting (within 4 miles of active lek)
  - ✓ Manage for average height of 7" (March 1-June 30)
  - ✓ Manage for average height of 4" (July 1-Sept 30)
- Brood Rearing & Summer (July 1 to Sept 15)
  - ✓ Manage for average height of 4" in riparian / mesic meadow vegetation.
- Winter/Fall
  - ✓ ≤ 35% utilization of sagebrush

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### Hot Topics: Grazing

- 220 HT allotments are in greater sage-grouse habitat
- First inventory, then make adjustments if necessary
- Process began in the summer of 2016 with data collection.
- Modification to permits will begin the fall of 2016.
- Phased in changes, if necessary, to grazing instructions over time.

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### Hot Topics: Minerals Withdrawals

- DOI has approved application to potentially withdraw 10 million acres of public lands; 800,000 of these acres are National Forest System lands and 568,340 of these acres located in Nevada.
- Temporarily segregated the Sagebrush Focal Areas for up to 2 years from mineral entry.
- Decision September, 2017 by Secretary of Interior.

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### Hot Topics: Mitigation

- Each state doing something slightly different
- We can't dictate or approve your state plan
- We can't defer our decision authority to a state plan
- Compensatory only when can't minimize or avoid
- Will form WAFWA zones collaboratively

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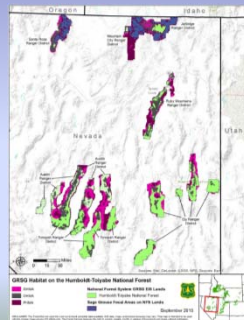
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### Hot Topics: Habitat

- The Habitat Management Areas (HMAs) used in the FEIS were developed in 2014.
- The HMAs represent where management direction will apply, including standards and guidelines and anthropogenic disturbance caps.



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### Hot Topics: Habitat

In December 2015, the SEC adopted a revision to the Nevada Habitat Management Categories.

Can the HMAs used in the Great Basin ROD be changed based on the December 2015 maps?

- Not without another plan amendment
- But there are other options

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### Very Important Footnote

“Priority management areas and general management areas may contain non-habitat, but management direction would not apply to those areas of non-habitat...”

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### Very Important Footnote

“Priority management areas and general management areas may contain non-habitat, but management direction would not apply to those areas of non-habitat...”

However, management direction would apply to all areas within sagebrush focal areas including non-habitat.”

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### Hot Topics: Adaptive Management

During implementation...inter-agency teams in Idaho, Southwest Montana, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming will evaluate the key metrics for populations and habitat on an annual basis

The working group will...recommend adjustment to management activities...

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### Regional Accomplishments:

#### 2016

- Implementation begun with guides
- Mitigation MOU for Nevada is signed
- Other state MOUs are in progress
- 5,200 acres funded for invasive plant control
- 1,152,988 acres of preliminary nesting and breeding habitat have been identified
- 70,400 acres of conifer removal and sagebrush and forb restoration

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### Implementation Timeline

Draft Guides Posting	Current
Habitat/Range Inventory	Start in 2016
First Year Report	Oct. 2016
Grazing Permit Modifications	Start in fall 2016
Adaptive Mgt/Mitigation Teams	2016-2020
FWS Review	2020
Habitat Improvement Projects	2015-2025

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### Mitigation on the H-T: Nevada Conservation Credit System

- FS, BLM, and Nevada Department of Conservation finalized MOU in April 2016 for interagency implementation of the NV CCS.
- Avoid or minimize impacts first.
- CCS may be used if compensatory mitigation is needed.
- FS recognizes the NV Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team as a cooperating agency.
- FS shares scoping and project information with the SETT.

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### HTNF Forest Accomplishments

- 900 acres funded for invasive plant control
- 1.2 million acres of preliminary nesting and breeding habitat have been identified, refined from the 2.5 million acres of habitat management areas identified.
- 2,120 acres funded for conifer removal and sagebrush and forb restoration

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### HTNF Habitat Assessment

- H-T using the 4<sup>th</sup> order Habitat Assessment Framework to assess site-specific habitat conditions.
- Sampling design based on regional systematic grid of plot locations.
- In 2016, gathering data to support current NEPA analyses, may also sample in restoration project areas to get pre- and post-treatment data.
- Data used to assess if areas are meeting or moving toward desired conditions in ROD (Table 1).

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**HTNF Grazing Guidelines**

- Many guidelines included in ROD, current field work focuses on grass heights listed in Table 3. Current work:
  - ✓ Inventory community types to determine if sites are capable of growing minimum grass heights.
  - ✓ Sample grass heights in areas of contiguous seasonal habitat to see if grazed pastures are meeting guidelines this year.
- Will need multiple years of data to determine capability, use, and need to change management.

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**Thank You**

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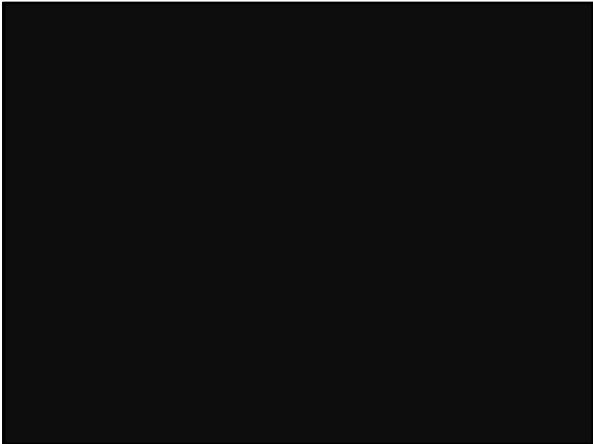
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