

Comment Form

Document Title	Nevada and Northeastern California Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement
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Chapter	Page	Section and Sentence	Comment
ES 2	ES-8 2-3 2-17	ES.4 Bottom of Second to Last Paragraph in the Section 2.3.2 2.6	<p>“<u>In addition, DOI and the BLM are evaluating whether the implementation of a compensatory mitigation standard on public lands is appropriate and consistent with applicable legal authorities.</u> We request public comment about how the BLM should consider and implement mitigation with respect to the Greater Sage-Grouse, including alternative approaches to requiring compensatory mitigation in BLM land use plans.”</p> <p><u>This is an important request for public comment. The SEP should provide a unified response.</u> The State Plan uses the net conservation gain standard. It implies compensatory mitigation at this standard should be required for anthropogenic disturbances wherever and whenever possible. Moving in another direction at this point would be in direct opposition to what the State of Nevada has adopted as a means to properly offset disturbances, minimize their impacts, and reasonably protect the sagebrush ecosystem while continuing to allow for the responsible multiple uses of the natural resources.</p>
ES	ES-8	ES.4 Large Middle Paragraph	<p>“...<i>clarifying</i> the BLM’s commitment to use the State of Nevada’s Habitat Quantification Tool to quantify human disturbance calculations for mitigation...”</p> <p>SETT note: We had an issue with the word “Clarifying”.</p>
1 And in References	1-12	1.6.1 First Bullet	Update reference to refer to the 2016-2021 SCORP. http://parks.nv.gov/forms/Nevada_Comprehensive_Outdoor_Recreation_Plan_2016-2021.pdf
F	F-1 through	F-1 through F-4	The Nevada CCS requires mitigation in all three habitat types (PHMA, GHMA, and OHMA), and the BLM identifies potential mitigation to occur in PHMA and GHMA. The SETT

	F-4		recommends that “PHMA, GHMA, and OHMA, collectively GRSG habitat” be included throughout the Appendix F rather than “GRSG and its habitat”.
2	2-07	Habitat Management Area Designations Flexibility	Throughout the document, when the Habitat Quantification Tool (HQT) is referenced, the SETT recommends using “the most current Habitat Quantification Tool (HQT) version”.
2	2-10	Mitigation First Paragraph	<p>3.1.2 of State Plan is ‘Avoid, Minimize, Mitigate’ (See “Avoid, Minimize, and Compensate,” in Management Alignment Alternative). “Avoid, Minimize, and Compensate” is the BLM policy, as also outlined in Appendix F, page F-1, third and last paragraph.</p> <p>The SETT has yet to be consulted regarding avoidance and minimization. The Avoid, Minimize, Mitigate” policy in the State Plan sets a high bar for unavoidable disturbances and an “exemption” process to move forward. (Section 3.0, Table 3-1)</p>
2	2-10	Mitigation Second Paragraph	The current HQT version should be adopted by the BLM as the quantification tool. (Could this be included with the plan maintenance section, along with updating maps and science?)
2	2-11	Mitigation	Will proponent driven mitigation set a lower bar than mitigation within the CCS by eliminating gain brought by application of proximity ratio, reserve account contribution, etc.? These are some factors that build net gain. We could consider adjusting the calculator to achieve similar conservation regardless of CCS participation. Fewer credits if no reserve contribution, no financial assurances, etc. Durability of credits over the term of disturbance is a significant component of the CCS. If these important concepts are not adopted, the result will at best be a “no net loss” outcome.
2	2-12	Allocation Exception Process	<p>Proponents planning mitigation, resulting in a net conservation gain, may receive an exception. For land uses in which mitigation is to achieve a net conservation gain is already required or anticipated, this exceptions process seems like an authorization to develop with no additional obstructions to develop than what may already be intended.</p> <p>The SETT recommends more specifics and definitions pertaining to the exceptions criteria. For example, “location of the proposed authorization” does this include the project footprint or the analysis area as well? What is meant by “adverse impacts”? What are the criteria for “lacks ecological potential to become suitable habitat”? Is the HQT to be used to determine direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts? What is the definition of “habitat fragmentation”?</p>

			How would de minimis impacts be determined? Further clarification, potentially in an appendix, may be necessary.
2	2-17	2.6 Preferred Alternative Last Sentences	<p>“The public did not have the opportunity to comment specifically on a net conservation gain approach to compensatory mitigation during the 2015 land use planning process. In addition, DOI and the BLM are evaluating whether the implementation of a compensatory mitigation standard on public lands is appropriate and consistent with applicable legal authorities. We request public comment about how the BLM should consider and implement mitigation with respect to the Greater Sage-Grouse, including alternative approaches to requiring compensatory mitigation in BLM land use plans.”</p> <p><u>This is an important request for public comment. The SEP should provide a unified response.</u> The State Plan uses the net conservation gain standard. It implies compensatory mitigation at this standard should be required for anthropogenic disturbances wherever and whenever possible. Moving in another direction at this point would be in direct opposition to what the State of Nevada has adopted as a means to properly offset disturbances, minimize their impacts, and reasonably protect the sagebrush ecosystem while continuing to allow for the responsible multiple uses of the natural resources.</p>
Glossary	Glossary -03		Missing Definition of OHMA.
B	B-01	Third Bullet	There is a lot of new research concerning tall structures, specifically powerlines, which demonstrate impacts of tall structures are well beyond 2 miles. Indirect impacts, particularly from raven predation, that capitalize on powerlines can significantly affect nest success as females are moving on and off nests/leks.
C	C-06	RDF LR-LUA 1 and Onward	Font change in the “Yes” and “No” boxes.
D	D-04	D.5.1	What imagery would be used to calculate sagebrush cover? How and what will be used to calculate ‘baseline data’ (time period, extent, etc.) for sagebrush cover? ‘Baseline Data’ should be clarified.
D	D-04	D.5.2	What statistical methods or models will be used to calculate sagebrush cover change, and are those methods sensitive enough to detect a 2% decline with inherent variation observed in the statistical analysis that is used for this purpose?
D	D-04	D.5.2	How will this analysis be conducted? How often? What tools (if GIS based) will be used for

			conducting the analysis? Citations should be used (if available) for determining % decline. Detailed methods need to be established prior to analyzing habitat triggers to avoid variability and provide greater consistency.
D	D-04	D.6 Step 1	What if habitat data are not available during the fall of each year, or if there are consistent and significant delays in obtaining habitat data annually, how will that be addressed? There is a concern if habitat triggers are not identified due to the inability to collect and analyze habitat data in the expected time frame.
D	D-05	D.6 Step 2	The individual lek scale identified by USGS hierarchical population modeling is not included within the causal factor analysis area, only the lek cluster and BSU are included.
D	D-05	D.6 Step 2	If the analysis cannot be completed with existing data, who will fund the analysis? Some of the answers to the questions being asked to determine causal factor could take extensive time to extrapolate. Establishment of a funding pool should be considered to pay for the population trigger analysis.
D	D-05	D.6 Step 2	The SETT recommends that other local partners include grazing permittee(s), and other county or city natural resource advisors as cooperators in the causal factor analysis and management response (included in Steps 2&3).
D	D-05	D.6 Step 2	The SETT recommends that the report developed in Step 2 may include recommendations for additional analyses or data collection.
D	D-06	D.6 Step 4	The SETT recommends that district or field offices will collaborate with federal, state, or other local partners to implement project specific management responses in Ste 4.
D	D-06	D.6 Step 5	The SETT recommends that district or field offices will collaborate with the same group convened in Steps 2 & 3 to continue to monitor the lek (population only), lek cluster, or BSU in which the trigger was reached.
D	D-06	D.6 Step 5	Population monitoring is addressed, but who will conduct and fund habitat monitoring? What happens if monitoring is not conducted?
D	D-07	D.7	The SETT recommends defining a minimum time period in which a trigger response can be removed. The SETT recommends this should be equivalent to the length of time it took to result in a slow or hard trigger at the identified scale (e.g. slow trigger of two years of slow warnings must demonstrate two years of the population above the slow destabilizing and decoupling threshold).
F	F-01	F.1	“...or cannot be rectified through reclamation (i.e. residual impacts).”

		Last Paragraph	<p>Why is reclamation mentioned in this section since it is likely to occur at time of closure? Is the intent here to distinguish term debits from permanent debits? Or is the intent to suggest that unsuccessful reclamation efforts will also require mitigation in addition to term/temporary impacts? It could also be interpreted to suggest that anthropogenic disturbances that require reclamation may not have to mitigate during the term of disturbance.</p> <p>‘Residual impacts’ as defined in this document refer to the remaining impacts (both temporary and permanent) after ‘avoid and minimize’ have been evaluated. What cannot be rectified through reclamation would represent a permanent disturbance within the State’s Conservation Credit System. Increased clarification is needed.</p> <p>This statement needs to offer more clarity.</p>
F	F-01 F-03	F.1 Last Paragraph F.2 Compensatory Mitigation Siting (Second Dash)	How will reinforcement of timely, durable, and additional mitigation be upheld; particularly the durability component on proponent driven mitigation on public lands? The SETT recommends further development of the concept. Durability of habitat over the term of disturbance is a significant component of the CCS. Clarification on this concept will need to be developed when addressing proponent driven mitigation.
F	F-02	F.2 Compensation	The CCS requires mitigation for the duration of project plus 10 years.
F	F-02	F.2 Compensation	The SETT recommends the use of financial instruments to increase durability in a majority of cases (unintentional and intentional loss) when proponent driven compensatory mitigation is conducted on public land?
F	F-02	F.2 Impact and Compensatory Mitigation Project Valuation Guidance	The SETT recommends the establishment of protocols and responsibility for reporting on compensatory mitigation projects that occur outside the CCS.
F	F-02	F.2 Impact and	The SETT recommends removal of the word ‘common’ in first dash.

		Compensatory Mitigation Project Valuation Guidance	
F	F-02	F.2 Impact and Compensatory Mitigation Project Valuation Guidance	The SETT is not clear on the intent, method of analyzation, or who and how an “upward adjustment of the valuation” will be conducted.
F	F-02	F.2 Compensatory Mitigation Options	Use of the HQT to quantify outcomes should be incorporated on all compensatory mitigation projects to enable a comparative analysis of net conservation gain Does such a mitigation/conservation fund exist and who would hold/distribute and calculate the necessary funds to meet the obligation in comparison to using the CCS? (Second bullet, bottom of page)
F	Through out	Throughout	The SETT recommends addressing how net conservation gain will be accomplished or reported if projects with valid existing rights move forward with mitigation efforts that are not commensurate with direct, indirect, cumulative, and permanent impacts.