

# **Western Governors' Wildlife Council Report to Governors**

## **December 2011**



### **Inventory of State and Local Governments' Conservation Initiatives for Sage Grouse**



**WESTERN  
GOVERNORS'  
ASSOCIATION**

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#### **Executive Summary**

The Greater Sage-Grouse, a bird species listed as “warranted but precluded” on the Federal Endangered Species List, is found throughout the interior West. Eleven of the Western Governors' Association's (WGA) 19 member states provide habitat to the sage-grouse – habitat that often intersects with lands ideal for energy development and rangeland agriculture. If the sage-grouse is fully listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the economic impacts to states and communities that have sage-grouse habitat could be severe.

Western states have been coordinating on sage-grouse conservation for decades. In WGA policy resolution 11-9, the Western Governors directed WGA staff and the Western Governors' Wildlife Council (WGWC) to inventory state and local actions that conserve sage-grouse and sage-grouse habitat. WGA and the WGWC partnered with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) to develop this report for the Governors.

In order to maximize awareness of possible conservation mechanisms, this inventory includes information pertinent to the Gunnison sage-grouse, as well as the Bi-State and Washington State populations of Greater Sage-Grouse. The report shows that state and local governments are engaged in a range of activities to conserve sage-grouse and sage-grouse habitat. The states have set forth a variety of protections for the sage-grouse, including local working groups, conservation plans, executive orders and agency guidance. County governments have also pursued conservation mechanisms, most often working in partnership with state and federal governments through Local Working Groups.

This inventory report provides a catalogue of management approaches implemented by state and local authorities, as well as by local partnerships committed to on-the-ground action to conserve sage-grouse and their habitat. The WGWC recommends that state and local governments and their partners review the elements included in this inventory, and give strong consideration to the initiatives recorded here when strengthening their own sage-grouse conservation efforts.

## Introduction

The sage-grouse is known as a “landscape-scale bird” because it needs large expanses of land to provide habitat components for the stages of its lifecycle. Sagebrush, key habitat for the species, is found throughout the interior West in 11 of WGA’s 19 member states. But according to published scientific literature, sage-grouse now occupy just 56% of their historic range. In order to maximize awareness of possible conservation mechanisms, this inventory includes information pertinent to the Gunnison sage-grouse, as well as the Bi-State and Washington State populations of Greater Sage-Grouse.

In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) listed the Greater Sage-Grouse as “warranted but precluded” under the Endangered Species Act. The regional economic impacts of placing sage-grouse on the endangered species list could be severe, since much of the West’s grazing rangeland and energy resources overlap with sage-grouse habitat.

Western states, through the WGA and WAFWA, have worked for decades to collaboratively address challenges to sage grouse and their habitat. Partnerships established through local working groups have been successful because of a shared commitment to maintaining adequate population numbers, in the face of significant pressures on the species and its habitat. Local working groups are broad partnerships between state, local, and federal governments along with private landowners and other stakeholders. These groups identify local issues and concerns for sage-grouse, prioritize local practices and projects, and implement action items in a manner that will help ensure success.

With the passage of policy resolution 11-09, the Western Governors demonstrated support for all reasonable management efforts necessary to avoid a threatened or endangered listing of the species. This report inventories state and local conservation actions underway that strive to make a threatened or endangered listing of the sage-grouse unnecessary.

## Background

The sage-grouse is an important member of the sagebrush ecosystem found throughout the West, home to multiple species of concern. Sage-grouse habitat covers more than 57 million acres in 11 states. Federal agencies manage nearly two-thirds of the sagebrush habitat, private landholders own approximately 31% of the habitat, and state agencies manage 5% of the overall sage-grouse habitat. The efforts to conserve sage-grouse at a state, regional and federal level date back several decades.

The Western states have a long history of working together on sage-grouse conservation. Local working groups (LWGs) are one of the most enduring mechanisms in place; these partnerships are actively pursuing conservation actions to support the sage-grouse. WAFWA reported in their Comprehensive Conservation Strategy<sup>i</sup> that conservation actions planned or being implemented by LWGs number in the hundreds, however, conservation actions are dynamic and precise tallies are difficult to obtain.

The Greater Sage-Grouse was first petitioned for ESA listing in 1999. In 2000, Western state wildlife agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of the Interior to work on conservation efforts relative to the sagebrush ecosystem for a wide variety of species. Through WGA, Western Governors created two reports in 2004 demonstrating the state and local actions that protect the species.<sup>ii</sup> The FWS determined that the Greater Sage-Grouse did not warrant listing in 2005, but that decision was challenged in court, and a federal judge’s ruling in 2007 remanded it to the agency for

reconsideration. To inform this new finding, Western Governors and their respective state fish and wildlife agencies submitted to the FWS significant data and success stories on sage-grouse recovery efforts. In addition, the Western states through WAFWA, along with the FWS, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), published a conservation template for sage-grouse in 2006. This document was adopted by WAFWA directors and endorsed by the FWS.<sup>iii</sup>

In March 2010, the FWS found that the Greater Sage-Grouse warranted protection under the provisions of ESA, but the species was precluded because of higher listing priorities. The FWS will revisit the listing decision in 2015, as announced through a 2011 settlement in federal district court. Since the 2010 decision, state agencies have continued to focus significant efforts and resources on sage-grouse and sagebrush management.

Federal agencies – which manage the vast majority of sage-grouse habitat – have also made progress in sage-grouse conservation efforts since the “warranted, but precluded” listing decision. BLM first published a “National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy” in 2004 and revised that with supplemental guidance in 2010. Significantly, BLM announced this year that they are working to revise all of their relevant Resource Management Plans (RMPs) to address sage-grouse conservation on BLM lands. Also in 2010, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of the Interior signed an agreement to work together to conserve sage-grouse habitat. The USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs help private landowners apply conservation measures on their own property, thus helping protect sage-grouse on lands outside the management of state or federal agencies. NRCS has committed over \$110 million in FY 2010-11 for sage-grouse conservation<sup>iv</sup>.

## **Methods**

WGA staff distributed a one-page survey to states, cities and counties via e-mail. Staff used contacts at the state Governors’ offices to disseminate to the appropriate agencies. Municipal and county contacts were made with the assistance of the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties, respectively. At the initial deadline, WGA tallied five responses from 163 counties (2% response rate) with sage-grouse resources. To increase response rates, 20 counties were randomly selected for direct follow up from the 158 non-respondents. Also questioned were two counties that are believed to have current sage-grouse or sagebrush conservation measures or initiatives. The low response rate indicated there was a problem with the distribution of the survey, a lack of clarity for how to respond, or no activities underway in that particular county. No cities or municipalities responded to the questionnaire, and no further solicitation of comments was made.

The survey asked for the name of the policy or conservation measure, the type of action, the phase of implementation, and a description of the action. Additional questions were asked for reference, validation and duplication. The survey requested the conservation measure or action be categorized as a policy, executive order, rule, regulation, statute, conservation plan, initiative or a local working group.

Data were consolidated by conservation measure and jurisdiction.

## Data Analysis

Our survey was distributed to 11 states and 163 counties that have occupied sage-grouse habitat. All 11 states with sage-grouse habitat responded to our survey. A total of 17 counties were successfully contacted, but only eight reported that they had county-level sage-grouse regulations, initiatives or conservation measures in place. A summary of every response received can be found in Appendix A.

Local Working Groups: Working groups are a popular and prevalent means of conservation that involves teamwork between government and citizens alike. Eight of the reporting states identified local working groups (LWGs) as functional conservation organizations in their respective states. All LWGs reported having conservation plans in place and conducting conservation efforts. Responding counties reported working with or participating in LWGs.

Initiatives: Four states and three counties responded that they had initiatives to protect or enhance sage-grouse populations or sagebrush habitat. Gunnison and San Miguel Counties in Colorado report that they have developed a tax initiative for purchasing conservation easements, land-fill tipping charges for mitigation, and a land heritage program. Each of these initiatives was designed to protect habitat. Montana reports a functioning Montana Sagebrush Initiative designed as part of their statewide sage-grouse conservation plan for the purpose of conserving native sagebrush grasslands for a period of 30 years. Initiatives in Wyoming include a landscape conservation initiative, a statewide sage-grouse seasonal habitat map, and a statewide sagebrush map.

Nevada has implemented Nevada Partners for Conservation and Development. Modeled after the UtahPCD, the NevadaPCD is a unique partnership of several natural resource agencies and organizations committed to providing solutions to conservation issues, including sage grouse conservation. From Federal agency representation and State leadership, to local coordinators on the ground, the NevadaPCD members work together to leverage resources and increase effectiveness. Core values of the NevadaPCD are to protect Nevada's biological diversity, to restore productive rangeland ecosystems to support wildlife and agriculture, and to provide high quality outdoor recreation opportunities that include sage-grouse conservation as a primary consideration.

Conservation Plans: All states reported having conservation plans for sage-grouse. Most plans have been in existence for a number of years and several states reported that they were in various phases of plan revisions. Six of the 17 reporting counties cited local level sage-grouse conservation plans. Five of the plans were from Utah as part of the local working group process. The remaining local conservation plan was developed by Gunnison, Colorado specifically for the Gunnison Sage-grouse. The plan, "Gunnison County Strategic Plan; 2008, 2009, 2011", provides for an inventory of areas for habitat protection, agricultural production, and industrial, commercial and residential developments. The inventory is to be completed in 2012 and appropriated in 2013.

Executive Orders: Wyoming's Governor Mead issued an Executive Order on June 2, 2011 which reiterated and clarified the intent of Wyoming's Core Area Strategy, originally developed under former Governor Freudenthal's administration with the assistance of the Governor's Sage-Grouse Implementation Team and the local sage-grouse working groups. An implementation process has been developed, including an on-line disturbance density and acreage calculation tool and manual to guide users through the process.

Resolutions: In 2011, the Nevada General Assembly passed Concurrent Resolution No. 3. The resolution urges each state and local governmental group involved in activities to improve the population of Greater sage-grouse and to prevent the Greater sage-grouse from being listed as an endangered or threatened species, to engage in those activities in a positive and proactive manner to ensure the protection and restoration of the population and habitat of the Greater sage-grouse, and to mitigate any future damage to that habitat and population in Nevada. Further, the members of the Nevada legislature recognized the need for acquiring and maintaining sources of money and other funding to assist in the efforts to protect and restore habitat and population numbers.

Additionally, the Wyoming General Assembly passed a resolution in 2009 in support of the Governor's Executive Order on Wyoming's Core Area Strategy.

Statutes: All states cited statutes that protect, manage or conserve sage-grouse within their wildlife agencies. Washington cited provisions of their threatened and endangered statutes that are unique because of the candidate status of Washington's sage-grouse population. The Wyoming legislature has appropriated funds for sage-grouse conservation activities; \$1.5 million in 2005-2007; \$2.83 million in 2008; and \$1.8 million in 2010.

Regulations: Two states and three counties reported having regulations in effect for sage-grouse. An examination of the state responses revealed that hunting season rules or regulations were included. All states have regulations that govern hunting or take of the species.

The three counties that reported regulations included land use provisions and annual road closures. Gunnison and San Miguel Counties in Colorado and Harney County, Oregon reported they have land use restrictions codified that limit development or make provisions for sage-grouse. Gunnison County reports they have annual road closures to protect breeding sage-grouse.

Policies: Montana provided a position statement that could be classified as an agency policy to protect sage-grouse. This policy is embedded in their "Agency Position – Sage-Grouse Conservation and Energy Development" paper, May 2007.

Three of the 17 reporting counties indicated they have policies to protect sage-grouse. Gunnison and San Miguel counties in the range of Gunnison sage-grouse reported policies to protect sage-grouse and their habitat. These policies originate with the county government by either adopting strategic plans or providing regulations in the county codes. Hot Springs County, Wyoming adopted its "Natural Resources Plan for State and Federal Lands" in 2005. This plan forms the basis for their policy.

## **Results**

Responses from state and local governments followed a pattern of statutory responsibility. States hold the primary responsibilities for the protection and management of sage-grouse and as such reported at a high percentage and more comprehensively than county governments. County governments, with the exception of those in the range of Gunnison sage-grouse, reported at a very low rate of <3%. Follow-up inquiries conducted of a random sample of non-responding counties found that a majority of these counties do not have any county-based conservation measures in place. More than 50 percent of the counties contacted did not remember initially receiving the questionnaire. This lead to the conclusion that the recipients; 1) may not

have known who to direct the inquiry to, 2) did not have any policies or initiatives that would benefit sage grouse, or 3) believed they received the questionnaire in error. Those that did respond indicated a good working relationship with, and reliance on, state fish and wildlife agencies to handle sage-grouse issues. The objective of developing a range-wide summary of local policies and initiatives, however, was likely not met with the low response rate from local governments.

States provided a comprehensive list of policies and initiatives underway within their respective jurisdictions. All responding states cited their fish and wildlife agencies for the protection of the species through hunting or take. Washington reported that sage-grouse are protected under their Threatened and Endangered Species statutes. No other state government agencies provided information on sage-grouse conservation efforts.

Additionally, individual interpretations of “initiatives” were very broad and we believe scores of initiatives were unreported as part of conservation plans, normal operations or initiatives that have been implemented for a number of years. Nevada and Utah’s “Partners for Conservation and Development” programs are a clear fit in the category of “initiative,” however, some states reported several programs without classifying them as initiatives. We believe that many states are conducting additional conservation “initiatives,” which were not reported.

This inventory demonstrates that sage-grouse habitat protection is active at state, regional and county levels. The data analysis indicates that state fish and wildlife agencies are rightly viewed as the primary authority for sage-grouse conservation, yet significant efforts are also being implemented under local government land use planning authorities. Partnerships through LWGs appear to enhance awareness of activities across the range of authority – from local, state and federal governments to private landowners. These partnerships are excellent examples which demonstrate the opportunities both state and local governments have for sage grouse conservation given their management authority.

## **Conclusion**

This inventory report provides a catalogue of management approaches implemented by state and local authorities, as well as by local partnerships committed to on-the-ground action to conserve sage-grouse and their habitat. The Western Governors’ Wildlife Council recommends that state and local governments and their partners review the elements included in this inventory, and give strong consideration to the initiatives recorded here when strengthening their own sage-grouse conservation efforts.

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<sup>i</sup> “Greater Sage-Grouse Comprehensive Conservation Strategy,” Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2006.

<sup>ii</sup> “Conserving the Greater Sage Grouse: Examples of Partnerships and Strategies at Work Across the West” and “Conserving the Greater Sage Grouse: A Compilation of Efforts Underway on State, Tribal, Provincial, and Private Lands,” Western Governors’ Association, 2004.

<sup>iii</sup> “Greater Sage-Grouse Comprehensive Conservation Strategy,” Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2006.

<sup>iv</sup> NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative.  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/farmbill/initiatives/?&cid=steldevb1027671>.

## Appendix A: Western Governors' Association Sage-Grouse Conservation Inventory

Date Modified: 1/9/2011

Type of Measure	Responding Entity	Name	Synopsis	Jurisdiction for Action	Citation
<b>States</b>					
Statute	All States	Wildlife protection, conservation and hunting statutes. Wildlife Titles		Statewide	
Regulation	California	Annual recommendations for sage-grouse hunting in CA	Annually, the Department of Fish and Game makes recommendations to the Fish and Game Commission for sage-grouse hunting, including areas open to hunting and the number of hunting permits for each area. These recommendations are based on a highly conservative population and allowable harvest models. Several areas with smaller populations are closed to hunting in California.	Lassen, Modoc, Mono, Inyo, and Alpine Counties	www.fgc.ca.gov, www.dfg.ca.gov
Local Working Group and Conservation Plan	California	Devil's Garden/Clear Lake Sage-grouse Conservation Plan and Local Working Group	The Devil's Garden/Clear Lake Sage-grouse Conservation Plan was released in 2010. The plan focuses on the recovery of sage-grouse in the Devil's Garden which has only 1 known remaining lek, located on the Clear Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Grouse have been translocated from Oregon and Nevada since 2005 to prevent extirpation of the population. Significant reduction of juniper has already been undertaken in the area with additional plans for habitat restoration. The Local Working Group meets regularly to implement the plan.	Western Modoc County, CA	www.dfg.ca.gov
Conservation Plan and Local Working Group	California	Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage-grouse and Sagebrush Conservation Plan and Local Working Group	The first Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Conservation plan was released in 2008 covering Lassen and southern Modoc counties, CA, and a portion of western Washoe County, NV. The Buffalo-Skedaddle Working Group meets monthly to implement actions from the conservation plan.	Lassen and Modoc counties, CA, and a portion of western Washoe County, NV	www.ndow.org www.dfg.ca.gov
Local Working Group and Conservation Plan	California	Bi-State Sage-grouse Conservation Plan and Local Working Group	The Bi-State Local Working Group covers the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment and includes CA and NV. The first conservation plan was completed in 2004 and several conservation actions have been implemented since then. An updated MOU and action plan is currently being developed under lead of a newly formed Executive Committee including state and federal agencies in both states.	Bi-State Distinct Population Segment including Mono and portions of Alpine and Inyo counties, CA, and portions of western Nevada	www.ndow.org www.dfg.ca.gov
Conservation Plans	Colorado	Colorado greater sage-grouse conservation plan	Rangewide, state conservation plans and local conservation plans have been implemented. The intent for the rangewide and state conservation plans is to review every 5 years.	<p>GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan.</li> <li>o San Miguel Basin Gunnison Sage-grouse Conservation Plan.</li> <li>o Gunnison County Sage-grouse Conservation Action Plan.</li> <li>o Crawford Area Gunnison Sage-grouse Conservation Plan.</li> <li>o Gunnison Sage-grouse Conservation Plan, Dove Creek Colorado.</li> <li>o Gunnison Sage-grouse Conservation Plan, Piñon Mesa Colorado.</li> <li>o The Poncha Pass Gunnison Sage-grouse Conservation Plan.</li> </ul> <p>GREATER SAGE-GROUSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Colorado greater sage-grouse conservation plan.</li> <li>o Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan.</li> <li>o North Park Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan.</li> <li>o Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan.</li> <li>o Middle Park Sage-grouse Conservation Plan.</li> <li>o Parachute-Piceance-Roan (PPR) Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan.</li> </ul>	



Local Working Group	Colorado	Local Working Groups (See jurisdiction)	All rangewide, state and local conservation plans were developed in collaborative effort. The goal for conservation planning for Greater and Gunnison Sage-grouse in Colorado is to protect and improve sufficient habitat and implement other measures across their range to ensure that the species has minimal (<1%) modeled risk of extinction over a 50-year time frame. Population strategies include: (1) Habitat Protection; (2) Habitat Improvement; and (3) Population Management.	<p>GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee.</li> <li>o San Miguel Basin Local Working Group.</li> <li>o Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee.</li> <li>o Crawford Area Local Working Group.</li> <li>o Dove Creek Local Working Group.</li> <li>o Piñon Mesa Gunnison Sage-grouse Partnership.</li> <li>o Poncha Pass Gunnison Sage-grouse Working Group.</li> </ul> <p>GREATER SAGE-GROUSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Colorado Greater Sage-grouse Steering Committee</li> <li>o Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-grouse Working Group.</li> <li>o North Park Sage-grouse Working Group.</li> <li>o Northern Eagle/Southern Routt Work Group.</li> <li>o Middle Park Sage-grouse Working Group.</li> <li>o Parachute-Piceance-Roan (PPR) Greater Sage-Grouse Work Group.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/SpeciesOfConcern/Birds/Pages/GunnisonConsPlan.aspx">http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/SpeciesOfConcern/Birds/Pages/GunnisonConsPlan.aspx</a> <a href="http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/SpeciesOfConcern/Birds/Pages/GreaterSagegrouseConservationPlan.aspx">http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/SpeciesOfConcern/Birds/Pages/GreaterSagegrouseConservationPlan.aspx</a> <a href="http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/SpeciesOfConcern/Birds/Pages/SageGrouseLocalPlans.aspx">http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/SpeciesOfConcern/Birds/Pages/SageGrouseLocalPlans.aspx</a> <a href="http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/SagebrushConservation/Pages/ColoradoSagebrush.aspx">http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/SagebrushConservation/Pages/ColoradoSagebrush.aspx</a>
Initiative	Colorado	Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances	Starting in 2006, CPW finalized an umbrella CCAA with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the Gunnison Sage Grouse. Baseline data was developed for 41 properties at a cost of \$350,000. 9 Certificate of Inclusions (CI's) have been completed and 11 CI's are awaiting review by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. 12 additional CI's are under development. Completion of the CI's and monitoring for the 9 completed CI's have cost an additional \$70,000 plus one full time biologists time. An additional \$900,000 in Species Conservation Trust Funds have been authorized by the Colorado Legislature for development of CCAA's.	All Gunnison Sage-grouse Populations in Colorado.	
Initiative	Colorado	Private Lands Biologist Program.	Colorado Parks and Wildlife, working in partnership with the NRCS and Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, has hired 3 private lands biologists. These biologists provide technical assistance to private landowners for sage grouse habitat restoration and enhancement as well as rangeland management assistance for projects to restore or enhance sage steppe habitat as part of implementing NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative programs for both Greater and Gunnison sage-grouse in Colorado.	All Greater and Gunnison Sage-grouse populations in Colorado.	
Initiative	Colorado	Habitat Protection	Beginning in 2003, Colorado Parks and Wildlife started a habitat protection initiative for both Greater and Gunnison sage-grouse. Since 2003, over 40,000 acres of Greater sage-grouse habitat and 31,000 acres of Gunnison sage-grouse habitat has been protected either through fee title purchase or conservation easement at a cost of approximately \$65 million dollars.	All Greater and Gunnison Sage-grouse populations in Colorado.	
Conservation Plan & Local Working Groups	Idaho	Conservation Plan for the Greater Sage-grouse in Idaho	Conservation plan has 149 conservation measures for sage-grouse habitat and populations in Idaho. This is an ongoing plan with state, federal partners and 11 working groups and 9 of those have completed plans. Long list of conservation measures addressing threats to greater sage-grouse in local planning areas. Each local working group plan has various conservation measures addressing local threats. Annually Idaho Fish and Game Commission proclamation rules governing sage-grouse hunting seasons, and bag and possession limits in Idaho.	Statewide	<a href="http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/wildlife/sageGrouse/">http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/wildlife/sageGrouse/</a>
Conservation Plan	Montana	Management Plan and Conservation Strategies For Greater Sage-Grouse In Montana	The management Plan describes management issues that can impact sage-grouse populations and sagebrush habitat, and recommends several conservation actions to mitigate these impacts.	Statewide	<a href="http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/management/sageGrouse/default.html">http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/management/sageGrouse/default.html</a>

Conservation Plan & Local Working Groups	Nevada	Greater Sage-Grouse Plans and Local Working Groups	<p>In 2004, under former Governor Guinn, a series of local working groups developed plans to provide a comprehensive strategy for conservation measures to provide protection and minimize habitat loss of sage grouse in Nevada.</p> <p>The Bi-State local working group produced a conservation plan in 2004 which identified strategies to be employed to restore degraded habitat and provide protection to the remaining population. Since production of the plan, many projects have been implemented but the information is not centralized and efforts have not proven to be sufficiently coordinated. A Bi-State Interagency Executive Oversight Committee (Bi-State EOC) has been established to provide strategic direction and to ensure funding and other resources are committed to develop and implement an action plan to respond to the population threats identified by the US FWS</p>	Statewide	<a href="http://ndow.org">http://ndow.org</a>
Initiative	Nevada	Nevada Partners for Conservation and Development	Modeled after the UtahPCD, the NevadaPCD is a unique partnership of several natural resource agencies and organizations committed to providing solutions to conservation issues including sage grouse conservation. From Federal agency representation and State leadership, to local coordinators on the ground, the NevadaPCD members work together to leverage resources and increase effectiveness. Core values of the NevadaPCD are to protect Nevada's biological diversity, to restore productive rangeland ecosystems to support wildlife and agriculture, and to provide high quality outdoor recreation opportunities.	Statewide	<a href="http://www.ndow.org/nevpcd">http://www.ndow.org/nevpcd</a>
Resolution	Nevada	Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 3-Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining	In the resolution, the Nevada Legislature urges each state and local governmental group involved in activities to improve the population of greater sage-grouse and to prevent the greater-sage grouse from being listed as an endangered or threatened species, to engage in those activities in a positive and proactive manner to ensure the protection and restoration of the population and habitat of the greater sage-grouse, and to mitigate any future damage to that habitat and population in Nevada. Further, the members of the 76th Session of the Nevada Legislature recognized the need for acquiring and maintaining sources of money and other funding to assist in the efforts to protect and restore the habitat and population of the greater sage-grouse.	Statewide	<a href="http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Bills/ACR/ACR3_EN.pdf">http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Bills/ACR/ACR3_EN.pdf</a>
Other Species Management Plan	North Dakota	Management Plan and Conservation Strategies For Greater Sage-Grouse In North Dakota	Management plan currently monitors species and populations in the state. The plan supports habitat improvements through the NRCS sage grouse initiative. This initiative benefits nesting success. Outreach efforts have increased awareness and have resulted in a new working group in SW North Dakota called Grazing Ranchers About Sustainable Stewardship "GRASS". Facilitation and group collaboration between all interested parties has created a positive attitude towards conserving sage-grouse will inevitably be the single most important aspect to rebuilding the sage-grouse population in North Dakota.	Statewide	<a href="http://gf.nd.gov/conservation/docs/sage-gr-entire-plan.pdf">http://gf.nd.gov/conservation/docs/sage-gr-entire-plan.pdf</a>
Local Working Group	North Dakota	Local Working Group	In the beginning stages of being established.		
Policy/Rule	Oregon	Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon	Update of statewide conservation plan first adopted in 2005. Plan includes current status as well as conservation measures and methods for establishing core areas adopted as administrative rule. The Plan includes statewide management guidelines and regional conservation measures.	Statewide	<a href="http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/docs/20110422_GRSG_April_Final%2052511.pdf">http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/docs/20110422_GRSG_April_Final%2052511.pdf</a>
Policy	Oregon	Core Area Approach to Sage-Grouse Conservation	The 2011 Greater Sage-grouse Conservation and Assessment for Oregon included methods (in administrative rule) for developing Core Areas for sage-grouse conservation. After adoption of the plan, ODFW used these methods to tentatively identify Core Areas and used Local Working Groups to provide suggested revisions/refinements before a final Core Area map was accepted. The ODFW recommendations are used by other state, and to some degree local, entities with a regulatory role in permitting uses of land and water.	Statewide	<a href="http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/docs/Sage_Grouse_Core_Areas_Fact_Sheet.pdf">http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/docs/Sage_Grouse_Core_Areas_Fact_Sheet.pdf</a>

Policy	Oregon	Implementing Habitat Mitigation for Greater Sage-grouse under the Core Area Approach	Outlines interim guidance for development of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife habitat mitigation recommendations associated with renewable energy development and associated infrastructure or other landscape scale industrial-commercial developments in greater sage-grouse habitat in Oregon.	Statewide	Mitigation Framework_with_attachments_8-23-11.pdf
Policy/Conservation Plan	Oregon	Oregon's Ten-Year Energy Plan	Still in early development stages. The plan will include proposed policy changes to address energy facility/wildlife conflicts on a landscape scale.	Statewide.	<a href="http://www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/">http://www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/</a>
Initiative	South Dakota	Private Lands Habitat Programs.	Several South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks Private Lands Habitat Programs provide technical and financial assistance for upland restoration and enhancement as well as rangeland management which could be used to restore or enhance sage steppe habitat.	Statewide	<a href="http://www.gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/private-">http://www.gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/private-</a>
Initiative	South Dakota	Intermountain West Joint Venture/Pheasants Forever/Natural Resources Conservation Service/South Dakota Department of Game Fish and Parks partnership to establish Farm Bill biologist position with emphasis on sage grouse conservation	The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks has partnered with the Intermountain West Joint Venture, Pheasants Forever and the NRCS to establish a Farm Bill biologist position in western South Dakota	Statewide	<a href="http://www.pheasantsforever.org/page/1/PressReleaseViewer.jsp?pressReleaseId=117405_">http://www.pheasantsforever.org/page/1/PressReleaseViewer.jsp?pressReleaseId=117405_</a>
Conservation Plan	South Dakota	South Dakota Sage Grouse Management Plan Revision	Escalating range-wide concern for sage grouse conservation has prompted the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks to update their sage grouse conservation plan. The planning process for the revision will begin during the fall of 2011 with a goal of having a revised plan approved during the spring of 2012. The revised plan will identify additional conservation opportunities beyond what are identified in the current management plan.	Statewide	<a href="http://www.gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/docs/sage-grouse-management-plan.pdf_">http://www.gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/docs/sage-grouse-management-plan.pdf_</a>
Strategic Management Plan	Utah	Utah's Greater Sage-grouse Management Plan pub. 09-17	The purpose of the Utah Greater Sage-grouse Management Plan 2009 is to direct greater sage-grouse ( <i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i> ) management in Utah consistent with Utah Code Title 23 and the Mission and Goals of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR). Utah Code Title 23 establishes and defines the State's legal wildlife management authority within the UDWR. The UDWR Mission is to serve the people of Utah as trustee and guardian of the state's wildlife. Three identified goals associated with the mission focus upon the Resources, Constituency, and Agency. Specifically, the UDWR resource goal is to expand wildlife populations and conserve sensitive species by protecting and improving wildlife habitat. In fulfilling these mandates, the plan is to function as the over-arching document guiding management of greater sage-grouse within the state of Utah. Collectively, it should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guide UDWR general management and resource recommendations;</li> <li>• serve as a reference document and guide for land managers, biologists, planners, private interest groups, and others to protect, maintain, and improve sage-grouse populations and habitats and balance their management with other resource uses;</li> <li>• guide the direction of the 11 established Utah Local Working Groups (LWG).</li> </ul>	Statewide	<a href="http://wildlife.utah.gov/uplandgame/sage-grouse/pdf/management_plan_2009.pdf">http://wildlife.utah.gov/uplandgame/sage-grouse/pdf/management_plan_2009.pdf</a>
Governor's Guidance	Utah	Utah's Plan for Sage-Grouse and Development	Provides guidance and best management practices for development on or near crucial sage-grouse habitat. In effect since June 6, 2008 with a revised plan currently under development.	Statewide	<a href="http://wildlife.utah.gov/uplandgame/sage-grouse/sg-dev.php">http://wildlife.utah.gov/uplandgame/sage-grouse/sg-dev.php</a>
Statute	Washington	Wildlife Title - Threatened and Endangered species		Statewide	
Recovery Plan	Washington	Publication and adaptation of greater sage-grouse recovery plan	Implemented in 2004, the actions outlined in the recovery plan have provided a foundation for much of the management and research activities on greater sage-grouse in Washington. These activities include the following: (1) translocations to augment populations; (2) translocations to re-establish populations; (3) annual monitoring of populations; (4) support of federal farm programs in greater sage-grouse management zones; (4) establishment and prioritization of management zones; (5) support for research; and (6) support of sage-grouse management activities for agency-specific and area-specific management plans.	Statewide	<a href="http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/pub.php?id=00395">http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/pub.php?id=00395</a>

Initiative	Washington	Translocations of greater sage-grouse	With the cooperation of the Nevada Division of Wildlife and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, greater sage-grouse were translocated to the Yakima Training Center in Yakima County in 2004 and 2005 and to the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area in Lincoln County from 2008 to 2011. Genetic data indicated that the two Washington populations, and the Yakima Training Center population in particular, have undergone a genetic bottleneck, and an infusion of birds from a different population might help restore normal genetic diversity. Initial results suggest that the translocation was unsuccessful in achieving that purpose. The translocation to the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area was designed to re-establish a population where sage-grouse had been extirpated. Initial results show that sage-grouse have established a lek and they have been successful at reproducing.	Statewide	<a href="http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/pub.php?id=01164">http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/pub.php?id=01164</a>
Initiative	Washington	Arid Lands Initiative	The Arid Lands Initiative is a group of governmental and non-governmental organizations that recognize that eastern Washington's shrubsteppe landscape has been greatly reduced and fragmented by agricultural, residential, and urban development. The initiative hopes to use a coordinated effort to engage landowners with the goal of conserving shrubsteppe across multiple jurisdictions.	Statewide	<a href="http://waconservation.org/projects/planning">http://waconservation.org/projects/planning</a>
Working Groups	Washington	Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group; The Washington Greater Sage-Grouse Working Group	WHCWG is addressing connectivity patterns for numerous focal species, including greater sage-grouse. An analysis of statewide connectivity patterns was published in 2010; The Washington Greater Sage-Grouse Working Group began in 1997 and meets annually to provide an avenue for information exchange and conservation and management planning.	Statewide	<a href="http://waconnected.org">http://waconnected.org</a>
Conservation Plans	Washington	Management Plans	Several areas in Washington State provide conservation measures for sage-grouse and sage brush habitat through management plans.	Wenas Wildlife Area Management Plan; Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Management Plan; Oak Creek Wildlife Area Management Plan; L. T. Murray Wildlife Area Management Plan; Wells Wildlife Area Management Plan; Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area Management Plan; Sunnyside/Snake River Wildlife Area Management Plan	
Initiative	Washington	Research on Greater Sage-grouse	Research is an essential component of management and recovery actions in Washington. Research provides the foundation for adaptive management.		<a href="http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/">http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/</a>
Initiative	Washington	Support of Federal Farm Programs	The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has a general approach of supporting federal farm conservation programs that produce wildlife habitat. Two of these programs are the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program.	Statewide	<a href="http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01285/">http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01285/</a>
Initiative	Wyoming	Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances	A mechanism to achieve the goals of the statewide sage-grouse conservation effort is development of statewide agreements (Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA), Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCA), Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) and incentives to insure management actions on private and public lands will continue in a manner that is ecologically, economically, and culturally sustainable. These agreements provide a means for conserving species through proactive conservation measures that reduce the potential for additional regulatory requirements that result if or when species become listed as threatened or endangered. Currently, a CCAA and a CCA are being developed cooperatively by local, state, and federal resource agencies for Wyoming ranch operations.	Statewide	
Executive Order	Wyoming	Greater Sage-grouse Core Area Protection	Governor Matt Mead issued an Executive Order on June 2, 2011 which reiterated and clarified the intent of Wyoming's Core Area Strategy originally developed under former Governor Freudenthal's administration with the assistance of the Governor's Sage-Grouse Implementation Team and the local sage-grouse working groups. An implementation process has been developed, including an on-line disturbance density and acreage calculation tool and manual to guide users through the process.	Statewide	<a href="http://governor.wy.gov/documents/sage_grouse_executive_order.pdf">http://governor.wy.gov/documents/sage_grouse executive order.pdf</a>
Resolution	Wyoming	Greater Sage-grouse Core Area Protection - Resolution of Support	Wyoming State Legislature passed a resolution in 2009 supporting the governor's Executive Order on Greater Sage-Grouse Core Area Protection.	Statewide	

Initiative	Wyoming	Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative	Sage-grouse management is an emphasis in other efforts such as the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative, Pinedale Anticline Project Office and the Jonah Interagency Office. Other agencies, industry, NGOs and private individuals are also engaged in sage-grouse conservation efforts.	Statewide	<a href="http://www.wlci.gov/">http://www.wlci.gov/</a>
Local Working Groups/Plan	Wyoming	Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan	LWG planning began in 2004. Eight LWGs have completed local plans and are implementing Conservation Efforts.	Statewide	<a href="http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/wildlife_management/sagegrouse.asp">http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/wildlife_management/sagegrouse.asp</a>
Statute	Wyoming	Appropriations	Wyoming State Legislature appropriated \$6.13 million for sage-grouse conservation since 2005	Statewide	
Initiative	Wyoming	Sagebrush mapping	Sagebrush habitat by canopy cover category has been mapped statewide using remote sensing technology and modeling efforts through a partnership with industry, NGOs, academia, and Federal organizations. Statewide sage grouse seasonal range maps for nesting, brood rearing and winter habitats are in the process of development through a similar partnership.	Statewide	

## Counties

Conservation Program	Gunnison County, CO	Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation Program	Establishment of a county department that primarily addresses Gunnison sage-grouse conservation. Coordinator was hired in 2005, program is ongoing. Works with all federal and state agencies, as well as public and private landowners.	Gunnison County, CO	<a href="http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/sage_grouse.html">http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/sage_grouse.html</a>
Mitigation Fund	Gunnison County, CO	Gunnison Sage-Grouse Conservation Trust Fund	Since 2000, Gunnison has collected an additional fee for waste deposited in the county landfill to support a mitigation fund. A committee of county commissioners allocated funds from the mitigation fund to projects benefiting Gunnison Sage-grouse, like conservation easements.	Gunnison County, CO	<a href="http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/public_works.html">http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/public_works.html</a>
Policy	Gunnison County, CO	Gunnison County Strategic Plan (rev May 2011)	Requires designation of areas appropriate for habitat protection, ag production, industrial, commercial and residential development by 2013. Gunnison Sage-grouse is the primary wildlife species being identified.	Gunnison County, CO	<a href="http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/commissioners_pdf/BOCC_Strategic_Plan.pdf">http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/commissioners_pdf/BOCC_Strategic_Plan.pdf</a>
Regulation	Gunnison County, CO	Gunnison County Land Use Resolution (Sec 11-106)	Land use regulations intended to: 1) sustain and enhance existing populations of Gunnison Sage-grouse; 2) preclude the need to list or minimize the impact of listing. Primary cooperation with the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (providing biological and technical expertise for land use reviews).	Gunnison County, CO	<a href="http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/planning_regulations_guidelines.html">http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/planning_regulations_guidelines.html</a>
Regulation	Gunnison County, CO	County Annual Road Closures	Gunnison County, in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service, closes twelve County roads at 16 closures points annually, to all motorized travel, to protect Gunnison Sage-grouse during their lekking (breeding) season.	Gunnison County, CO	<a href="http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/commissioners_pdf/resolutions/2006/Resolution%202006-19.PDF">http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/commissioners_pdf/resolutions/2006/Resolution%202006-19.PDF</a>
Tax initiative	Gunnison County, CO	Gunnison County Land Preservation Fund	A 1% county sales tax generates approximately \$300,000 annually to fund open space and conservation easements, including areas within the Gunnison Sage-grouse Occupied Habitat.	Gunnison County, CO	<a href="http://gunnisoncounty.org/gis_maps.html">http://gunnisoncounty.org/gis_maps.html</a>
Regulation	Harney County, Oregon	Harney County Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Harney County Land Use Ordinance.	The subdivision and partition ordinance is particularly designed to protect and conserve agriculture land in our county. Only 24%+ of this county is private lands but this is the county ordinance required by state law that limits development on those lands, thereby providing significant amounts of regulatory control, particularly on development.	Harney County, Oregon	<a href="http://www.co.harney.or.us/PDF_Files/Subdivision%20and%20Partitioning%20Ordinance%20%20Revised.pdf">http://www.co.harney.or.us/PDF_Files/Subdivision%20and%20Partitioning%20Ordinance%20%20Revised.pdf</a>
Policy	Hot Springs County, WY	Wildlife-Sage Grouse, Promote improved habitat, predator control, and (if necessary) suspension of hunting season.	Actions and required measures are to encourage habitat improvements, encourage predator control and if absolutely necessary, suspend hunting seasons to promote population growth.	All Public Lands in Hot Springs County	<a href="http://www.hscounty.com">www.hscounty.com</a>
Policy	San Miguel County, CO	Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Conservation Plan	Land use code states that it is the policy of the county to identify and protect wildlife habitats for the preservation of wildlife, to encourage land use patterns that avoid disruptions to such habitat, and to prohibit dogs in and adjacent to wildlife habitat areas.	San Miguel County, CO	<a href="http://www.sanmiguelgrouse.org">www.sanmiguelgrouse.org</a>
Initiative	San Miguel County, CO	Land Heritage Program	Provides willing private landowners with financial incentives to maintain ownership of their land and help protect open space, wildlife habitat and agricultural land within our County. Participating landowners will place a conservation easement on their land, held by a qualified tax-exempt, charitable land trust.	San Miguel County, CO	<a href="http://www.sanmiguelgrouse.org">www.sanmiguelgrouse.org</a>
Regulation	Stillwater County, MT	Consultation with MFWP	The county does not have any sage-grouse specific policies, but their subdivision regulations require consultation with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for impacts to species of concern.	Stillwater County, MT	
Policy and Conservation Plan	Washington County, ID	Washington County Comprehensive Plan	In numerous areas of the county's recently approved comprehensive plan, Washington County included protections for the Greater sage-grouse. The intention is to protect the sage-grouse -- particularly lek habitat -- from disturbance from various types of land use, primarily exurban residential development.	Washington County, ID	<a href="http://www.co.washington.id.us/Planning_and_Zoning/Publications/Comprehensive_Plan_2010">www.co.washington.id.us/Planning and Zoning/Publications/Comprehensive Plan 2010</a>

## Regional Groups

Local Working Groups	Utah State University Cooperative Extension	Local Working Groups (See Jurisdiction)	<p>The Utah Community-based Conservation Program (CBCP) encompasses the historical range of greater sage-grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>, hereafter sage-grouse) in Utah as identified in the 2002 Strategic Management Plan for Sage-grouse.</p> <p>The strategies presented in each LWG plan meet the guidelines set forth by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in their Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts (PECE) standards. The conservation strategies and actions address the five USFWS listing factors as they apply to sage-grouse in each LWG area. Plan recommendations and guidance are voluntarily being implemented by all LWGs. The LWGs meet regularly to review actions and encourage adoption of Plan conservation strategies and actions. In 2010-2011, additional emphasis was placed on updating the Plans to incorporate strategies to address the conservation threats identified in the USFWS (2010) decision to designate sage-grouse as a candidate species for protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973). All 10 Utah LWGs have completed sage-grouse conservation plans. These plans and summaries of LWG activities can be found on-line at <a href="http://www.utahcbcp.org">www.utahcbcp.org</a>.</p>	<p>11 groups in historical sage-grouse habitat, most crossing county lines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•West Box Elder CRM</li> <li>•Carbon - Emery (CaCoARM) Castle Country</li> <li>•Color Country (CCARM)</li> <li>•Morgan - Summit (MSARM)</li> <li>•Parker Mountain (PARM)</li> <li>•Rich County CRM</li> <li>•Monticello / Dove Creek (SWOG)</li> <li>•Southwest Desert (SWARM)</li> <li>•Strawberry Valley (SVARM)</li> <li>•Uintah Basin (UBARM)</li> <li>•West Desert (WDARM)</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.utahcbcp.org">www.utahcbcp.org</a>
Guide	Utah State University Cooperative Extension	Working with Sage-Grouse Local Working Groups: A Practical Guide for NRCS Staff	A guide produced by USU with a grant from NRCS to help NRCS staff better assist LWGs.	All sage-grouse habitat	<a href="http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/pub___6725429.pdf">http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/pub___6725429.pdf</a>