



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Gunnison Sage-Grouse Resource Management Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement Newsletter • Issue 3 • November 2023

Draft RMP Amendment/EIS available for public review and comment November 9, 2023 through February 6, 2024

The Bureau of Land Management Colorado and Utah state offices have opened a 90-day public comment period for the Gunnison Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Release of the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS is the culmination of a coordinated effort by the BLM's interdisciplinary team and cooperating agencies, along with extensive public input. Through the RMP Amendment, the BLM seeks to provide consistent management direction for preserving and enhancing habitat in 11 BLM land use plans with occupied and unoccupied habitat for the eight known Gunnison sage-grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*) populations across southwest Colorado and southeast Utah.

During the 90-day comment period, the BLM will hold one virtual public meeting and two in-person public open house meetings in Gunnison and Dove Creek, Colorado. We encourage you to attend the public meetings to learn more about the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS and how to comment effectively. BLM managers and resource specialists will be available to answer questions. The public meetings will provide attendees with a brief overview of the plan, tips on document navigation, and helpful information about making effective comments. Information about the locations, dates, and times of the public meetings and how to comment will be available on the BLM ePlanning project website: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2019031/510>.

Navigating the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS

The Draft RMP Amendment/EIS is made up of Volume 1 and Volume 2. The following is an overview:

VOLUME 1

- **Executive Summary**
Summarizes the document.
- **Chapter 1. Introduction**
Provides introduction and purpose and need for action, decision area, and consistency with local land use plans and identifies resource issues.
- **Chapter 2. Alternatives**
Provides alternatives summary, compares the detailed alternatives, and identifies the preferred alternative.
- **Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences**
Describes the existing affected environment by resource issue and evaluates the impacts of the alternatives on the human and natural environment.
- **Chapter 4. Consultation and Coordination**
Identifies BLM efforts on consultation and coordination and provides a list of preparers.

VOLUME 2

- **Appendices**
Contains 22 appendices (A – V), including maps and supporting analysis data.



The Gunnison Sage-Grouse Draft RMP Amendment/EIS is available for comment! November 9, 2023 – February 6, 2024

How to Get Involved

If you'd like to comment on the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS, become more involved in the planning process, or keep up with the latest project news, please visit the BLM's project website (ePlanning):

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2019031/510>



Scan me



- Attend a public meeting (two in-person open house meetings and one virtual option will be available).
- View and/or download a copy of the document on the project website.
- Stop by any of the BLM field offices within the planning area to view the document and maps:
 - Colorado:** >Gunnison Field Office, Gunnison, CO; >San Luis Valley Field Office, Monte Vista, CO; >Tres Rios Field Office, Dolores, CO; >Uncompahgre Field Office, Montrose, CO; >Grand Junction Field Office, Grand Junction, CO
 - Utah:** >Moab Field Office, Moab, UT; >Monticello Field Office, Monticello, UT

Upcoming Public Meetings

| Date/Time | Location | Address |
|---|----------------|--|
| Open House Public Meetings - Presentation at 5:30 pm | | |
| Tues, Dec 5 at 5-7 pm | Gunnison, CO | Gunnison County Library, 1 Quartz Street, Gunnison CO, 81230 |
| Wed, Dec 6 at 5-7 pm | Dove Creek, CO | Dolores County Public Service Center 8477 County Road 7.7, Dove Creek, CO 81324 |
| Virtual Public Meeting | | |
| Tues, Dec 12 at 2-3:30 pm | Zoom platform | Zoom Registration Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NOvn0X0nTje5abubXWwAHA |

How to Comment

The BLM encourages the public to review the Gunnison Sage-Grouse Draft RMP Amendment/EIS and provide comments. You can provide input on the draft alternatives, review the adequacy and accuracy of the analysis, and provide any new information that would assist the BLM in developing the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS.

Please submit comments by the following two options:

Online:



<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2019031/510>

Mail: 

**BLM Southwest District Office
ATTN: GUSG RMPA
2465 S. Townsend Ave
Montrose, CO 81401**



Note: Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be aware that your entire document – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Draft Alternatives

The Gunnison Sage-Grouse Draft RMP Amendment/EIS details five alternative management approaches for addressing the habitat and conservation needs of the Gunnison sage-grouse in balance with the many other resources and activities the BLM manages for, including recreation, livestock grazing, lands and realty, wildland and prescribed fire, and energy and minerals. The goal of developing alternatives was to prepare different combinations of resource uses and allocations to address the purpose and need relative to the issues, resolve

conflicts among competing uses, and seek consistency with other land management agency plans and with guidance from the 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Final Recovery Plan for Gunnison Sage-Grouse.

The five draft alternatives represent the overall range of reasonable management strategies. None of the draft alternatives represents a final decision. Following the public comment period, the BLM will develop a Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS during which the BLM may select various management actions from any or each of the alternatives in the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS.

Alternative A (No Action/Current Management) would continue current BLM management direction in the RMPs for the 11 BLM administrative units in the planning area. Allowable uses and restrictions would remain unchanged. Under this alternative, current management and levels of protection for Gunnison sage-grouse habitat are highly variable across administrative units. The BLM would continue to initiate informal or formal consultation with the USFWS for individual authorizations that may directly or indirectly affect the Gunnison sage-grouse or their habitat.

Alternative B prioritizes removing identified threats within occupied and unoccupied habitat and reducing impacts within the decision area, which includes a 4-mile buffer around habitat and potential linkage-connectivity areas to the maximum extent allowable. The BLM would also designate all nominated ACECs that meet relevance and importance criteria, including an ACEC encompassing all Gunnison sage-grouse occupied and unoccupied habitat that overlaps all other nominated ACECs.

Alternative C would minimize, mitigate, or compensate for impacts from resource uses and activities in occupied and unoccupied habitat. This alternative does not provide for buffer zones around occupied and unoccupied habitat and does not designate linkage-connectivity areas. The BLM would not designate any new ACECs for Gunnison sage-grouse management under Alternative C, but would carry forward currently designated Gunnison sage-grouse ACECs.

Alternative D (Preferred Alternative) represents a set of actions and resource allocations identified by the BLM as providing the best combination to address habitat conservation within both occupied and unoccupied habitat. Under this alternative, conservation measures focus on occupied and unoccupied habitat, including a one-mile buffer around habitat that could extend to linkage-connectivity areas. The preferred alternative would also designate a specific subset of ACECs.

The preferred alternative aims to ensure consistency in management actions across the 11 RMP administrative units and implementation consistent with the USFWS Recovery Plan by: (1) strategically allocating resource uses and conserving resource values while sustaining and enhancing ecological integrity across the planning area, and (2) designating four ACECs where focused management and conservation actions would be strategically implemented.

Alternative E considers adopting applicable management direction from the interagency Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) for the Gunnison Sage-Grouse, Gunnison Basin Population. Some goals of the CCA are to: (1) engage key stakeholders in the Gunnison Basin community in a collaborative planning and review process to support Gunnison sage-grouse conservation, (2) prioritize conservation measures across occupied habitat, and (3) account for cumulative impacts of habitat fragmentation. Alternative E enables the BLM to compare elements of the CCA for the Gunnison Basin population to the other rangewide alternatives (B, C, D).

