



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Greater Sage-grouse 2024

Draft Environmental Impact Statement – March 2024

The BLM manages 67 million of the 145 million acres of greater sage-grouse habitat in the U.S. (46%). Recent science shows that sage-grouse numbers are declining due to habitat loss, invasive species, and climate effects such as drought and increasing numbers of wildfires. This habitat loss also affects 350 other species, like mule deer, pronghorn, and the pygmy rabbit.

In 2015 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that greater sage-grouse did not warrant listing under the Endangered Species Act, due to the habitat management plans the BLM adopted that year in consultation and cooperation with states, which have primary responsibility for managing wildlife populations.

The U.S. Geological Survey has reported that the number of greater sage-grouse across all habitats has declined 37% in the last 20 years, and that if current trends continue, more than half of the areas used for spring mating—known as leks—could be lost in the next 20 years.

Satellite mapping shows nearly 2 million acres of sagebrush habitat were lost between 2012 and 2018. Nearly 60% of this loss happened on BLM-managed public lands, mostly resulting from wildfires. While burned areas can be restored, treatment is costly and uncertain to be effective before sage-grouse and other wildlife are forced to leave the areas permanently.

Our habitat management plans aim to reduce the risk of wildfire by limiting surface disturbance, which curtails the spread of invasive plants like cheatgrass. Our fire management strategies use actions like fuel breaks to lower the risk and severity of fires. These actions work in tandem to conserve sagebrush habitat that remains on public lands to sustain populations of sage-grouse and other wildlife until restoration efforts can succeed.

In November 2021, the BLM began responding to new science and court rulings by developing proposed updates to the 2015 plans to ensure that habitat management actions we take today will have lasting effects into the future, even in the face of continually changing climate factors.

Current status

Since November 2021 the BLM has met more than 100 times with state, local, and federal partners to coordinate issues to consider and analyze as we update the management plans. We also received nearly 1,900 public comments that have guided our thinking about how to make our habitat management more effective.

With the help of these partners and public input, the BLM identified a range of alternatives for future action and analyzed the potential environmental impacts of each alternative.

Investing for the future

To complement the updates to our management plans, the BLM is investing in conserving and restoring sagebrush habitat.

Annually, the BLM invests \$35 million of its congressional appropriation in sagebrush conservation and restoration projects. The Inflation Reduction Act provides an additional \$98.3 million for such work, with another \$22.5 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding restoration projects in 2024.