



2017 DRAFT Accomplishment Summary Bi-State Action Plan Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of Greater Sage-Grouse

Background

In 2004, the first conservation plan for the Bi-State DPS was released. This plan identified conservation actions to be completed and summarized the status of the bird and the relevant threats. This stakeholder-driven plan was developed by members of the Local Area Working Group (LAWG) including; California BLM, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Nevada Department of Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada BLM, the Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. From 2004 to 2011, members of the LAWG implemented the plan, completing thousands of acres of habitat improvement projects.

An interagency effort in 2011 resulted in an updated Conservation Action Plan that was released in March of 2012. This Action Plan summarized prior conservation activities and provided a roadmap to future conservation of the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of greater sage-grouse. Since publication, many of the conservation actions detailed in the Action Plan have been completed. The purpose of this report is to summarize these conservation actions in a brief manner, prior to a full reporting of all accomplishments.

On October 28, 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) proposed to list the Bi-State distinct population segment (DPS) of greater sage-grouse as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. At that same time, the FWS proposed to designate 1.8 million acres of critical habitat for the DPS. The FWS announced in April 2015 that the Bi-State DPS was no longer warranted for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

In June of 2014, NRCS, USFS, BLM and other Bi-State partners announced a \$45 million dollar commitment to implement the 2012 Action Plan over a 10 year period to complete the highest priority actions in the Action Plan (originally the 76 projects).

Table 1 provides a summary of the on-the-ground conservation actions that have been implemented to improve habitat for the Bi-State DPS from the Action Plan completion in **2017**. Table 2 summarizes other actions such as research and monitoring, planning and coordination between agencies.

Table 1. Conservation Actions completed for the Bi-State DPS 2017

RISK ADDRESSED Project Type	# of Projects	Miles, Acres or Sites Treated	Project Locations¹	PMU: High/ Moderate Threat
CONIFER EXPANSION				ALL PMUs
Conifer removal to restore sagebrush	12	10,781 acres	BH, DC, MG, PN, SM	
Pile-burning in conifer removal areas	1	56 acres	BH	
Maintenance of past conifer removal areas	2	3,100 acres	DC, PN	
NEPA for future conifer removal in progress	1	4,682 acres	DC	
WILDFIRE				ALL PMUs
Wildfire: rehabilitation	1	210 acres	SM	
URBANIZATION				ALL (except MG)
None				
INFRASTRUCTURE				ALL (except WM)
Fences: modification, removal, marking	5	4.63 miles	BH	

Roads: permanent closures, seasonal and improvements	5	5 sites	SM	
GRAZING-WILD HORSES				
Pine Nut Herd Management Area EA	1	1 EA	PN	
GRAZING-LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT				
Livestock Management (exclosures)	14	362 acres, existing exclosures maintained	BH	Permitted grazing: Low for all PMUs
Livestock exclusion (fence construction)	1	0.40 miles	MG	
INVASIVE AND NOXIOUS SPECIES				PN, MG
Invasive and noxious weed control-mechanical and chemical	5	224.47 acres	BH, MG, SM, PN	
Invasive and noxious weed inventory	1	1,447 acres	MG	
HABITAT-BASED				DCF
Irrigation of wet meadows	3	3 sites	BH, DC, MG	
Restoration of sagebrush habitat: Trash removal	1	1 site	BH	

- Population Management Unit (PMU) abbreviations:
 PN – Pine Nut
 DCF – Desert Creek-Fales
 B – Bodie
 MG – Mount Grant
 WM – White Mountains
 SM – South Mono

Table 2. Action Plan accomplishments not included in Table 1

OTHER ACTION PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS	DESCRIPTION / MEASURES
Coordinated interagency approach (CIA 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Executive Oversight Committee meetings • 2 Tribal Natural Resource Committee meetings • 2 Local Area Working Group meetings • 2 Technical Advisory Committee meetings • LAWG Field Tour of 9 Mile Ranch • Coordinated tribal youth program (Bridgeport Piute, BLM, H-T)
Science-based adaptive management plan (SAM 1 & 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for Science Advisor has been provided from 2012-2017 (SAM 1) • Conservation Planning Tool has been implemented and continues to be refined (SAM 2)
Improve regulatory mechanisms (IRM 1 & 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The INF is finalizing its Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). (IRM 1-8).
Small populations (MER 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a translocation plan for the Parker population is in progress. Agreements between DWP, USGS and CDFW were completed. Parker translocation planned to start spring of 2017 (MER 7-1).
Research and Monitoring (RAM 1 thru 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coates, P. S., B. G. Prochazka, M. A. Ricca, K. B. Gustafson, P. Ziegler, and M. L. Casazza. 2017. Pinyon and juniper encroachment into sagebrush ecosystems impacts distribution and survival of greater sage-grouse. <i>Rangeland Ecology & Management</i> 70:25-38. • Prochazka, B. G., P. S. Coates, M. A. Ricca, M. L. Casazza, and J. M. Hull. 2017. Encounters with pinyon-juniper influence riskier movements in greater sage-grouse across the Great Basin. <i>Rangeland Ecology & Management</i> 70:39-49. • Duvall, A. L., A. L. Metcalf, and P. S. Coates. 2017. Conserving the Greater Sage-Grouse: A Social-Ecological Systems Case Study from the California-Nevada Region. <i>Rangeland Ecology & Management</i> 70:129-140.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lek Camera Project initiated with Gail Patricelli Lab, UC Davis
Maintain and improve stakeholder involvement (MSI 1 & 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and launched bistatesagegrouse.com • Featured on PartnersintheSage.com • Programs for LA, San Diego and Eastern Sierra Audubon • Ag in the Schools programs • Facebook and twitter posts • 5 Volunteer days
Minimize and Eliminate Risks: Wildfire (MER 1-1 thru 1-9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Advisor Kits were updated with relevant grouse data • Sage-grouse presentations at all fire refreshers for the INF/Bishop BLM/Carson BLM

76 Projects and the Action Plan

In 2014 the Bi-State Technical Advisory Committee evaluated projects in the Bi-State Action Plan (BSAP) and created a list of 76 projects that represented the projects that were most necessary to complete. At this time the boundaries of the conifer projects were drawn as a best guess. In 2014 the USGS produced the Conservation Planning Tool, which ranked the potential conifer projects based on benefit to grouse and cost effectiveness. In 2015, subcommittees of the TAC in the North and South Bi-State used the CPT rank as the basis of a reranking of the conifer projects that included other information, such as on-the-ground knowledge of an area, logistics of planning and implementing and professional expertise. At every step, it was assumed that 1) Priorities would change based on new information and 2) New priorities might occur that were unknown at the time of the 76 projects.

The projects summarized in this report represent the 2016 completion of the highest priority projects in the Bi-State based on the CPT, TAC reranking, input from the LAWG and common sense realities of implementing projects.