

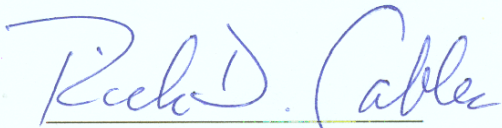
## Conservation Agreement

**The U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region (Forest Service)**, hereby states its intent and commitment to assist and participate in implementing the *Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Conservation Plan (RCP)*. All projects or management actions implemented in accordance with the RCP will be subject to all laws, regulations, policies and procedures in effect at the time the action is implemented. Authorities for the Forest Service to manage Gunnison sage-grouse habitat and to enter into this voluntary Conservation Agreement derive from the Sikes Act of 1960, as amended; the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960; the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended; and the National Forest Management Act of 1976. The Forest Service commits:

1. To manage, as outlined in the RCP, all Gunnison sage-grouse habitats (as mapped by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the RCP), as a desirable objective of land management activities, consistent with the overall management direction contained within the Forest Plans on the affected national forests: Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests; San Juan National Forest; Rio Grande National Forest; and the Pike-San Isabel National Forest.
2. To review and consider the information and recommendations provided by the RCP prior to making any new decision to undertake actions in Gunnison sage-grouse habitat. The RCP and other appropriate local information will be used in project design and implementation to reduce negative impacts and identify opportunities for habitat improvement.
3. To exercise authorities for maintenance of biological diversity, and the conservation and management of the Regional Forester's Sensitive Species, including the Gunnison sage-grouse, as directed by the Forest Service Manual 2630 and 2670. A "Biological Evaluation" will be prepared for each proposed Forest Service program or activity to ensure that Forest Service actions do not contribute to loss of viability of the Gunnison sage-grouse or cause this species to move toward federal listing under the Endangered Species Act.
4. To continue Forest Service participation and support of state-wide and local Gunnison sage-grouse working groups, as appropriate.
5. To coordinate management actions in Gunnison sage-grouse habitat with the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Performance of all activities described above is contingent on adequate funds being made available and allocated to the Forest Service. This agreement is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligating document. All other parties and their respective agencies or organizations will handle their own activities and utilize their own resources in pursuing these objectives. This Agreement shall not prohibit the Forest Service or the other cooperators in the RCP from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, or private citizens. This Agreement shall not prohibit the Forest Service from engaging in management actions regarding Gunnison sage-grouse conservation beyond those described in this conservation plan.

This Agreement shall become effective on the date of signature and shall remain in effect until the Forest Service chooses to terminate the Agreement. Exceptions to this Agreement may be made on a case-by-case basis, where such deviations would better provide for the conservation of the species or its habitat, conflicts must be resolved, or new scientific information becomes available.



Rick Cables, Regional Forester  
Rocky Mountain Region, U.S. Forest Service

April 28, 2005  
Date