

Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Conservation Plan

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), hereby states its intent to assist with and participate in the implementation of the Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Conservation Plan (RCP), as prepared by the interagency Rangewide Steering Committee (RSC), of which the Service is a member. Authority for the Service to enter into this agreement and participate in implementation of the RCP comes from the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended; the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended. Signing of this agreement does not constitute a review under the Policy for Evaluating Conservation Efforts When Making Listing Decisions (PECE), nor an evaluation of the real or absolute extinction risk for the Gunnison sage-grouse. The Service's endorsement of the RCP is not an indication that it will determine, under PECE, that the RCP should be considered when the Service makes a listing determination for the Gunnison sage-grouse, nor does the existence of this RCP necessarily result in the Service determining that listing is not warranted. Specific commitments made by the Service hereby are as follows:

1. To use our authorities to review projects and recommend measures to avoid or minimize impacts to the Gunnison sage-grouse and its habitat. We will review and consider the information and recommendations in the RCP and local information during informal consultation on projects.
2. To provide technical assistance for proposed conservation actions as needed and requested, considering information and recommendations in the RCP for the actions.
3. To pursue funding opportunities through available grants or funding sources for implementation of the RCP.
4. To continue Service participation and support on the RSC and local working groups as appropriate.
5. To provide recommendations to address any issues of concern during future RCP revisions.

Performance of all activities described above is contingent on adequate funds and staff being made available and allocated. 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. This agreement is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligating document. This agreement shall not prohibit the Service from engaging in management actions regarding Gunnison sage-grouse conservation beyond those described in this agreement and in the RCP. However, such management actions should be coordinated with the RSC.

This agreement shall become effective on the last date of signature by participating parties, and shall remain in effect until the agreement is terminated by consent of the RSC. Exceptions or amendments to this agreement may be jointly agreed to by the signatories 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.

Elliott Scetta

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Region 6, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

5/9/05

Date