

Conservation of Greater Sage-grouse: Challenges Managing a Landscape Scale Species

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on Private and Communal
Lands: Livestock, Tourism,
and Spirit*

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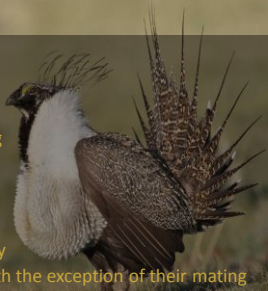
Guidepost

- The Bird
 - Description
 - Distribution
- The Issue
 - Biology
 - Listing
 - Threats
 - Addressing the threats



The Bird

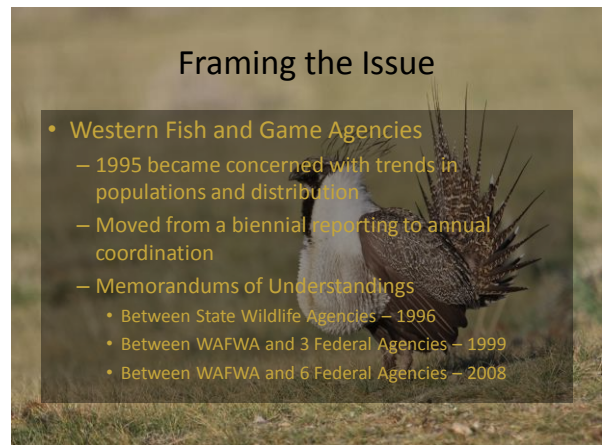
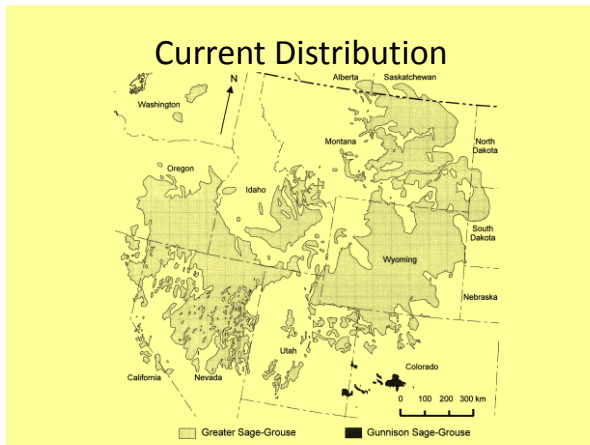
- Description
 - Weight
 - Adult Males 2.7 kg
 - Adult Females 1.5 kg
 - Length
 - Up to 30"
 - Color
 - Black, white and gray
 - Generally cryptic with the exception of their mating display



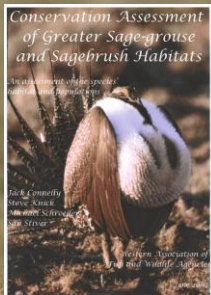
The Bird

- Original Distribution
 - 12 Western States
 - 3 Canadian Provinces
 - >1,200,000 km²
- Current Distribution
 - 11 Western States
 - 2 Canadian Provinces
 - < 668,400 km²
 - > 40 populations





Assessment and Strategy



2004



2006

Framing the Issue

- Listing
 - ESA petitions began to be accumulated by the Service in 1999.
 - Washington DPS
 - Gunnison
 - Western
 - Eastern
 - Combined
 - Bi-state

Framing the Issue

- Listing
 - Consolidated into the following:
 - Washington DPS - Threaten
 - Gunnison – working on the finding
 - Bi-state – working on the finding
 - Combined
 - Not warranted - 2005
 - Warranted but precluded – 2010
 - Finding due September 30, 2015

Settlement Agreement - 2011

Framing the Issue

- What are the threats to Sage-grouse?
 - Identified in the following:
 - The 2004 Assessment
 - The 2006 Strategy
 - The 2011 Studies in Avian Biology
 - The 2010 Finding

Framing the Issue

- What are the threats to Sage-grouse?
 - Degradation of Habitat
 - Urbanization and infrastructure (E)
 - Wildfire and invasive weeds (W)
 - Fragmentation of Habitat
 - Lack of Regulatory Mechanisms

Addressing the Threats

- The 2010 Finding of Warranted
 - All Hands On Deck
- 2011 Settlement Agreement
 - ALL HANDS ON DECK – with urgency

Addressing the Threats

- Conservation Actions –
 - NRCS – SGI
 - Addressing habitat issues
 - Syncing Conservation efforts across jurisdictions
 - BLM/USFS/States
 - Addressing lack of regulatory mechanisms
 - Syncing Conservation efforts across jurisdictions
 - Partners
 - Applying expertise/funding where needed

Addressing the Threats

- Conservation Actions – Facilitation
 - Funding
 - NRCS – SGI – Approaching \$300 million
 - NRCS – Partners – Perhaps \$150 million
 - States - > 150 million
 - BLM/USFS - > 45 million
 - Conservation and Regulation implementation
 - BLM/USFS/States working to make sure they have the tools in place to implement plans

Where We Are

- BLM, USFS and States have completed or nearly completed the lack of regulatory mechanisms listing factor
- SGI/States/Partners are continuing to pump millions of dollars into conservation efforts
- WAFWA/USFWS/USGS/USFS/partners are working to solve the Fire and Invasive issue in the western portion of the range.

Where We Are

- Legislation
 - Political folks have listened to our plea for national legislation to address the sagebrush ecosystem.
 - We provided a draft of the North American Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Act to delegations
 - With the pending listing decision we have seen significant interest in legislation.

Where Are We

- The Finding
 - The Fish and Wildlife Service will make a finding by September 30, 2015.
 - The BLM/USFS will have Records of Decisions completed about January 1.
 - The Service is collecting all data for their deliberations-they will need to complete their analysis about April 1st.

Lessons

Conserving a Landscape Scale Species

- Biology is complicated
- Partnerships are essential
- Funding is always a worry
- Politics will be part of the conservation matrix
- Litigation will influence how you talk and what you write