



Fluid Mineral Activities and Greater Sage-grouse Conservation

Fluid mineral activities have been identified as threats to greater sage-grouse (GRSG) and their habitat. They have the potential to fragment habitat, increase noise due to drilling, traffic, and compressor stations, and include structures that predators may use. These factors may impact GRSG activities such as breeding, nesting, feeding, and migration between seasonal use areas. The following is a general summary of the items in the proposed plan amendments designed to eliminate or minimize the impacts of minerals activities on GRSG. All actions will be subject to and consistent with the rights granted in the lease.



New oil and gas leases in priority habitat management areas (PHMAs) must include a no surface occupancy stipulation without waivers or modifications. The Authorized Office may grant an exception to the no surface occupancy stipulation if there would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects on GRSG or its habitat, and granting the exception provides an alternative to a similar action on a nearby parcel, and would provide a net conservation gain to GRSG.

In sagebrush focal areas (SFAs), there will be with no surface occupancy stipulation with no potential for waivers, exceptions, or modifications.

New oil and gas leases in general habitat management areas (GHMAs) are generally open to leasing, subject to application of the standard stipulations and appropriate controlled surface use, timing limitation, and no surface occupancy stipulations.

On existing federal leases in PHMAs, GHMAs, and SFAs, when surface occupancy cannot be restricted due to valid existing rights or development requirements, disturbance and surface occupancy will be limited to areas least harmful to the GRSG.





When authorizing a proposed development in PHMAs, GHMAs, or SFAs, the Forest Service will work with the operator to minimize the adverse impacts, such as locating facilities in non-habitat areas first and then in the least suitable habitat.

When approving the Surface Use Plan of Operation portion of the Application for Permit to Drill on existing leases in PHMAs, GHMAs, and SFAs, the leaseholder will be required to avoid and minimize surface disturbing and disruptive activities.

Geothermal (Nevada only)

Geothermal projects in PHMAs outside of SFAs will be considered if the project: 1) uses the best available science, 2) is within the disturbance cap, 3) mitigation measures are consistent with the Mitigation Strategy and project-mitigation measures including lek buffers..

Split Oil and Gas Estate

In PHMAs, GHMAs, and SFAs, where the federal government manages the mineral estate and the surface is in non-federal ownership, the Forest Service will coordinate with the mineral estate owner/lessee to apply appropriate stipulations, conditions of approval, conservation measures, and required design features.

On existing federal leases in PHMAs, GHMAs, and SFAs, when surface occupancy cannot be restricted, disturbance and surface occupancy will be limited to areas least harmful to the GRSG.

