



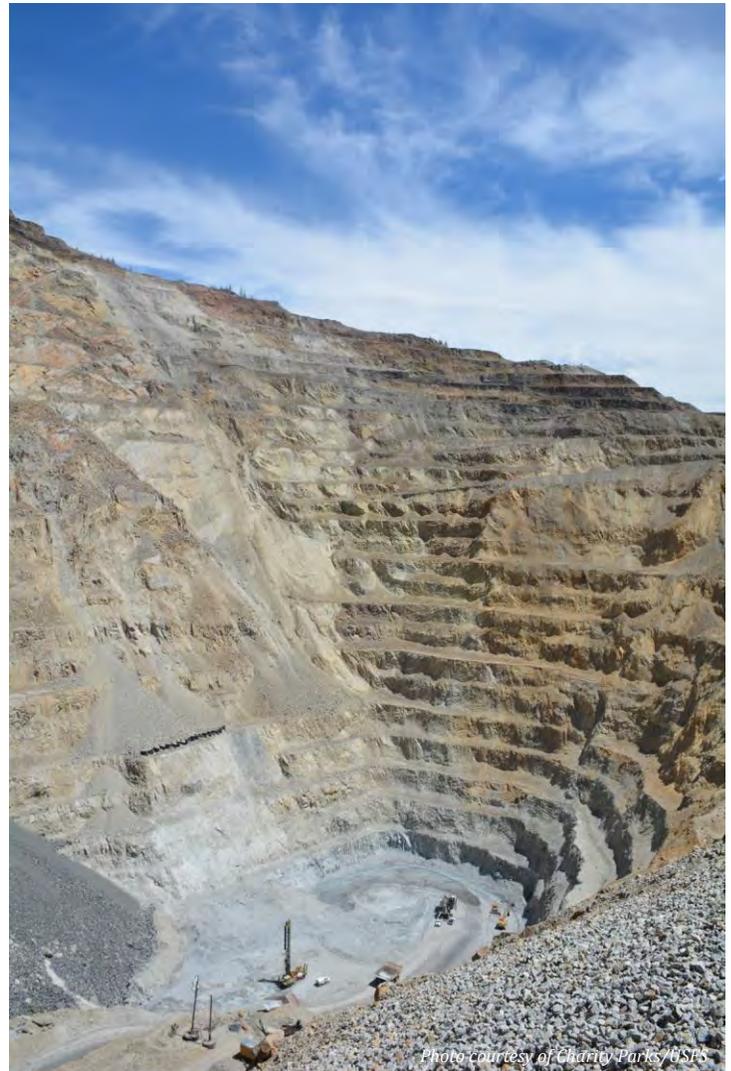
Minerals, Mining and Greater Sage-grouse Conservation

Mineral activities have been identified as threats to greater sage-grouse (GRSG) and their habitat. Minerals activities have the potential to fragment habitat, increase noise due to drilling, blasting, heavy equipment, 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 consistent with the rights granted the mining claimant under the General Mining Act of 1872, as amended.

Non-energy leasable minerals

In priority habitat management areas (PHMAs), general habitat management areas (GHMAs), and sagebrush focal areas (SFAs) when issuing prospecting permits, exploration licenses and leases, or readjustment of leases, the Forest Service will provide recommendation to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the protection of the GRSG and its habitat.

The Forest Service will recommend to the BLM that expansion or readjustment of existing leases in PHMAs, GHMAs, or SFAs avoid, minimize, or mitigate effects to the GRSG or its habitat.





Coal (Idaho and Utah only)

When consenting to new underground coal leases, the Forest Service will include a lease stipulation prohibiting the location of surface facilities in PHMAs and SFAs.

New appurtenant or secondary facilities related to existing underground mines will not be authorized in PHMAs and SFAs unless no technically feasible alternative exists. If the facilities cannot be located outside of these areas, they should be located within any already disturbed area or constructed to minimize disturbance.

Locatable Minerals

Sagebrush focal areas (SFAs) that are not already withdrawn from mineral entry will be recommended for withdrawal from mineral entry under the Mining Law of 1872, as amended, subject to valid existing rights.

The Forest Service will only approve Plans of Operation in PHMAs and SFAs, if they include mitigation to protect the GRSG and its habitat.

A phased development approach in PHMAs, GHMAs, and SFAs will be applied to operations to keep disturbance to a minimum.

Mineral Materials

The Forest Service will close PHMAs and SFAs to new mineral material disposal or development. These areas will remain open to free-use permits and expansion of existing permitted active pits except during lekking (March 1 to April 30) and within two miles from the perimeter of occupied leks.

Split Mineral 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.

