
**Administrative Change
to the
Timeframe set out in the September, 2015 Records of
Decision (RODs) for the greater sage-grouse land
management plan amendments
Date 12/28/2017**

BACKGROUND

In 2015, the Northern, Intermountain, and Rocky Mountain Regions of the Forests Service added direction for the conservation of to 20 land management plans. This administrative change does not affect this direction, but extends the timeframe for implementing of livestock grazing direction

On November 27, 2017, we provided public notice of an administrative change we intended to make to land management plans that include the greater sage-grouse amendments approved September 16, 2015 (see the [greater sage-grouse web page](#)).

DECISION

We approve an administrative change to the timeframe set out in the "Greater Sage-grouse Record of Decision: Idaho and Southwest Montana, Nevada, Utah" (Great Basin ROD) and the "Greater Sage-grouse Record of Decision: Northwest Colorado, Wyoming" (Rocky Mountain ROD).

This administrative change is made to the land management plans amended by the Great Basin ROD: the Ashley, Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Boise, Caribou, Challis, Dixie, Fishlake, Humboldt, Manti-La Sal, Salmon, Sawtooth, Targhee, Toiyabe, Uinta, and Wasatch-Cache National Forests, and the Curlew National Grassland. Also, this administrative change is made to the land management plans amended by the Rocky Mountain ROD: the Routt, Bridger-Teton, and Medicine Bow National Forests, and the Thunder Basin National Grassland.

This administrative change removes the following sentence in the RODs regarding implementation of the livestock grazing direction "In the second phase of implementation, term grazing permits of affected allotments will be modified with new grazing guidance by the 2017 grazing season for most units and no later than 2018 grazing season for all units." (Great Basin ROD at pp. 71-72; Rocky Mountain ROD at p. 65).

In its place, the administrative change inserts the following sentence: "In the second phase of implementation, term grazing permits of affected allotments will be modified with new grazing guidance as soon as practicable." As we stated in our November 27, 2017 notice, modification of permits will not be practicable until we have addressed the following developments that have arisen since the September 16, 2016 RODs:

1. Evaluation of allotments, including riparian/mesic areas, described in the RODs as Phase 1, have not yet been completed because the scale of work was more complicated and logistically challenging than initially thought;
2. Additional scientific information has produced new observations regarding the precision of grazing guidelines and has complicated the evaluation of vegetation relative to the guidelines; and
3. New issues have been identified, and continue to be identified, about the current greater sage-grouse plan amendments. These issues may affect the interpretation and implementation of the amendments and may lead to changes to them. On November 21, 2017, the Forest Service issued a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement, which initiates a scoping process to solicit public comments on greater sage-grouse land management issues that could warrant land management plan amendments. (82 FR 55346).

Furthermore, we may resolve these issues so that modification of the permits would not be necessary or may be different than the current plan direction (see the November 21, 2017 notice of intent).

For this administrative change, we considered whether the timing of term grazing permit modifications was used in the effects or outcome analysis from the final environmental impact statements (FEISs) that informed the greater sage-grouse RODs. The FEISs were silent on the timing of term grazing permit modifications. We conclude that this administrative change does not change environmental effects of the amendments.

This decision and the updated RODs are available on the [greater sage-grouse web page](#).

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: John Shivik at 801-625-5667 or email johnshivik@fs.fed.us. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

Nora B. Rasure

Nora B. Rasure

12-13-17

Date

Regional Forester

Brian Ferebee

Brian Ferebee

12/18/17

Date

Regional Forester

Leanne M. Marten

Leanne M. Marten

12/18/17

Date

Regional Forester

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.