



U.S. Forest Service

Sage-Grouse Bulletin #6

July 2, 2018

Summary: Sage-Grouse Bulletin #6 provides an update on the publication of the Corrected Supplemental Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register, including links to the specific, proposed plan changes. This bulletin also addresses cooperating agency requests and plan amendment timelines.

Potential Plan Amendments – Publication of NOI

The Forest Service Supplemental NOI to amend the GRSG ROD/Forest Plan Amendments was published in the Federal Register on 6/20/18 (with a correction, removing references to lands in Montana, published on July 2). It is a supplemental notice that stemmed from information collected from a more general NOI that was published on November 20, 2017. The FS planning process emphasizes public participation, and this current NOI solicits public comments on proposed actions for altering greater sage-grouse land management plans.

The purpose of the proposed action is to incorporate new information to improve the clarity, efficiency, and implementation of greater sage-grouse plans, including better alignment with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and state plans, in order to benefit greater sage-grouse conservation on the landscape scale. The NOI includes a link to the specific language in the standards and guidelines that would be modified. With the publication of the July 2, 2018 correction, the comment period for the NOI will extend to August 1, 2018. No public meetings are planned during the NOI comment period.

Links to the Federal Register Notice and specific text adjustment can be found here:

1. Federal Register Notice, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-06-20/pdf/2018-13260.pdf>
2. The Correction which removes references to Montana and extends the comment period, to August 1, 2018: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-07-02/pdf/2018-14282.pdf>
3. Specific textual adjustments currently under consideration can be found on the Intermountain Region home page <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r4/home/?cid=stelprd3843381>

Requests for Cooperating Agency Status.

Requests have been received from several state and local governments seeking cooperating agency status for the plan amendments. Send additional requests to John Shivik, National Sage grouse Coordinator. The format of cooperator meetings is being structured during the month of July. It may vary state-by-state and may include face to face meetings and/or virtual webinars and conference calls.

Plan Amendments –NEPA Timelines

The Forest Service plans to complete one multi-region EIS, most likely leading to separate RODs for each state. A draft EIS will be published in late August with a 90 day comment period. A final EIS and draft Record of Decision (ROD) is expected to be completed in January, 2019 which will begin a 60 day objection period. The signing of the RODs approving the plan amendments will follow the objection period and could occur as early as the end of March 2019 or as late as mid-June 2019, depending on the complexity of objections received.

Media Inquiries and Information

There has been interest from the media in the Forest Service planning effort. Media inquiries, or any other questions, should be directed to John Shivik at 801-625-5667 or johnshivik@fs.fed.us.