

Timeline – Major Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Actions

2002 – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) receives the first of several petitions to list the greater sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

2005 – The FWS makes an initial determination that the greater sage-grouse does not warrant listing under the ESA. This finding is later reversed by court order and FWS is directed to revisit this initial decision.

2006 – The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies publishes the first range-wide strategy for conserving the species – *Greater sage-grouse Comprehensive Conservation Strategy* – which provides the foundation for development of subsequent conservation strategies by federal land managers.

2008 – Wyoming, the state with the most greater sage-grouse habitat and largest sage-grouse population in the United States, implements a core area strategy, the first "all lands" regulatory mechanism developed by state or federal officials to conserve the greater sage-grouse and its habitat.

2010 – The FWS finds that the greater sage-grouse is warranted for protection under the ESA. Higher priorities precluded the FWS from proposing a listing rule to provide regulatory protections, so it has been a “candidate” species for the past five years. In its 2010 finding, the FWS identified the primary threat as the loss and fragmentation of sagebrush habitat, coupled with a lack of regulatory mechanisms to protect habitat across the bird’s range.

2010 – USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service launches the Sage-Grouse Initiative to conserve sage-grouse habitat on working lands.

2011 – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar joins with WY Gov. Mead and CO Gov. Hickenlooper to form an unprecedented partnership to work together across state and federal lands to develop a conservation strategy for the greater sage-grouse and avoid the need to list the species under the ESA. The Sage-Grouse Task Force meets regularly over the course of the following years.

2011 – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issues the National Technical Team report prepared by resource specialists and experts from state and federal agencies. The report provides an initial guide for management actions and policies in developing Resource Management Plans (RMPs) to conserve the greater sage-grouse on BLM-administered lands.

2013 – The BLM and United States Forest Service (USFS) release draft land management plans for federal lands in 10 western states. The proposals are subject to extensive public comment.

2013 – The FWS releases the Conservation Objectives Team (COT) report, which identifies key threats to remaining greater sage grouse populations across the range. The COT is made up of state and federal wildlife experts. The comprehensive, peer-reviewed report, prepared at the request of the FWS Director, provides an important blueprint for development of the final BLM and USFS sage-grouse conservation plans.

2014 – Congress passes a rider that prohibits FWS from writing and issuing a proposed listing rule this fiscal year; however, the FWS is not prohibited from reaching a decision as to whether ESA protection is still warranted or not by the court-ordered deadline.

2015 –

- **February 12** – USDA releases report showing that since 2010 NRCS and its partners in the Sage Grouse Initiative have worked with private landowners to restore \$4.4 million acres of habitat for sage-grouse while maintaining working landscapes across the West.
- **May 19** – The Interior Department releases a [comprehensive, science-based strategy](#) to reduce the size, severity and impact of rangeland fires; address the spread of cheatgrass and other invasive species that exacerbate the threat of fire; pre-positioning fire management resources for more effective rangeland fire response; and increasing efforts to restore fire-impacted landscapes with native grasses and sagebrush.
- **May 28** – The BLM and USFS will release final Environmental Impact Statements and proposed RMPs for federal lands in 10 western states. Following a concurrent 30-day protest period and 60-day period for the Governor’s Consistency Review, the plans will be finalized with Records of Decisions (RODs).
- **Late summer** – The BLM and USFS will issue final RODs and approved land use plans to conserve the greater sage-grouse.
- **September 30** – The date by which FWS must make a determination as to whether sufficient action has been taken to conserve the greater sage-grouse and its habitat such that a listing under the ESA is no longer necessary.