

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
FRIEDMAN MEMORIAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY***

**December 1, 2015
5:30 P.M.**

IN ATTENDANCE:

BOARD MEMBERS: Chairman – Ron Fairfax, Vice-Chairman – Don Keirn, Board – Lawrence Schoen, Fritz Haemmerle, Jacob Greenberg, Angenie McCleary, Pat Cooley
FRIEDMAN MEMORIAL AIRPORT STAFF: Airport Manager – Rick Baird, Emergency/Operations Chief – Peter Kramer, Contracts/Finance Administrator – Lisa Emerick, ASC/Special Projects Coordinator/Executive Assistant – Steve Guthrie, Administrative Assistant/Alternate Security Coordinator – Roberta Christensen, Administrative Assistant/IT Systems Maintenance Coordinator – April Matlock
CONSULTANTS: T-O Engineers – Dave Mitchell; Mead & Hunt – Mark McFarland, Ron McNeill; Centerlyne – Nancy Glick, Sarah Shepard
AIRPORT TENANTS/PUBLIC: ATCT – George White; FMA Staff – Greg Beaver, Nick Carnes, Todd Emerick; BCPA – Tom Lenze; Sun Valley Resort – Jack Sibbach; Atlantic Aviation – Michael Rasch; Avis – Peter Scheurmier; FHR – Mark Reinemann; SVBR – Bob Crosby; FSVA – Carol Waller, Dick Fenton; Power Engineers – Frank Halverson; Bryan Furlong, Felicity Roberts, Donna Serrano, Len Harlig, Michelle Griffith, Eric Seder, Baird Gourlay, Bob Leahy, Craig Wolfrom, Richard Fassino, Steve Mills, Walt Denekas, Linda Haavik, Margaret Youdall, Bill Rae, Steven Garman
AIRPORT LEGAL COUNSEL: Lawson Laski Clark & Pogue, PLLC – Jim Laski
PRESS: Idaho Mountain Express – Ryan Thorne

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Chairman Fairfax.

I. APPROVE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented:

III. AIRPORT STAFF BRIEF

A. F. Recognition of Todd Emerick – 20 Years of Service

VI. ~~V.~~ AIRPORT STAFF BRIEF

B. ~~A.~~ Noise Complaints

C. ~~B.~~ Parking Lot Update

D. ~~G.~~ Profit & Loss, ATCT Traffic Operations Count and Enplanement Data

E. ~~D.~~ Review Correspondence

F. ~~E.~~ Airport Commercial Flight Interruptions

F. ~~Recognition of Todd Emerick – 20 Years of Service~~

MOTION:

Made by Vice-Chairman Keirn to move the Recognition of Todd Emerick – 20 Years of Service agenda item after item II. Public Comment. Seconded by Board Member McCleary.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Hailey resident Linda Haavik asked the Airport to do what is necessary, including going outside the fence, to maintain commercial and private air service in the Wood River Valley. She encouraged the Board to keep in mind that a growing and successful economy for all of Blaine County depends greatly on the Airport.

Hailey resident Bryan Furlong expressed his support for the Airport and commented that although he lives close to the north end of the runway, the benefits of the Airport far outweigh the annoyances that go along with it. He also commented that noise seems to have decreased and the Airport's close proximity has not affected his property value. He asked the Board to continue doing whatever is necessary to operate a successful and safe Airport.

Avis Car Rental local manager and Hailey resident, Peter Scheurmier, thanked the Board and Airport Staff for the recent improvements made to the terminal and commented that the support for the Airport he has received from clients has been overwhelming. He commented that the biggest complaint he receives is in regard to flight frequency and encouraged the Board to remember that moving forward, as a lot of clients travel in/out of the Boise Airport in order to make a convenient connection.

Steve Mills commented that before he bought his property on Broadford Road he was warned about noise from the Airport; however, the Airport has not been a nuisance in the 25 years he has lived there and still is not a nuisance today. He also commented that he recently retired as CEO of Webb Landscape and approximately 99% of his clients find it a huge asset to have the Airport in such close proximity to Hailey, Bellevue, and Ketchum. He thanked the Board for all they have done and encouraged them to continue moving forward.

Hailey resident and Power Engineer representative Frank Halverson commented that the Wood River Valley cannot sustain a tourist economy without an airport to support local businesses, especially a business like Power Engineers. He commented that recently Power Engineers had to downsize its Hailey office because the Airport is no longer viable to Power Engineers due to a lack of flight frequency. He expressed his appreciation for all the Board has done but without flight frequency, Power Engineers will not be able to sustain itself in Hailey.

Atlantic Aviation general manager, Mike Rasch, thanked the Board for all their efforts and commented that the Airport is an asset to the community and should be treated as such. He commented that there is a lot of economic value associated with the Airport and Atlantic Aviation alone brings business to local hotels, caterers, rental car agencies, landscaping contractors, janitorial businesses and many others throughout the year. He also briefed the Board that 85% of their employees are residents of Bellevue and Hailey and Atlantic Aviation also donated \$1,500 to Bellevue's Hunger Coalition this year.

Hailey resident Walt Denekas complimented the Board for improving the safety and convenience of the Airport and applauded their recent decision to appoint a committee to review the current voluntary noise abatement program in an effort to make the Airport a better neighbor to the community.

Hailey resident and Sun Valley Resort representative, Jack Sibbach, thanked the Board for all the recent Airport improvements and commented that their guests have been commenting on the new look of the Airport as well as the convenience provided by the new direct flights.

III. AIRPORT STAFF BRIEF

A. F. Recognition of Todd Emerick – 20 Years of Service

Airport Manager Baird presented Friedman Memorial Airport Operations Staff Todd Emerick with a service award in recognition of 20 years of service. He congratulated Mr. Emerick and thanked him for all the hard work he does for the Airport and the Wood River Valley.

Mr. Emerick expressed his appreciation and gratitude for the award.

IV. III. APPROVE FMAA MEETING MINUTES

A. October 13, 2015 Regular Meeting (See Brief)

The October 13, 2015 Friedman Memorial Airport Authority Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

MOTION: *Made by Board Member Haemmerle to approve the October 13, 2015 Friedman Memorial Airport Authority Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Seconded by Board Member McCleary.*

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

A. November 3, 2015 Regular Meeting (See Brief)

The November 3, 2015 Friedman Memorial Airport Authority Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

MOTION: *Made by Board Member Haemmerle to approve the November 3, 2015 Friedman Memorial Airport Authority Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Seconded by Board Member McCleary.*

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

V. IV. REPORTS

A. Chairman Report

No report was given.

B. Blaine County Report

Board Member Schoen gave the Board a presentation summarizing the U.S. Interior Secretary's recently issued Record of Decision not to place the greater sage grouse on the endangered species list. He summarized the principal components of the decision and the effects implementation will have in Blaine County, including in areas proposed for airport relocation. The primary purpose of the ROD is to ensure the bird is not listed by taking measures to protect and restore greater sage grouse habitat in Blaine County (Minutes Attachment #1).

Board Member Haemmerle asked if Board Member Schoen is suggesting that all the areas that have been identified as possible site selection options in Chapter E of the Master Plan are no longer viable.

Board Member Schoen answered that there is almost a 0% likelihood that an Airport would be considered on public lands in Sagebrush Focal Areas, which are the highest priority for protection and are within Priority Habitat Management Areas. He commented that there also is a private land component to sage grouse habitat management; and, if private land is adjacent to public land with sage grouse habitat, development would create impacts which would be counted among all actions taken in a region.

Board Member Haemmerle commented that the Board needs to reexamine the parameters for site selection and search for different site options. He also suggested that the Board examine the possibility of a regional airport that would be located further to the south.

C. City of Hailey Report

No report was given.

D. Airport Manager Report

Airport Manager Baird reported that since 2001, air traffic operations at the Airport have decreased by approximately 50% and by approximately 67% since 1996.

Board Member McCleary asked why there has been such a significant decrease in air traffic operations.

Airport Manager Baird answered that the reasons for the decrease in air traffic operations include the following:

- Small general aviation traffic never recovering after the last recession.
- The inception of the 95,000 lbs. weight limitation.
- The transition to large capacity jet service.

Vice-Chairman Keim commented that from 2001 through 2007, the Airport averaged 47,692 operations a month and from 2008 through 2014, the Airport averaged 30,308 operations a month.

VI. ~~V.~~ AIRPORT STAFF BRIEF

B. ~~A.~~ Noise Complaints (See Brief)

C. ~~B.~~ Parking Lot Update (See Brief)

D. ~~C.~~ Profit & Loss, ATCT Traffic Operations Count and Enplanement Data (See Brief)

E. ~~D.~~ Review Correspondence (See Brief)

F. ~~E.~~ Airport Commercial Flight Interruptions (See Brief)

~~F. Recognition of Todd Emerick – 20 Years of Service~~

VII. ~~VI.~~ UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Airport Solutions

1. Existing Site

a. Plan to Meet 2015 Congressional Safety Area Requirement

i. Runway Safety Area Improvements Project (See Brief & Power Point Presentation)

Engineer Mitchell presented the Board with an overview of each project of the Runway Safety Area Improvements Project and thanked the Board for allowing T-O Engineers to be a part of the project.

ii. Project Closeout (See Brief & Power Point Presentation)

Engineer Mitchell briefed the Board on the grant closeout process and schedule for the RSA Improvements Project.

b. Future Projects

i. Terminal Aircraft Parking Improvements – Consideration of an Environmental Categorical Exclusion Checklist Scope of Work (See Brief)

Engineer Mitchell briefed the Board that the terminal aircraft parking improvements discussed in Chapter D of the Master Plan Update (MPU) may be needed sooner than anticipated and requested that the Board consider approval of completion of a Categorical Exclusion Checklist for a future potential project to expand the air carrier apron.

Board Member Cooley asked how climatic conditions have made terminal aircraft parking improvements necessary.

Airport Manager Baird answered that the airlines have requested space for overnight parking in summer months in order to depart early in the morning before the temperatures require them to decrease seat and luggage capacity.

Board Member Haemmerle commented that this issue has arisen in the context of approving MPU concepts that have not been approved yet and asked for confirmation that the Board is only approving the commencement of an environmental Categorical Exclusion Checklist and not the approval of the improvement project itself.

Engineer Mitchell confirmed that the Board is only being asked to approve work on a Categorical Exclusion Checklist.

Airport Manager Baird commented that Staff is asking the Board to have the checklist completed now so the Board is in a position to proceed with project design in the future if desired.

Board Member McCleary asked what categorical exclusion means in an environmental context.

Engineer Mitchell answered that certain categories of projects are excluded from environmental analysis if they meet certain criteria and the checklist will show the FAA whether or not the terminal aircraft parking improvements project is excluded.

Chairman Fairfax asked what the Airport does with the de-ice fluid it uses in the winter months.

Engineer Mitchell answered that de-icing fluid is self-treated before it goes into the ground. He commented that self-treatment is possible due to the low concentration of de-icing fluid used and the amount of time it takes to reach the ground. If usage of de-icing fluid increases, an underground vault would be used to treat the fluid and divert it to a different location.

Board Member Schoen asked if there would be a problem if project construction is delayed, if the project design were completed in 2016. He

also asked for confirmation that the Board is not being asked now to make a decision about the ultimate layout for this project.

Engineer Mitchell answered that the Categorical Exclusion Checklist will expire if construction is delayed for more than 3 years and another checklist would need to be done at that point. He also confirmed that the Board is not currently making any design decisions on the project by allowing the Categorical Exclusion Checklist to be completed.

Chairman Fairfax opened the discussion for public comment.

Craig Wolfrom commented that making decisions about terminal aircraft parking prior to the approval of the MPU makes the whole planning process a farce and waste of money. He commented that allowing overnight parking may increase early morning and late night flights and may also increase the amount of de-icing fluid used. Mr. Wolfrom also commented that the Board has stated in Chapter D of the MPU that one of their goals is to "minimize environmental impact and noise."

Board Member Haemmerle commented that Mr. Wolfrom brought up a lot of good points to discuss should the Board decide to proceed with the terminal aircraft parking improvement project; however, the checklist is only meant to allow the Board the option to consider moving forward with the project earlier if deemed appropriate as well as research possible environmental impacts the expansion of the terminal apron could have.

MOTION: ***Made by Board Member Haemmerle to approve T-O Engineers Work Order 15-01 in the amount of \$3,430 to complete a Categorical Exclusion Checklist for a potential project to expand the air carrier apron. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Keirn.***

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Board Member Schoen commented that the purpose of the checklist is to research a range of basic environmental concerns and ensure that if impacts to the environment are significant, a higher level of environmental analysis be implemented.

Board Member Haemmerle suggested that the completed checklist be included in the Board packet to give the public an opportunity to review and comment on the results.

ii. Terminal Parking Lot Improvements (See Brief)

Engineer Mitchell briefed the Board that the terminal parking lot improvements discussed in Chapter D of the MPU may be needed sooner than anticipated and requested that the Board consider moving forward with a work order to evaluate the parking lot in detail at this time.

The Board discussed Engineer Mitchell's request to begin development of a work order to evaluate the terminal parking lot and agreed that it is too soon in the process to consider terminal parking lot improvements.

iii. Terminal Airline Ticketing Office Improvements (See Brief)

Engineer Mitchell and Airport Manager Baird briefed the Board on the project for improving the terminal airline ticketing office area and requested that the Board consider moving forward with a work order to design improvements for the area.

Board Member Cooley asked why the airline ticketing area was not reconstructed with the rest of the terminal improvements.

Airport Manager Baird answered that during the design of the terminal improvements, the Board decided to wait to expand the airline ticketing area due to time and budget constraints and the fact that airline ticketing office expansion is not eligible for FAA reimbursement.

Board Member Haemmerle asked if the project would be financed through operational funds and whether or not that financing would decrease funding for completing the MPU.

Airport Manager Baird answered that the project would be financed with operational funds and development of a Scope of Work would not significantly affect funding for the MPU. He commented that he will have more details about funding once a Scope of Work and cash flow projections are developed and presented to the Board in January.

Chairman Fairfax commented that the Board should proceed with development of a SOW as the airlines also deserve an improved space in the terminal.

Board Member Haemmerle commented that the airlines do not deserve anything; however, he does not object to the development of a SOW so the Board can make an informed decision on whether or not this is needed.

Vice-Chairman Keirn commented that the passengers deserve an improved airline ticketing area.

Board Member McCleary commented that she would like the Board to proceed with the development of a SOW.

Chairman Fairfax directed Staff to proceed with development of a Scope of Work for design improvements for the terminal airline ticketing offices.

c. Retain/Improve/Develop Air Service

i. Fly Sun Valley Alliance Update

No update was given.

B. Master Plan Update – Consideration of and Acceptance of Chapter D (See Brief)

Engineer Mitchell reviewed the Board's suggested revisions made to Chapter D of the MPU at last month's meeting, the 20-Year Conceptual Development Plan (CDP), and the next steps in the MPU process.

Board Member Schoen asked if the Board will be able to explore further expansion in the future if the expansion to the south included in the MPU does not provide an adequate amount of space.

Airport Architect Mark McFarland answered that additional expansion alternatives can be put in the MPU if the Board desires.

The Board discussed Board Member Schoen's suggestion to include additional expansion options in the MPU and agreed that Alternative 4 of the General Aviation Facilities portion of the MPU will be carried out initially if a need exists, and if an additional need for space is identified in the future, the Board would revisit the MPU and discuss other alternatives.

Board Member Haemmerle thanked the consultants for implementing his requested changes to Chapter D of the MPU and asked the Board to consider the following additional changes:

- On page D34, Section 8: Delete the word "acceptable."
- Replace the word "need" with "should" throughout the entire document.

Board Member McCleary asked the Board to consider the following additional changes to Chapter D of the MPU:

- On page D3, Section 1.2, Goal One: Replace "Wood River Valley" with "Blaine County."
- On page D3, Section 1.2, Goal Three: Delete "rather than convenience" at the end of the sentence.
- On page D3, Section 1.2, Goal Four: Delete list of environmental impacts 1 through 4.
- On page D34, Section 7, Paragraph 1: Add "for safety and efficiency" after the word "necessary" at the end of the sentence.

Board Member Schoen commented that it is better to define "necessary" and add the words "for safety and efficiency" at the end of the sentence as it adequately serves the purposes of the MPU and these concepts are contained in the airport's foundational documents. He also expressed his support for all the amendments proposed by Board Member McCleary.

Board Member Haemmerle adamantly opposed defining the word "necessary" solely as "safe and efficient" and commented that he will vote against approval of Chapter D of the MPU if that amendment is approved. He commented that he prefers not to limit the meaning of the word "necessary" but to broaden its interpretation to include anything the Board deems necessary at the time.

Chairman Fairfax commented that he prefers limiting the context of "necessary" to safety and efficiency as it is the Board's goal to operate the Airport in a safe and efficient manner.

Board Member Cooley commented that the Board should not set limits for future Board Members.

Vice-Chairman Keirn agreed that not defining the word "necessary" is the most flexible option.

Board Member Schoen suggested that on page D34, Section 8 of Chapter D, rather than deleting the word "acceptable" it should be replaced with "preferred." He also commented that while he is cautious about not defining "necessary," he can see merit to Board Member Haemmerle's argument of broadening the Board's options, so that a broad spectrum of issues could be deemed necessary by the Board.

Chairman Fairfax opened the discussion for public comment.

Bob Leahy suggested that the Board allow the private sector to manage the vehicle parking issue at the Airport and asked how many general aviation aircraft are denied access to the Airport due to space constraints.

Craig Wolfrom suggested that the Board refer to language in Chapter 1 to solve the debate on the word "necessary." He disagreed with Board Member McCleary's suggestion to delete the list of environmental impacts on Goal 4 of Chapter D, because listing environmental concerns is beneficial to the MPU. He also suggested that the elements to Alternative 7 be specifically defined in the MPU rather than generalized as "elements."

Walt Denekas commented that he agrees with Board Member Haemmerle regarding the word "necessary" as there are issues that are not related to safety or efficiency such as capacity, changes in regulations, and environmental impacts.

The Board agreed to leave the language of the last sentence on page D34, Section 7, Paragraph 1 as is and accept all other suggested changes from the Board.

MOTION: *Made by Board Member Schoen to accept Master Plan Update Chapter D: Existing Airport Site Alternatives as amended in today's discussion. Seconded by Board Member Greenberg.*

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Engineer Mitchell asked the Board to discuss whether or not they would like to schedule a public hearing for Chapter E.

The Board discussed the request and directed Staff to notice the beginning of the January Regular Board Meeting as the Public Hearing for Chapter E of the MPU.

C. Voluntary Noise Abatement/Runway Use Program Review Committee – Consideration of Appointments (See Brief)

Airport Manager Baird briefed the Board that the County has requested more time to select representatives for the committee and therefore the item will be on the agenda for the January meeting for discussion.

Craig Wolfrom requested that the Board not select committee members that are biased, like Airport Staff and Engineers and ensure that the Voluntary Noise Abatement Committee is well-balanced.

VIII. VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Air Service Update (See Power Point Presentation)

Air Service Consultant, Ron McNeill presented the Board with an update on air service.

Board Member Greenberg commented that it is commendable of the community to support the local-option-tax (LOT) for air service and commendable of the Board for the decisions they have made that have created a great balance between safety and environmental and economic impacts.

B. Airport Art Committee (See Brief)

Airport Manager Baird briefed the Board on the purpose of the Airport Art Committee and suggested that the Board consider assigning a Board Member at the January meeting to help the Hailey Arts Commission develop a formal Airport Arts Committee to establish a continuing system for exhibiting art in the terminal.

C. North Fork Iron Works LLC Gift – Consideration of Accepting an Art Donation (See Brief)

Airport Manager Baird suggested that the Board consider formally accepting the Rod Kagan metal sculptures donated by North Fork Iron Works, LLC and currently on

display at the Airport exit thoroughfare

The Board thanked North Fork Iron Works LLC for their incredible donation.

MOTION:

Made by Vice-Chairman Keirn to accept the gift of four Rod Kagan metal sculptures donated from North Fork Iron Works, LLC. Seconded by Board Member McCleary.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

D. January, February, and March Meeting Dates (See Brief)

Airport Manager Baird requested that the Board discuss rescheduling meeting dates for the January, February, and March Board meetings due to City and County scheduling conflicts.

The Board discussed the request and agreed to schedule the January, February, and March meeting dates as follows:

- January 12, 2016
- February 9, 2016
- March 8, 2016

IX. VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Craig Wolfrom thanked the Board for changing the format of the agenda to make the community feel more welcome to comment on various items on the agenda.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The December 1, 2015 Regular Meeting of the Friedman Memorial Airport Authority was adjourned at approximately 8:32 p.m.


Lawrence Schoen, Secretary

* Additional resources/materials that should be reviewed with these meeting minutes include but are not limited to the Friedman Memorial Airport Authority Board Packet briefing, the PowerPoint presentation prepared for this meeting and any referenced attachments.

BLM

Sage-Grouse Implementation



**Greater Sage-Grouse
Plan Amendment**



IMPLEMENTATION

Idaho Implementation Major Components

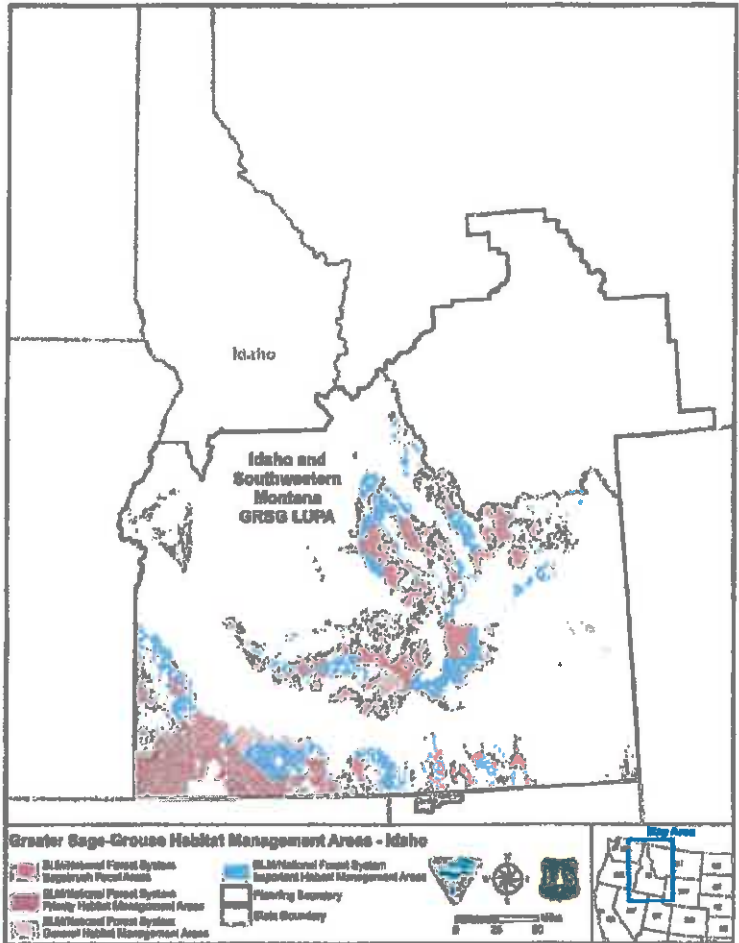
- **Desired Future Conditions – What are we trying to achieve**
 - **Goal SSS 1: Maintain and/or increase the abundance, distribution and connectivity of GRSG by conserving, enhancing and restoring GRSG habitat to maintain resilient populations by reducing, eliminating or minimizing threats to GRSG habitats.**



BLM-USFS Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plans in ID

• The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) amended the land-use plan in Idaho to address threats to the greater sage-grouse. The BLM-USFS plans provide a three-tiered habitat management approach that focus protections on the areas of highest importance to the species:

- The highest levels of protections are applied to Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFA), which are landscapes with high breeding population densities of sage-grouse, high-quality sagebrush habitat and a preponderance of federal ownership or protected areas that serve to anchor the conservation value of the landscape. These areas are prioritized for habitat improvement and vegetation management efforts and proposed for locatable mineral withdrawal.
- Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA), equivalent to Core Areas, are managed to avoid and minimize further disturbance. Surface energy and mineral development is limited in these areas. Development is capped with limits on the amount and density of disturbance allowed. All of the SFAs are incorporated within PHMA.
- Important Habitat Management Areas (IHMA) have moderate-to-high conservation value for greater sage-grouse populations. While IHMA is managed less-conservatively than PHMA, more protection allocations may be instituted through the adaptive management strategy.
- General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA) provide greater flexibility for land use activities. Mitigation and required design features ensure that impacts from development are avoided, minimized and mitigated in GHMA.



SFA Acres	PHMA Acres	IHMA Acres	GHMA Acres
3.8 million acres	4.5 million acres	3.1 million acres	2.3 million acres

- The plans respect valid, existing rights, including those for oil and gas development, renewable energy, rights-of-way, locatable minerals and other permitted projects.
- During grazing permit renewals and modifications on lands within greater sage-grouse habitat, the BLM will incorporate locally developed management objectives for sage-grouse habitat and rangeland health standards, consistent with ecological potential. The BLM and USFS will prioritize monitoring for compliance, review and processing of grazing permits in important areas for greater sage-grouse first, SFA, followed by PHMA with a focus on lands containing riparian areas and wet meadows.

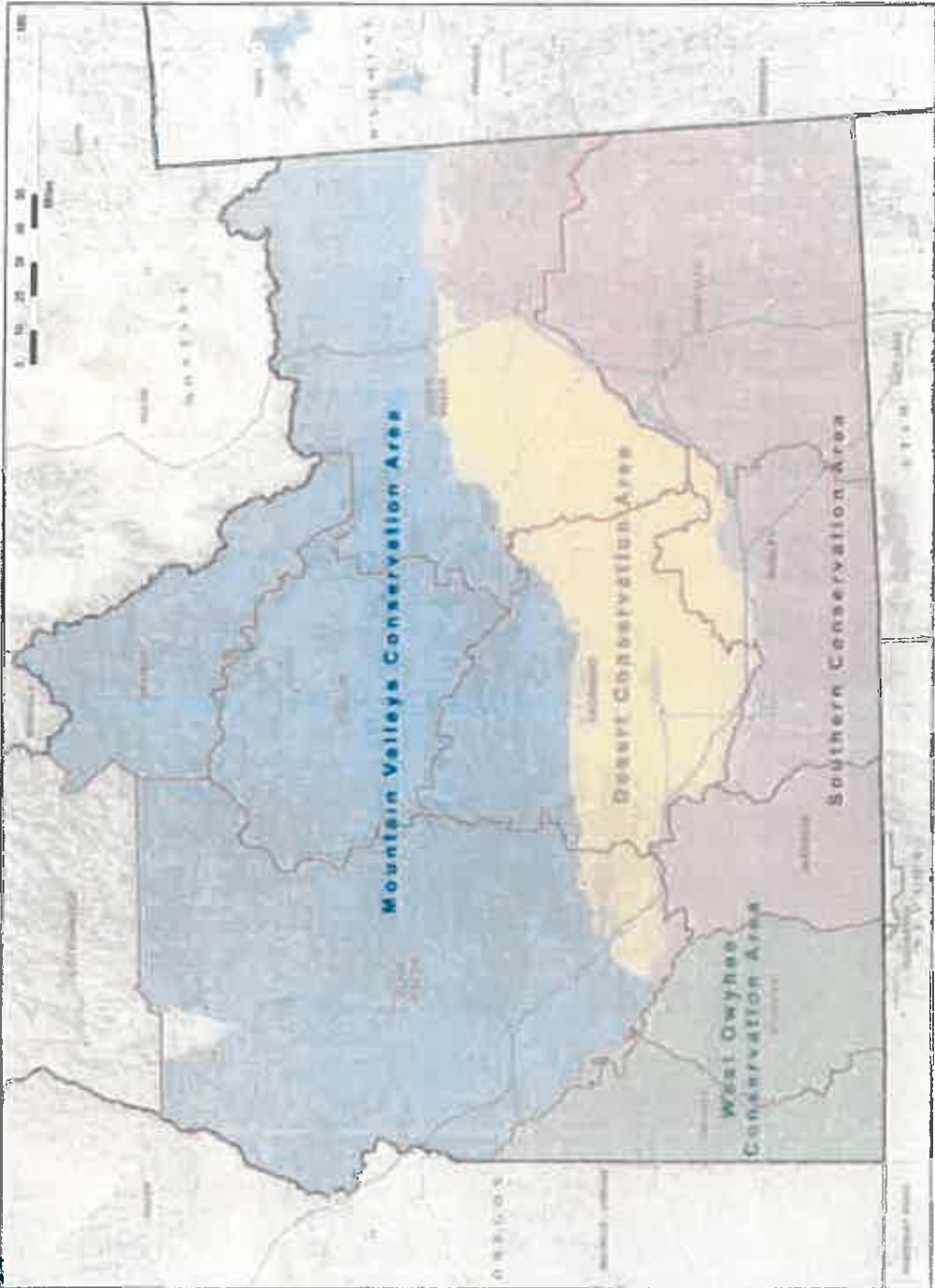
All of the federal lands with high and medium gas potential in Idaho are outside of federally managed priority conservation areas. There is no high and medium oil potential in Idaho.

Acres of High & Medium Oil and Gas Potential and Lease Status on Federal Lands and Minerals within PHMA								
State	High/Medium Oil Potential				High/Medium Gas Potential			
	Within PHMA Already Leased	Within PHMA Subject to BLM/USFS RMP Decisions for Priority Habitat	Outside of PHMAs	Total High/Medium Oil Potential	Within PHMA Already Leased	Within PHMA Subject to BLM/USFS RMP Decisions for Priority Habitat	Outside of PHMAs	Total High/Medium Gas Potential
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,000	10,000



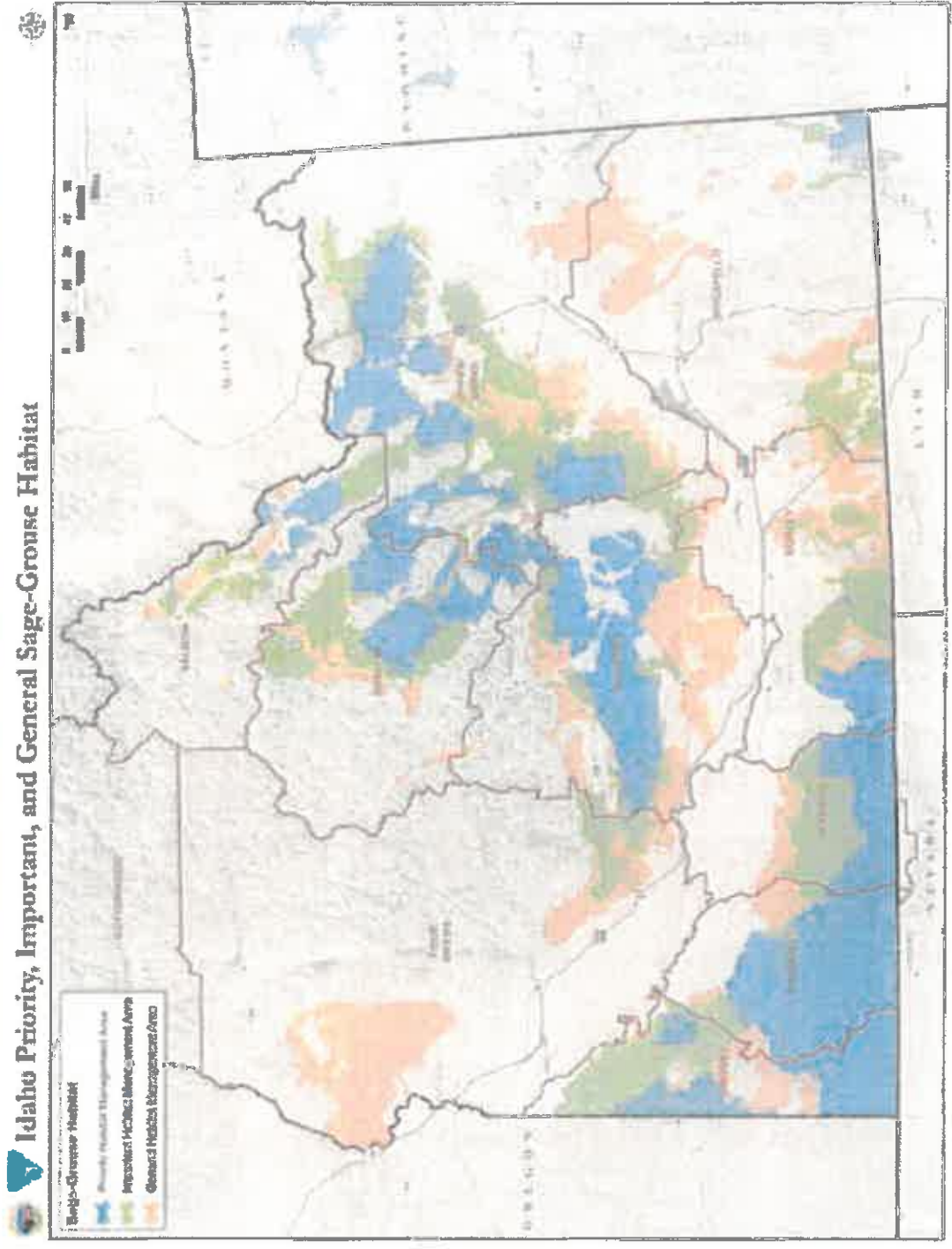
Conservation Areas

Idaho Sage-grouse Conservation Areas



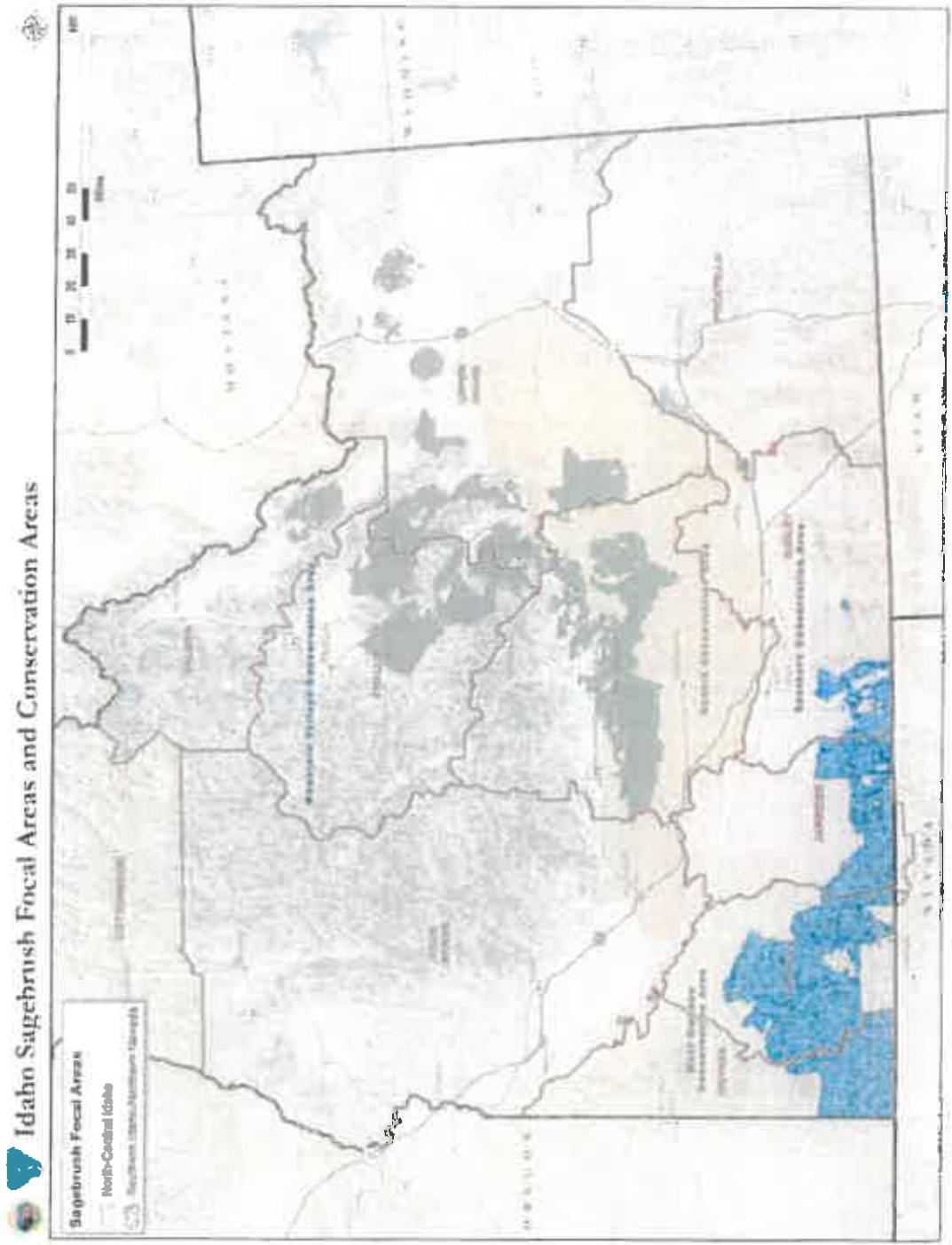


Habitat Management Areas





Sagebrush Focal Areas



that, in accordance with applicable law, achieves the long-term conservation of GRSG and its habitat.

Conservation of the GRSG is a large-scale challenge that requires a landscape-scale solution that spans 11 western states. The Idaho and Southwestern Montana GRSG LUPA/EIS achieves consistent, range-wide conservation objectives as outlined below. Additionally, the Idaho and Southwestern Montana GRSG LUPA/EIS aligns with the States of Idaho and Montana's priorities and land management approaches consistent with conservation of GRSG. The Proposed Plan incorporates adaptive management habitat and population hard and soft triggers as well as management actions to reduce surface disturbance.

3 Objectives

Minimize additional surface disturbance. The most effective way to conserve the GRSG is to protect existing, intact habitat. The BLM and Forest Service aim to reduce habitat fragmentation and protect key habitat areas. The Idaho and Southwestern Montana GRSG LUPA/EIS minimizes surface disturbance on over 11 million acres of BLM-administered and National Forest System lands by allocating lands as SFA, PHMA, IHMA, and GHMA with decisions that aim to conserve GRSG habitat.

The Proposed Plan includes numerous management actions and strategies to reduce surface disturbance. Some key components include applying a 3 percent anthropogenic disturbance cap, requiring RDFs, implementing anthropogenic disturbance exception and development criteria, requiring mitigation to provide a net conservation gain to GRSG, and prioritizing oil and gas development outside of GRSG habitat.

Improve habitat condition. While restoring sagebrush habitat can be very difficult in the short term, particularly in the most arid areas, it is often possible to enhance habitat quality through purposeful management. The Idaho and Southwestern Montana GRSG LUPA/EIS commits to management actions necessary to achieve science-based vegetation and GRSG habitat management objectives established in the Proposed Plan.

The Proposed Plan includes numerous management actions and strategies to improve habitat condition. Some key components include specifying decadal treatment objectives for mechanical, prescribed fire, and grass restoration treatments; incorporating GRSG seasonal habitat objectives into the design of projects or activities; using the Wildland Fire and Invasive Species Assessments to identify priority areas for fuels management, fire management, and restoration; and managing livestock grazing and wild horses to achieve GRSG habitat objectives.

Reduce threat of rangeland fire to GRSG and sagebrush habitat. Rangeland fire can destroy sagebrush habitat and lead to the conversion of previously healthy habitat into nonnative cheatgrass-dominated landscapes.

**Table ES-2
Key Components of the Idaho and Southwestern Montana Proposed Plan
Addressing COT Report Threats**

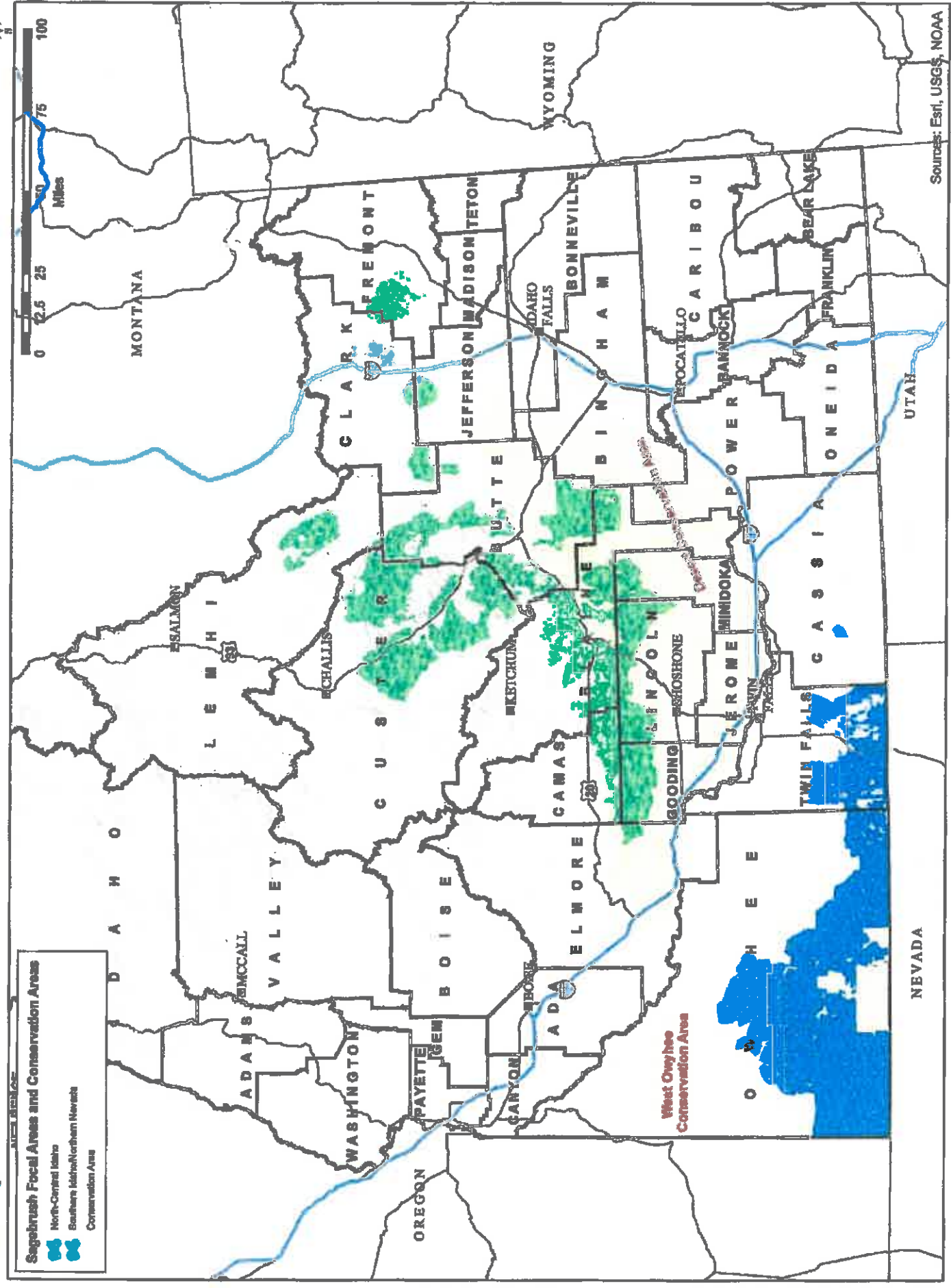
Threats to GRSG and its Habitat (from COT Report)	Key Component of the Idaho and Southwestern Montana Proposed Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with special stipulations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GHMA in Montana: Avoidance area
Infrastructure – major Rights-of-Way (ROW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for major ROWs with special stipulations) • IHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for major ROWs with special stipulations) • GHMA in Montana: Avoidance area (may be available for major ROWs with special stipulations)
Infrastructure – minor ROWs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for minor ROWs with special stipulations) • IHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for minor ROWs with special stipulations)
Mining—locatable minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFA: Recommend withdrawal from the Mining Law of 1872
Mining—non-energy leasable minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Closed area (not available for non-energy leasable minerals)
Mining—saleable minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Closed area (not available for saleable mineral development) with a limited exception (may remain open to free use permits and expansion of existing active pits if criteria are met)
Mining—coal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable in the Idaho and Southwestern Montana Sub-region.
Livestock Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize the review and processing of grazing permits/leases in SFAs followed by PHMA. (BLM only) • Adjust grazing management to move towards desired habitat conditions consistent with ecological site capability. (Forest Service only) • The NEPA analysis for renewals and modifications of grazing permits/leases will include specific management thresholds, based on the GRSG Habitat Objectives Table, Land Health Standards, and ecological site potential, to allow adjustments to grazing that have already been subjected to NEPA analysis. (BLM only) • Consider closure of grazing allotments, pastures, or portions of pastures, or managing the allotment as a forage reserve as opportunities arise under applicable regulations, where removal of livestock grazing would enhance the ability to achieve desired habitat conditions. (Forest Service only) • Prioritize field checks in SFAs followed by PHMA to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of grazing permits. (BLM only)
Free-Roaming Equid Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage Herd Management Areas (HMAs) in GRSG habitat within established Appropriate Management Level (AML) ranges to achieve and

Fact Sheet: BLM, USFS Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Effort

- **Surface Disturbance Caps** – Research clearly shows that sage-grouse decline as the amount of nearby surface disturbance (from roads, oil and gas wells, buildings, etc.) increases. The plans balance open space and development through a disturbance cap in priority habitat that limits how much fragmentation of habitat can occur. The caps take into account both existing disturbance and new authorized disturbance.
- **Fluid Mineral Resources (oil, gas and geothermal)** – The plans will reduce surface disturbance from oil, gas and geothermal development while recognizing valid existing rights. The BLM will work with lessees, operators and proponents of proposed fluid mineral projects on existing leases to mitigate adverse impacts to sage-grouse by avoiding, minimizing and compensating for unavoidable impacts. The plans prioritize future leasing and development outside of Priority and General Habitat Management Areas, and limit surface disturbance associated with new federal leases in Sagebrush Focal Areas and Priority Habitat Management Areas. For oil and gas, approximately 90% of lands with high to medium potential are located outside of federally managed priority habitat.
- **Surface Occupancy** – Advances in drilling technology have enabled companies to access oil and gas deposits without disturbing the surface directly above those deposits, making it possible to conserve sensitive habitats while still developing subsurface resources. In states without a demonstrated all-lands regulatory approach to managing disturbance, the BLM will require no-surface occupancy measures in new federal oil and gas leases in Sagebrush Focal Areas and, with exceptions, in Priority Habitat Management Areas. Exceptions, which will be determined by federal and state sage-grouse biologists, are limited to proposed development that will have no impact or a positive impact on sage-grouse.
- **Lek Buffers** – Leks are at the heart of the sage-grouse life-cycle, serving as sites that sage-grouse return to every year to mate. Scientific literature also suggests that other activities, including nesting, occur within a limited distance from a lek site. The plans identify buffers, consistent with the distances identified in a USGS study, as areas in which disturbance should be limited or eliminated to protect sage-grouse. As the study acknowledges, there is no single distance that's appropriate for all populations and all habitats across the range, so distance variations based on local data, best available science, landscape features and existing protections will be considered during the project-specific NEPA processes.
- **Renewable Energy** – Large-scale wind and solar projects have been demonstrated to negatively impact sage-grouse populations. While allowed in general habitat, the plans steer wind and solar development projects to areas outside of priority sage-grouse habitat. The plans complement the BLM's [Western Solar Plan](#) which developed solar energy zones, all of which are located outside sage-grouse habitat.
- **Transmission** – Large-scale wind and solar energy projects require transmission to deliver electricity to demand centers. The plans require developers seek to avoid placing transmission lines and other linear developments in sage-grouse habitat. Where important habitat cannot be avoided, mitigation measures will be required.
- **Mining** – The plans minimize surface disturbance caused by mining activities, subject to valid existing rights, in priority habitat and ensure that sagebrush habitat will be an important consideration in the BLM review of proposed coal mines or coal mine expansions. The plans



Idaho Sagebrush Focal Areas and Conservation Areas



Sources: Estl, USGS, NOAA