

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/3/2018 12:00:00 AM

First name: Anonymous

Last name: Anonymous

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Listing the GSG would directly impact land management, economies and domestic energy supplies and production in these states. Litigious environmental activists, through numerous lawsuits dating back to 2003, have sought federal ESA protection for the greater sage-grouse for years. Between 1999 and 2003, environmental groups filed eight petitions to list the GSG. FWS responded with a finding in 2005 that an ESA listing was "not warranted." Five lawsuits against the FWS were filed in multiple courts challenging FWS' determination. we must find common-sense ways of protecting, restoring, and reconnecting the Western lands that are most important to the species' survival while responsibly developing much-needed energy resources. Voluntary conservation agreements, federal financial and technical assistance and other partnership incentives can play a key role in this effort." Efforts by states to conserve the GSG also predate the mega-settlement and go back as far as 2008. Several western states have subsequently embarked on range-wide efforts to protect sage grouse habitat in an effort to avoid federal listing. The investment of time and resources at the state level has been considerable and according to one state wildlife manager, amounts to "numbers that we have never seen before in my profession being committed by a State to a single species." these state efforts still face the uncertainty of a listing that could undermine state efforts to conserve the GSG and discourage similar state efforts in the future. In fact, the BLM issued internal regulatory memoranda that threatened to severely restrict activities through BLM Resource Management Plans affecting nearly 250 million acres. New research from the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies suggests greater sage-grouse populations are strongly on the rebound. Status review conducted by the Service has found that the greater sage-grouse remains relatively abundant and well-distributed across the species 173-million acre range and does not face the risk of extinction now or in the foreseeable future. More than 325 greater sage-grouse projects have been completed, improving 270,000 acres of uplands, 7,000 acres of wet meadows, and 131 miles of streams and rivers. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced it was withdrawing a proposal to list the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of greater sage-grouse as threatened because a locally developed conservation plan . FWS with a finding in 2005 that an ESA listing was "not warranted.". GSG listing would harm economies throughout the West. The potential impact of a sage grouse listing is so great that it has caused at least one industry group to refer to it as "the spotted owl on steroids". Most areas where sage grouse have been identified are managed by the BLM, which is required by federal law to manage these areas for "multiple use and sustained yield". A study by the Policy Analysis Center for Western Public Lands found that, "public land is an important seasonal source of forage for western ranches. Thus, eliminating BLM grazing to improve habitat for sage grouse would have a significant impact on the economic viability of affected ranches." Additionally, earlier this year, the BLM announced it was delaying for two years a decision whether to approve a wind project that would cross 30,000 acres of BLM-owned land.