

Date submitted (UTC-11): 9/13/2018 11:49:09 AM

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Hunters and Anglers Want Sage-grouse Plans to Stay

Sep 13, 2018

U.S. Forest Service Forest Service

Dear U.S. Forest Service Service,

I join other sportsmen and women in asking you to leave the sage-grouse conversation plans alone. Hunters like myself know how important the sagebrush is to big game species like mule deer and elk. The sage-grouse conservation plans are the best tool we have to improve habitat vital to both the bird and the herd as well as hundreds of other species.

Sportsmen and women were integral in developing balanced conservation plans for the greater sage-grouse. They participated in one of the country's largest-ever collaborative conservation efforts and worked with federal agencies, the states, industry, landowners, and many other stakeholders to develop these plans. All these stakeholders came together in search of a way to keep this iconic Western bird off the endangered species list and its sagebrush habitat intact.

I am concerned that if major changes are made to these plans then what we all wanted to avoid -- the need to list the greater sage-grouse to ensure its survival -- could become a reality.

The plans have not been given an adequate chance to work and I believe that they need to be afforded that chance. Too many Westerners worked too hard to find common ground and we need to honor their work. Conserving sage-grouse habitat is about more than the bird. Scores of other wildlife species will benefit and so will the Western way of life. Healthy habitat means healthier local economies, more hunters and anglers traveling to experience time honored Western traditions.

Again, please keep the sage-grouse conservation plans intact and give them a chance to work throughout the West. Don't scrap a made-in-the West solution for a top-down, D.C. approach.

Sincerely,

Mr. John Burnside

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