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Comments:

The western sagebrush plains deserve protection

Dear Forest Service Chief Thomas L. Tidwell,

The western sagebrush plains are a critical ecosystem that should be protected from expanding development. The U.S. Forest Service's announced changes would undermine the protection of this habitat and the sage-grouse.

This action breaks the deal that federal officials made with western states in 2015, when the plans were originally finalized and when the sage-grouse was found to be on the road to recovery.

The health of the sage-grouse determines the survival of hundreds of species, including the golden eagle, elk, pronghorn and mule deer. Protecting this species and its habitat is important.

The U.S. Forest Service's amended plans should protect sage-grouse habitat across the west, including keeping key commitments to protect the most important habitat, prioritizing oil and gas leasing and development away from sage-grouse habitat and listening to the stakeholders that created these historic plans in 2015.

Please keep the original sage-grouse management plans intact to protect sage-grouse and the sagebrush habitat that is vital to hundreds of species across the west.

Regards,

Lori Bell

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