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Comments:

Please protect sage grouse, sagebrush habitat, and the sage grouse plans.

Jan 30, 2019

U.S. Forest Service Forest Service

Dear U.S. Forest Service Service,

I'm joining the hundreds of thousands of Americans that have taken action for years urging agencies to do everything necessary to conserve the greater sage-grouse and the sagebrush ecosystem. The U.S. Forest Service has a distinct mission to conserve fish and wildlife. Today, I call on the agency to stay true to your clear obligation to protect the diversity of species on our National Forests and Grasslands.

The plans to conserve greater sage-grouse were the result of historic efforts resulting in the largest land based conservation effort in our country's history. Saving the sage grouse and the sagebrush sea isn't just about a chicken sized bird with spiky tail feathers and an unforgettable mating dance. It's about saving over 350 plant and wildlife species that rely on a healthy sagebrush ecosystem. It's about saving the largest land based ecosystem remaining in the United States. And it's about saving the future of collaborative conservation efforts.

I am specifically concerned with proposed changes in the Forest Service's sage grouse management plans that open these lands to increased development. Specifically the proposed changes would remove Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFA) designations, reduce Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA) and expand opportunities for waivers, exceptions and modifications to no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations for fluid mineral leases.

Please, listen to the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have urged Federal agencies to honor the deal made with western communities three years ago and leave the plans to conserve the greater sage-grouse intact.

Sincerely,

michael smith
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