



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Scoping Questions & Answers

Question: Why is BLM considering a scoping process for possible changes to land-use plan amendments?

Answer: In June of 2017, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke signed Secretarial Order 3353, “Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation and Cooperation with Western States.” The order’s aim is to improve sage-grouse conservation by strengthening collaboration among states and the federal government. A review team was formed to address the elements of the secretarial order and produce a report with recommendations. Among the team’s recommendations were steps to evaluate potential amendments to the existing sage-grouse provisions in BLM’s land-use plans. BLM is undertaking the scoping effort to gather information from the public regarding those potential steps.

Question: Who was on the Secretarial Order 3353 Review Team?

Answer: The team consisted of representatives of DOI, BLM, US Geological Survey and US Fish and Wildlife Service. The team consulted with representatives of western states through the Western Governors’ Association Sage Grouse Task Force and also the US Forest Service in preparing the report submitted to the Secretary in August 2017.

Question: What happens after the scoping period ends?

Answer: BLM will evaluate the comments and information and determine if land-use plan amendments are needed. If they are, then BLM will follow the process specified in the National Environmental Policy Act and BLM planning regulations.

Question: How does this process affect the FWS’s September 2015 “Not Warranted” Decision?

Answer: The Review Team and the BLM remain committed to preventing a future listing of the sage-grouse. However, land use plans must also recognize that states have the authority to manage greater sage-grouse.

Question: What kinds of issues could be examined in potential plan amendments?

Answer: Some of the issues identified in the Report to the Secretary include designation of Sagebrush Focal Areas, mitigation standards, lek buffers, disturbance and density caps, boundary adjustments, fuels and invasive species actions, and the geographic scale of any potential planning effort. Other issues may be identified during scoping, and we encourage commenters to provide input on any issues relevant to the sage-grouse plans.

Question: Where do I send comments?

Answer: Submit comments online at <http://bit.ly/GRSGplanning>

Question: What is the deadline for submitting comments?

Answer: Comments must be received by November 30, 2017.



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Effective Scoping Comments

Scoping comments must be received by November 30, 2017.

Submit comments online at <http://bit.ly/GRSGplanning>

This scoping process is designed to solicit public comments and identify sage-grouse management issues that may warrant changing existing land-use planning decisions.

The most helpful comments will contain:

- Input on whether to amend some, none, or all of the BLM plans that were amended or revised in the 2014 and 2015 sage-grouse planning process.
- Input on whether any such planning process should occur through a state-by-state amendment process.
- Management issues that could warrant amending a plan and should be considered in order to improve collaborative conserve efforts,
- Planning criteria that should be considered during the planning process.

Form letters are generally less helpful because they do not provide new information, suggest new methods, or offer new sources of credible information.

If you have questions, please contact Matt Magaletti at 775-861-6472.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the BLM planning process.