



**04-9 NR 1**

**Sage-Grouse Conservation**

**WHEREAS** the Greater Sage Grouse’s current range extends across eleven states (California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming). These states have various local/grass roots Sage-Grouse Conservation Plans that exist or are in progress throughout the country; and

**WHEREAS** in early 2004 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviewed all outstanding petitions for the listing of the Greater Sage Grouse (known as the 90 day review) and determined there was sufficient biological information to continue reviewing data for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Currently a 9 month review is underway to determine whether a listing of Greater Sage Grouse under the Endangered species act is “warranted”, “warranted but precluded” by higher priority listing actions, or “not warranted;” and

**WHEREAS** the Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts (PECE) was published in the Federal Register on March 18, 2003 and identifies criteria to be used in evaluating conservation efforts and whether they contribute to improving the species’ habitat and survival; and

**WHEREAS** In June, 2004, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) published a range-wide conservation assessment of habitat and biology of Greater Sage Grouse; and

**WHEREAS** various local working groups across the West are developing Sage Grouse Conservation Plans which are in various stages of completion; and

**WHEREAS** locally developed Sage Grouse Conservation Plans that are written compatible with the PECE policy offer a better scenario for sage grouse management than listing under the Endangered Species Act because such locally-developed plans have local support and recognize local environmental, cultural and institutional opportunities and challenges;

**WHEREAS** many natural resource uses in western Colorado have traditionally occurred and will continue to occur in sage grouse habitat.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

CLUB 20 opposes listing the Greater Sage Grouse under the Endangered Species Act and urges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to utilize locally developed, and biologically and economically defensible, Sage Grouse Conservation Plans across the West to manage sage grouse and sage grouse habitat rather than invoke the Endangered Species Act.

CLUB 20 recommends state, federal, and range-wide sage grouse plans are consistent with local / grass-roots sage grouse plans.

CLUB 20 urges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to use the Secretary of Interior’s 4 C’s policy (communication, consultation and cooperation, all in the service of conservation), sound science, and on-the-ground land management experience while considering the listing of the sage grouse. This includes utilizing reports such as the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ (WAFWA) report and information compiled in locally developed sage grouse plans.

Club 20 requests all federal, state, and local grouse management plans recognize that in addition to addressing habitat issues, all sage grouse plans must completely address the five (5) ESA listing factors:

- 1) Present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range.
- 2) Over-utilization for commercial, recreational, scientific or educational purposes
- 3) Disease or predation
- 4) Authorities and inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms
- 5) Other natural or man-made factors affecting its continued existence

Club 20 requests all conservation plans are flexible and outcome-based, focusing on adaptable management to achieve end products rather than process-oriented outcomes.

CLUB 20 believes that local, state, and range-wide plans should work in cooperation with existing land uses to manage sage grouse and sage grouse habitat. Due to interdependence between varying land uses, it is imperative that sage grouse management does not take an overriding role and is balanced with existing land uses. Successful grouse conservation is dependent upon the mutual well being of the human communities that live in western Colorado. Sage grouse conservation goals must sustain the social, cultural, and economic lives of the citizens of western Colorado, as grouse and humans are mutually dependent upon the habitat.

CLUB 20 recommends that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should find that a listing is not warranted until the affected states have finished their individual conservation plans, local plans, and range-wide plans (such as the BLM Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy) because rushing toward a listing in advance of a range-wide, strategic plan and completion of local / grass roots plans could be detrimental to the conservation efforts currently taking place on private lands.

CLUB 20 encourages the Colorado Wildlife Commission and Division of Wildlife to adequately fund and prioritize the completion and monitoring of the statewide Sage Grouse Conservation Plan and local plans where DOW participates.

CLUB 20 encourages the Secretary of Interior, Secretary of Agriculture, and Congress to devote funding and direct grants to state and local entities to assist in implementation of Greater Sage Grouse Conservation Plans across the West, including adequate and approved predator control if deemed necessary and appropriate by local conservation plans.

CLUB 20 recommends that 'Safe Harbor' type protections be extended to all public land users that benefit sage-grouse management. Safe harbor protections should protect the investments by public land users to improve habitat and species, and assure they are not negated by an administrative change in policy or agreements.

Club 20 urges federal agencies to cooperate with private landowners to manage sage grouse habitats by promoting and entering in to voluntary stewardship contracts that allow and encourage landowners to aid in the management of sage-grouse populations across the West (private landowners provide crucial nesting and chick-rearing habitat integral to grouse survival on federal lands).

Club 20 recommends locally adapted and 'common sense' best management practices regarding sage grouse be used by all land users in sage grouse habitat.

When acceptable to the landowner, CLUB 20 recommends speedy exchanges of like value between public and private lands for the protection of Lek areas of Sage-grouse.

**Adopted September 10, 2004**