



## **IDL Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan**

### **Background and Key Elements of the Plan**

*Updated April 2015*

There are approximately 10.5 million acres of Core and Important (C/I) Sage-grouse habitat in Idaho. Approximately 620,000 acres of endowment rangeland are in identified C/I habitat, which makes up only about six percent of the total surface ownership within C/I habitat zones but accounts for 44 percent of all endowment rangeland ownership. Approximately 69,000 acres of IDL mineral ownership makes up 0.66 percent of the total mineral ownership within C/I habitat zones.

**The IDL plan focuses on the three primary threats to Sage-grouse for Idaho, as determined by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.**

- Wildfire
- Infrastructure
- Invasive Species

**The IDL Plan outlines enforceable stipulations in leases, permits, and easements on endowment lands.**

**The conservation measures also will be used as best management practices for activities pertaining to IDL's role in supporting fire prevention, suppression, and rehabilitation, and regulating oil and gas development, some mining activities, and abandoned mine reclamation.**

**The IDL plan complements Governor Otter's sage grouse plan for federal land management in Idaho.**

- The Governor's plan was submitted to the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in September 2012. The Governor's Plan was incorporated in the November 2013 BLM Draft Idaho and Southwest Montana Sub-Regional Sage-grouse Land Use Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement, where it was presented as a "co-preferred alternative."
- The USFWS will consider the Idaho plan, including the IDL plan nested within the broader state effort, and conservation measures outlined by ten other western states and regulatory mechanisms for federal lands in the states, before it makes a decision whether to list sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

**Governor Otter backed up Idaho's commitment with a budget recommendation of \$750,000 for Sage-grouse conservation activities.**

- \$250,000 for IDL to implement cooperative fuel breaks on endowment rangelands and money to refurbish firefighting equipment for use by Idaho's rangeland fire protection associations
- \$500,000 to Office of Species Conservation for spring lek surveys; funding for establishment of more rangeland fire protection associations; and private lands coordination efforts

## Key Elements of the IDL Plan

---

**Fuels Management** – IDL will cooperate with lessees, working groups, and other federal, state, county and private partners to:

- Strategically **establish fuel breaks** to protect C/I habitat zones
- Use **targeted grazing** as a treatment to reduce vegetative fire fuels, reduce annual grass densities, and to protect and enhance C/I habitat zones
- Strategically **remove juniper** near habitat
- Utilize the BLM/U.S. Forest Service Fire and Invasives Assessment Team (FIAT) plans for identification and prioritization

### **Fire prevention**

- IDL will continue to support the formation and ongoing operations of **rangeland fire protection associations**
- Authorized lessees and permittees will be required to develop and be prepared to implement a **fire prevention and emergency response plan** that covers all aspects of operations

### **Wildfire Restoration and Rehabilitation**

IDL will form partnerships, agreements, and cooperate with lessees, working groups, and other federal, state, county, and private partners in **post-fire restoration treatments** of C/I habitat zones on lands damaged by fire.

### **Buffers**

**No surface occupancy** is allowed within 0.62 mile of lek in C/I habitat zones.

### **Marked fencing**

New and existing wire fence segments located in high risk areas will be **marked with collision-diverter markers**.

### **Operational restrictions**

- **Noise levels** from operational activities within C/I habitat zones will be limited during breeding season
- **Seasonal restrictions** apply to project activities within 0.62 mile of occupied leks

### **Land Exchanges**

IDL may recommend the Land Board consider a three-year deferral on leasing of endowment minerals if the Department of Interior adopts a streamlined exchange process that enables the State to enter into an expedited exchange process with the BLM to reduce endowment ownership of Key habitat within Core habitat zones and provide the greatest levels of certainty for conservation of Sage-grouse habitat.