

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

In August 2005, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) adopted the Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan into Oregon Administrative Rule. Plan development was lead by the department, but was collaboratively agreed upon and written by the Oregon Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Habitat Conservation Team. Specifically, the Commission adopted the population and habitat objectives into rule, and directed staff to implement these policies as described in the Plan.

Conservation guidelines in the Sage-Grouse Plan for energy developments (including oil/gas, wind facilities, transmission lines) were based on a few studies, and department's guidance for wind energy was drawn from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's interim guidelines. At the time, there was a paucity of data regarding effects of energy development on sage-grouse. Guidelines for placement of temporary meteorological towers (MET towers) were not included in the Sage-Grouse Plan. Staff has developed a white paper to clarify habitat mitigation categories as it pertains to industrial development in sage-grouse habitat.

The purpose of developing a white paper is to provide policy direction, consistent recommendations and supporting rationale to guide the department's habitat mitigation recommendations associated with impacts to greater sage-grouse habitat from energy development, its associated infrastructure, or other industrial/commercial development.

This document establishes the standards for which greater sage-grouse (sage-grouse) habitat should be considered under the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Policy (OAR 635-415-0000) (Mitigation Policy). These recommendations utilize and are consistent with habitat categories directed under the Mitigation Policy.

The goal of these recommendations is to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for impacts on sage-grouse habitats from energy development, its associated infrastructure or other industrial/commercial developments. The objective of these recommendations is to protect essential habitats to meet habitat and population objectives in the cooperatively developed Sage-Grouse Plan.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- Communication/coordination with affected government agencies is in progress
- Blind peer review of the white paper was conducted by WAFWA Sage and Columbian sharp-tailed Grouse Technical Committee.

ISSUE

Increase in wind energy developments in eastern Oregon has created a need to specifically recommend habitat mitigation guidance for Greater Sage-Grouse conservation under the department's Habitat Mitigation Policy.

ANALYSIS

The department has developed habitat mitigation guidelines for the conservation of greater sage-grouse in Oregon as it pertains to energy development and transmission.

STAFF

Informational only. No action requested at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

DRAFT MOTION

No Action requested at this time.

EFFECTIVE DATE

N/A