

NEWS RELEASE
GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
STATE OF MONTANA

FOR RELEASE: January 29, 2014

CONTACT:

Mike Wessler, Deputy Communications Director, Governor's Office, 444-9725

Governor Bullock Presented With Sage-Grouse Plan

Governor's Greater Sage-Grouse Advisory Council Completes First Phase of Protection Plan

(HELENA) – Today in Helena, Governor Steve Bullock was presented with recommendations on policies and actions for a state-wide strategy to preclude the need to list the Greater Sage-Grouse under the federally administered Endangered Species Act.

On February 20th of 2013, Governor Bullock signed Executive Order No. 2-2013 which established the Governor's Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Advisory Council. The council of Montana citizens was tasked with compiling a list of recommendations to manage the Sage-Grouse which would then serve as a framework for a Montana plan to be submitted to the USFWS.

"It's important that the State of Montana maintain control over the management of the Greater Sage-Grouse. Our state wildlife managers know how to do this and we can do a better job of ensuring the viability of the species because our people live and work in Montana every day," said Bullock.

Background

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has determined that the Greater Sage-Grouse species is warranted for listing as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), but is precluded by other higher priority species. On February 2, 2012 the United States District Court for the District of Idaho ruled that the USFWS must re-evaluate the status of the Greater Sage-Grouse by September 30, 2015.

In response, the United States Secretary of the Interior invited Montana and other western states impacted by the potential listing of the Greater Sage-Grouse to develop state-specific regulatory mechanisms to conserve the species and preclude the need to list under the ESA.

Council members were appointed from the following groups of stakeholders:

- a. Agriculture and Ranching;

- b. Conservation and Sportsmen;
- c. Energy, Mining, and Power Transmission
- d. Tribal;
- e. Local Government; and
- f. Legislature

Members of the council:

- 1. Paul Callahan of Missoula
- 2. Rep. Pat Connell of Hamilton
- 3. Janet Ellis of Helena
- 4. Gary Forrester of Billings
- 5. Jay Gore of Missoula
- 6. Sen. Brad Hamlett of Cascade
- 7. Robert Lee of Forsyth
- 8. Glenn Marx of Helena
- 9. Rep. Bill McChesney of Miles City
- 10. Curtis Monteau, Jr. of Box Elder
- 11. Rep. Ray Shaw of Sheridan
- 12. Mr. Carl Wambolt of Bozeman

Jeff Hagener, Director of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, is the chair of the committee.

The Sage-Grouse Advisory Council Plan can be found at:

http://governor.mt.gov/docs/GRSG%20strategy%2029Jan_final.pdf

###