



APPLICATION

FOR REQUESTING ADJUSTMENTS TO THE SAGE-GROUSE MANAGEMENT AREA (SGMA) MAPS

Attention: SGMA map adjustment requests must be sent to Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Sage-grouse Implementation Coordinator, Eric Ellis – ellis@utah.gov

Sage-grouse Management Areas (SGMAs): were drawn to represent the best opportunity for high-value, focused conservation efforts for the greater sage-grouse in Utah. This approach recognizes and accepts current land uses and identifies potential future uses which may conflict with the needs of the species. The sage-grouse populations within the SGMAs all lend themselves to increases through appropriate protective measures and habitat enhancements, so each SGMA identifies areas on the landscape that provide these additional habitat enhancement opportunities (Opportunity Areas) for greater sage-grouse. *These SGMAs encompass the highest sage-grouse breeding density areas, which together currently support greater than 90% of the Utah aggregate population of greater sage-grouse.*

Recognize that the State’s Sage-grouse Conservation Plan (Conservation Plan) “accepts current use of the land”. It further states that, “If in the review of any proposal or other action, differences between the maps and the on-the-ground situation become apparent, the on-the-ground boundaries shall control” (State Plan - 3.5.2). When the boundaries for the SGMA polygons were drawn, each ranging from 100,000 to over a million acres, three map delineations were roughly identified: 1) Habitat; 2) Non-habitat; and 3) Opportunity Areas.

Habitat: The aggregation of seasonal habitats used by sage-grouse at some point during the yearly life-cycle of the birds. Habitat includes the geographical extent of leks, nesting, brood-rearing, late-brood rearing, transitional and winter areas.

Non-Habitat - Non-habitat areas within SGMAs include lands that do not contribute to the annual life-cycle of sage-grouse. Effort has been made to minimize the amount of non-habitat within an SGMA, but given the topographic, physiographic and land cover features within Utah and the scale and detail of mapping, the inclusion of some non-habitat was unavoidable. Examples of non-habitat due to existing land uses might include: concentrated areas like municipal boundaries, cement plants, agricultural fields, and coal mine portals or dispersed occurrences throughout a larger area like oil and gas pads, roads within a developed field, wind farms, and transmission lines.

Opportunity Areas - Opportunity areas are those portions of a SGMA that currently do not contribute to the life cycle of sage-grouse but are areas where restoration or rehabilitation efforts can provide additional habitat when linked to existing sage-grouse populations. In Utah, the majority of these areas are lands that have been altered due to wildfire or the proliferation of invasive plant species. Examples include: areas where pinyon-juniper, other conifers, deciduous shrubs, or other plant species have encroached upon habitat, rendering it less useful or useless as habitat. Opportunity areas may be transformed into either habitat or non-habitat based upon natural events or management choices, and may be used to mitigate disturbance within habitat as appropriate.

General rules:

- Lands that fall within SGMAs, regardless of ownership, receive higher priority when pursuing conservation grants for range and watershed improvements or conservation agreements and protections.
- Land found along the border of an existing SGMA is a candidate for removal from, or annexation into, the existing SGMA upon request and after verification using the following protocols.
- Adjustment requests for areas landlocked within the borders of an SGMA will follow the same protocols, but in most cases, the resulting map adjustment will be to re-designate the identity of that polygon into one of the three above-mentioned land designations.

Protocols for Adjusting Map Boundaries and Land Designations Within or Adjacent to Sage-grouse Management Areas:

- (1) Please check to be sure adjustment request includes the following:
 - a. Explanation of need for boundary adjustment
 - b. Description of the land being requested for adjustment
 - i. Vegetative community type, and associated characteristics such as cover
 - ii. General Topography
 - iii. Proximity to SGMA border (landlocked, adjacent to, or outside the SGMA border)
 - c. Specific location of the land (preferably a GIS shapefile)
 - d. Assure the affected land owner(s) and/or land manager(s) have reviewed the application and have approved the outcome requested in adjustment application. Provide contact information for both the

entity requesting the adjustment and the landowner(s) or land manager(s) of the property affected by the adjustment.

- e. Identify the subsurface mineral estate owner if not the same as the entity with surface ownership
- (2) The Sage-grouse Implementation Coordinator will work with biological experts at DWR, local sage-grouse working groups and other land management agencies or entities with knowledge of the area to complete an on-site verification and to provide adjustment recommendations.
- (3) Concurrently, the Sage-grouse Implementation Coordinator will work with the Public Lands Policy Coordination Office (PLPCO) staff to determine the feasibility and ramifications of the proposed boundary map adjustment to the overall goals of the Conservation Plan.
- (4) After a thorough review of the requested documents, recommendations from the biological experts, the adjustment request will be considered by the Sage-grouse Conservation Plan Steering Committee (multi-agency oversight committee) for approval.
- (5) The Sage-grouse Steering Committee will be responsible for approving, denying or recommending the SGMA map modifications sought in the adjustment request.
- (6) Approved changes will be forwarded to the DWR GIS specialist for posting.
- (7) All changes will be tracked by the Sage-grouse Implementation Coordinator.

As the applicant I have read and understand the requirements for requesting this SGMA map adjustment.

I HEREBY APPLY FOR MAP ADJUSTMENT TO THE _____ SGMA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ABOVE PROTOCOLS

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

For more information or additional consideration please contact:

Eric Ellis
(801) 538-4775
eellis@utah.gov