



APPLICATION

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

Attention: SGMA map adjustment requests are sent to Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Sage-grouse Conservation Plan and Policy Coordinator.

Sage-grouse Management Areas (SGMAs) reflect the biological and geographical realities of the areas currently occupied by a population or populations of sage-grouse. The 11 SGMAs incorporate more than 90% of all sage-grouse in Utah, and represent the best opportunity for high-value, targeted conservation efforts for the species. The SGMAs are based upon the locations of occupied leks, the identification of nesting and brood-rearing habitat (which, on average, are within a three-mile radius of the occupied leks¹), and associated winter and other seasonal habitat.

This approach recognizes and accepts existing land uses, and identifies potential future uses that may conflict with the needs of the species. Sage-grouse habitat outside the SGMAs has already been disturbed by human and natural causes, and is not required for long-term conservation of the species. Therefore, the provisions of the plan do not apply to greater sage-grouse populations in these areas outside of SGMAs.

The GIS maps that accompany this Plan contain representations of these boundaries, and are for informational purposes only. The maps contained herein, and online, are not meant to represent a survey-grade boundary, nor are they intended to be the final authority for habitat-delineations. Parties should consult with the DWR to determine the precise delineation of habitat for any particular development proposal. 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 be the authoritative resource.

Seasonal Habitats

Within each SGMA, seasonal habitats have been mapped and classified, based on current or potential sage-grouse conditions. If in the review of any proposal or other action, differences between seasonal habitat maps and the on-the-ground situation become apparent, the on-the-ground boundaries shall be the authoritative resource.

Habitat — Habitat areas include the combined total of seasonal habitats used by sage-grouse at some point during their yearly life-cycle. 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 lifecycle of greater sage-grouse. There have been efforts 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. As in other instances related to this plan, on-the-ground boundaries of non-habitat shall be the authoritative resource.

Opportunity areas — Opportunity areas are those portions of an SGMA that currently do not contribute to the lifecycle of sage-grouse, but they 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 pine, Utah juniper, 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 they may be used to mitigate disturbance within habitat as appropriate.

Past efforts to delineate Opportunity Areas statewide have proven difficult and have led to complications during implementation. Therefore, Opportunity Areas will no longer be mapped, but should be identified on-the-ground using the criteria listed above and during appropriate circumstances, such as when evaluating the impacts of a proposed project, or when evaluating the potential benefits of a PJ removal project.

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. Contact information for entity requesting the adjustment (including the landowner or land manager, etc.)
 - e. Identify the subsurface mineral estate owner if not the same as the entity with surface ownership
- (2) Sage-grouse Plan 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 Plan 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 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 modifications to the map adjustment request.
 - (6) Approved changes will be forwarded to the DWR GIS specialist for posting online.
 - (7) All changes will be tracked by the Sage-grouse Plan 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 Heather Talley at 385-251-1089 or heathertalley@utah.gov.