



June 18, 2012

Helen Hankins  
Colorado State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
2850 Youngfield Street  
Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7093

***Re: BLM's Greater Sage-Grouse Environmental Impact Statement***

Dear Director Hankins,

The continued viability of the greater sage-grouse in Garfield County is of critical concern to our county as is reflected in our policies. I'm certain you are aware we have been actively involved in developing the Parachute – Piceance - Roan Plan administered by the Colorado Department of Wildlife and continue to support this approach. It has proven to be an effective conservation plan that appropriately balances mitigation, additional study, and monitoring to gage results and adjust conservation measures for the benefit of the greater sage-grouse.

Most importantly, the plan was developed from a local perspective. Each solution is based on the uniqueness of our local climate, ecology, geology, habitat characteristics, productive uses and species diversity. Your agency is a participant in the plan and has committed to support these conservation measures.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) holds 615,973 acres of land in our county making every management decision made by the BLM important to our future and that of the greater sage-grouse. We were pleased by your agency's announcement in the Federal Register on December 9, 2011 (FR Vol. 76, No. 237) that the BLM would be preparing an Environmental Impact Study to officially incorporate greater sage-grouse conservation measures into your land use and management plans.

Such a step by your agency is a necessary one to ensure and enhance the sage grouse habitat in ways that are compatible with existing and future land uses. We were also pleased that this same notice affirmed that you would be preparing this plan in coordination with Garfield County:

*"The BLM and FS will coordinate and communicate with State, local, and tribal governments to insure that the BLM and FS consider provisions of pertinent plans, seek to resolve inconsistencies between State, local and tribal plans, and provide ample opportunities for state, local and tribal governments to comment on the development of amendments or revisions." (FR page 77011)*

Coordination between your agency and our county's planning efforts can result, and should result, in an effective approach that incorporates management of the federal lands with conservation goals of private, county and state landowners for the benefit of the sage-grouse. Coordination will also provide the opportunity for us to be meaningfully involved in the process to point out any inconsistencies between our positions early in the process so that potential conflicts can be avoided.

As you may recall, Garfield County requested the ability to participate in a coordination process in our letter to the BLM on February 14, 2012; the request is excerpted here from that letter (attached):

Based on this recently conducted significant work effort, Garfield County also requests, to the degree permitted by process, to be considered as a Coordinating Agency in the EIS scoping and review of the BLM Greater Sage-Grouse planning effort.

In addition to our role as a Cooperating Agency, we have adopted the coordination resolution (attached) requiring the BLM to coordinate with Garfield County regarding the Sage Grouse NEPA study to ensure that our local plans and policies of Garfield County (such as the **Parachute – Piceance - Roan Plan**) are being carefully considered to resolve local impacts while maintaining the ultimate goal of avoiding a listing of the species.

We have reviewed the coordination requirement set forth by Congress at 42 USC 1712 and agree that the process outlined in the statute in addition to your Agency's regulations is an appropriate path for us to move forward so that a localized solution is developed in your environmental study.

Accordingly, we request our first coordination meeting to take place prior to your scoping period closing. We have set aside the morning of July 17, 2012 for this meeting.

We look forward to this meeting and the opportunity to coordinate our plans. Please contact Commissioner Tom Jankovsky by email at [tjankovsky@garfield-county.com](mailto:tjankovsky@garfield-county.com) or by telephone at

970-945-5004 to confirm the suggested meeting date above, or to arrange for an alternative date if conflicts with other priorities.

Very truly yours,



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John Martin, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners



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Tom Jankovsky, Commissioner  
Board of County Commissioners



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Mike Samson, Commissioner  
Board of County Commissioners

*Enclosure(s):*                    *Garfield County Coordination Resolution  
February 14, 2012 letter to BLM*

*Cc:*                                    *Jim Cagney  
Andrew Gorgey, Garfield County Manager  
Carey Gagnon, Acting Garfield County Attorney  
Fred A. Jarman, AICP, Garfield County Building & Planning Department*