

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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EMS TRANSMISSION 06/29/00
Instruction Memorandum No. NV-2000-064
Expires: 9/30/2001

To: Field Managers, Nevada

From: Associate State Director, Nevada

Subject: Fire Suppression/Fire Rehabilitation Efforts as They Relate to Sage Grouse/Sagebrush

The following are program-specific actions pertaining to fire and fire rehabilitation activities impacting the sage grouse and sagebrush ecosystem within Nevada. These actions are taken from the Nevada "Draft" Management Guidelines for Sage Grouse and Sagebrush Ecosystems. Even though the guidelines are "draft" and working their way through the review process, I am requesting that the Field Offices implement the following actions as they relate to Fire Management and Emergency Fire Rehabilitation for this field season:

Fire Management:

- ◆ Where practical, locate incident base camps, spike camps, staging areas, and helibases at least 1 km (0.6 mi.) away from key sage grouse habitat. Also, as part of the preparedness planning process, identify the possible locations of these temporary facilities on a map.
- ◆ Ensure key sage grouse habitat information is incorporated into each Wildfire Situation Analysis to assist in determining appropriate suppression plans and prioritizing fires during multiple ignition episodes.
- ◆ Minimize the amount of sage grouse habitat burned.
 - Give wildfire suppression in key sage grouse habitat appropriate consideration within the framework of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. Firefighter and public safety are the first priority, with property and natural/cultural resources jointly the second priority. Protection decisions will be based on the values to be protected along with possible other considerations.
 - Use direct attack when it is safe and effective.
 - Retain unburned areas (including interior islands and patches between roads and the fire

perimeter) of sage grouse habitat unless there are compelling safety, resource protection, or control objectives at risk.

- ◆ When modifying water sources for temporary purposes of fire suppression, ensure that all impacts are reclaimed as soon as possible following the fire suppression activities.
- ◆ Ensure all local and incoming suppression crews and dispatch centers are informed of the sage grouse and sagebrush issues and the actions recommended above.

Emergency Fire Rehabilitation:

- ◆ Evaluate all wildfires as soon as possible to determine if reseeding is necessary to recover ecological processes and achieve habitat objectives appropriate for the biological needs of sage grouse and prevent the invasion of noxious weeds or other exotic invasive species.
- ◆ Long-term desired plant community objectives for wildfire rehabilitation within the sagebrush ecosystem will be to establish the natural native vegetation community.
- ◆ If seeding is necessary, use appropriate sagebrush species and other shrubs, grasses, and forbs that will increase the probability of recovering the ecological processes and habitat features of the site.
- ◆ All wildfires occurring in Wyoming big sagebrush, basin big sagebrush, and mountain big sagebrush habitat will be reseeded within one year over key sage grouse habitat unless natural recovery of the native plant community is expected within the next five years.
- ◆ If invasive or noxious weed species have the post-fire potential to dominate the site, rehabilitation of the site by native or other appropriate species will occur to best preserve the future site potential and retain or regain sage grouse habitat.

Questions or concerns on this subject may be addressed to either the Office of Fire and Aviation (775) 861-6450 or the Division of Natural Resources, Lands, and Planning (775) 861-6464.

Signed by:
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Associate State Director, Nevada

Authenticated by:
Sally Morrin
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Distribution
NV-930