



Society for Range Management

June 2, 2005

The Honorable Gale Norton, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Norton,

Over the period of the past several years many western states have developed sage grouse conservation plans. These plans required countless hours of time from many state and federal agencies including local citizens and university personnel. This task continues as states complete their planning efforts and move into implementation of the sage grouse conservation plans. This is an unprecedented effort to provide USFWS with the best available science concerning sage grouse and to implement active conservation.

Although the effort is an exemplary accomplishment, this scale of effort for conservation of a single species is not sustainable and will ultimately result in contradiction of conservation efforts and potentially a loss of species. It is crucial that a holistic *sagebrush ecosystem conservation plan* be established to avoid single species management of sagebrush obligates and ensure the most efficient use and allocation of the states natural, human and economic resources.

The Society for Range Management recognizes the value of biological diversity to ecosystem structure and function, and promotes the inclusion of biological diversity in the array of facts to be considered in rangeland ecosystems. Maximizing biological diversity is not always possible or desirable at all levels of biological or spatial organization. Management for biological diversity should focus at the landscape level of organization or higher. This recognizes the natural mosaic pattern of ecosystems within landscapes associated with various biotic and abiotic factors and disturbance regimes.

Therefore, the Society for Range Management urges the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish and empower an advisory group composed of individuals from the various states that represent the multiple uses of the ecosystem to outline and oversee development of a Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Plan.

We appreciate your attention to this very serious concern and look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Angela S. Williams
President

cc: Kathleen Clarke, BLM Director
Steven Williams, USFWS Director
Western Governor's Association
Paul Beddoe, Western Interstate Region & Legislative Representative, National Association of Counties
Richard Pombo, Chairman, Committee on Resources, U.S. House of Representatives
Pete V. Domenici, Chairman, Committee on Energy & Natural Resources, U.S. Senate

HEADQUARTERS OFFICE:

445 Union Blvd., Suite 230, Lakewood, CO 80228-1259; Phone: 303-986-3309; Fax: 303-986-3892
Email: info@rangelands.com; Home Page: <http://www.rangelands.org>

**SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT
ANNUAL CONVENTION
FEBRUARY, 2005**

WHEREAS, many western states have successfully developed statewide Sage Grouse Conservation Plans, and

WHEREAS, the Sage Grouse conservation plans were developed to address the sagebrush ecosystem throughout the historical range of Sage Grouse, it should be expanded to address the *sagebrush ecosystem* and the multitude of sagebrush obligate species, and

WHEREAS, the Sage Grouse Conservation plans are in the process of implementation, and the Local Area Conservation Planning groups remain in existence, and

WHEREAS, it is crucial that a holistic Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Plan be established to avoid single species management of sagebrush obligates and ensure the most efficient use and allocation of the states natural, human and economic resources,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Society for Range Management urges the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to establish and empower an advisory group composed of individuals from the various states that represent the multiple uses of the ecosystem to develop a Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Plan.