

# SAGE GROUSE



## PROGRESS OVERVIEW

July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

Contract No. 146311

***Consistent, methodical progress has been made over the past year in the fight to return Sage-grouse management to state control. Significant steps have been made toward a long-term solution ensuring state Sage-grouse management plans can be implemented.***

The Department of the Interior has continued to evaluate and revise the 2015 Sage-grouse Management Plans. The release of plan amendments in May is an important step in the right direction from the administrative side. The significant efforts made by Secretary Zinke and the Department of the Interior signal the importance of the Sage-grouse issue to the current administration.

Inclusion of Sage-grouse and Prairie Chicken language in the National Defense Authorization Act is the result of Utah's representatives working closely with other states in Congress to create a permanent solution that returns control of Sage-grouse management to states. The following events highlight some of the important steps that have been made in the past year.

**June 8, 2017** • Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed Secretarial Order 3353 to address serious concerns of Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service records of decision in the name of Sage-grouse. The secretarial order specifically ordered a review of federal plans to ensure conservation plans are implemented in ways that do not impede local economic opportunities and established an internal review team to evaluate federal and state Sage-grouse plans to ensure they are complementary and consistent with local economic growth and job creation.

**Aug. 4, 2017** • Secretary Zinke released a memo detailing the Sage Grouse Plan Review Team's initial findings and recommendations and ordered the Department of the Interior and its agencies to look for ways to implement its recommendations. The team's recommendations are a step in the right direction in reducing the onerous requirements of the BLM and US Forest Service's plans and will lead to better coordination between the Federal and State Sage-grouse Management Plans.

**Oct. 25, 2017** • The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources held an oversight hearing to hear from representatives of Utah, Idaho, Nevada and Montana on adverse effects of the 2015 GRSG management plans. The hearing signaled another step toward legislative action to protect state management plans.

**Dec. 27, 2017** • The BLM issued six Instruction Memorandums (IMs) in direct response to Order 3353 and the resulting Sage Grouse Plan Review Team's recommendations. These memorandums addressed key concerns identified in the August 4<sup>th</sup> memo, including: revisions for oil and gas leasing, review and processing of grazing authorizations, evaluating Greater Sage-grouse land use plans and hard and soft triggers, and expediting habitat assessments and associated land-use.

**Jan. 30, 2018** • Six senators from Western states affected by the Federal Sage-grouse management plans sent a letter to Senator Thad Cochran, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee asking for Section 273 (which became Section 120) which prohibited the use of funds appropriated for the remainder of the 2018 fiscal year on Sage-grouse listing efforts to be included in the bill.

**Mar. 22, 2018** • The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 was passed and signed into law by President Trump which included the section restricting use of funds for Sage-grouse listing efforts, despite fierce opposition from Democrats. This is representative of the considerable progress that continues to be made in efforts to return control of Sage-grouse management to the state level.

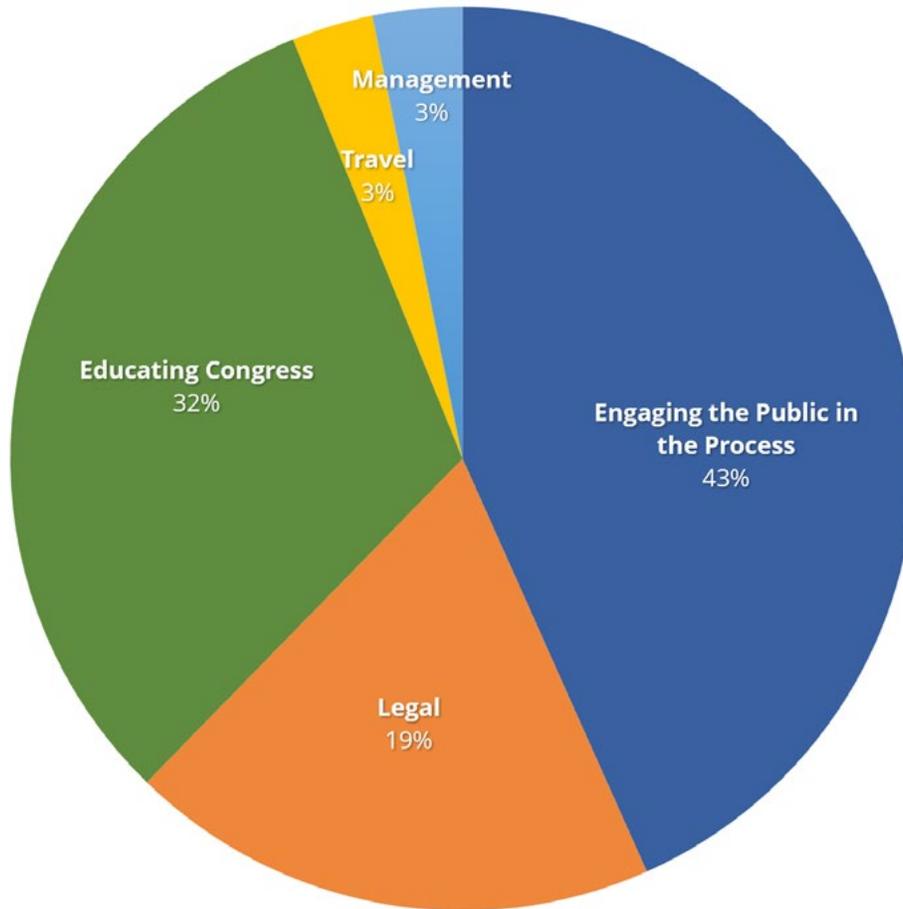
**May 4, 2018** • Amendments to the 2015 BLM plans and the corresponding Draft Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) were published to further address the issues identified in the review resulting from Secretarial Order 3353. These amendments continue to bring the DOI's Sage-grouse Management in line with state management plans.

**May 24, 2018** • The National Defense Authorization Act was passed by a vote of 351 to 66. Included in the bill is section 314, entitled State Management and Conservation of Species which includes language protecting state management of Sage grouse for a period of 10 years. The language offered by Congressman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) was approved and incorporated in the bill during the House Armed Services Committee Hearing.

The Greater Sage-grouse Coordinated Consulting Team continues its efforts to protect Utah's conservation programs through a multi-pronged effort. The congressional and administrative developments in 2017-2018 contract year are clear successes for Utah. Efforts will continue to work with the administration for changes to federal management plans and with congress to provide a legislative safe harbor to protect state plans from further needless litigation.

*For a more detailed description of these events, see Stag Consulting's submitted quarterly reports.*

# CONTRACT BUDGET EXPENDITURES



July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

<b>Total Expenditures (12 months)</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
Engaging the Public in the Process	\$433,190
Legal	\$189,833
Educating Congress	\$315,811
Travel	\$29,184
Management	\$31,982