



CORE AREA FACT SHEET

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
July 26, 2010

Core Area Approach to Habitat Mitigation for Greater Sage-Grouse in Oregon

The *Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A Plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitat* identifies and maps Core Areas of habitat that are essential to sage-grouse.

The maps and data provide a tool for planning and identifying appropriate mitigation in the event of human development in sage-grouse habitats. These maps show both Category 1 and Category 2 habitats. Category 1 habitats are recommended as “no development;” Category 2 habitats are recommended as limited development with “no net loss with net benefit.”

The goal of the Core Area recommendations is to protect essential habitats to meet habitat and population objectives identified in the Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan. The objective of these recommendations is to avoid, minimize or mitigate for impacts on sage-grouse habitats from energy development, its associated infrastructure or other industrial and commercial developments.

About the Core Area Approach

Recently, a landscape approach to sage-grouse habitat protection has been developed across the Western states. This landscape approach is commonly referred to as *Core Areas*. Specifically, this approach prioritizes habitats based on measures that assess breeding bird density of sage-grouse populations and associated habitats. ODFW’s Core Area approach is consistent with range-wide efforts to map important population strongholds by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The strength of the Core Area approach is that it uses biological information to identify important habitats with the objective of protecting the highest density breeding areas. It also enables managers, at the landscape scale, to map and analyze the risks and necessary conservation measures for each core area.

For sage-grouse the relative breeding bird density data is drawn from spring lek counts of males, so habitat conservation measures may be biased towards breeding and nesting only. To address this, an additional and complementary method was used to approximate seasonal use ranges referred to as *connectivity corridors*. Using known seasonal movements and ranges, local and seasonal connectivity corridors were estimated.

More information about sage-grouse Core Areas is available on ODFW’s website. ODFW’s Mitigation Policy is outlined in OAR 635-415-0000.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, www.dfw.state.or.us