

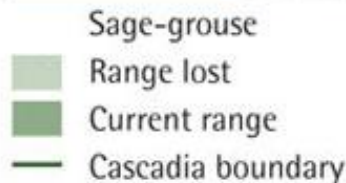
# Sage Grouse Conservation in Wyoming: A Case Study in Cooperation



**Bob Budd, Chairman  
Governor's Implementation Team  
State of Wyoming**

# What is the Issue?

- Declining numbers of birds at the end of the last century
- Loss of habitat
- Challenges to existing habitat
- Challenges to the bird
- Oppressive nature of Endangered Species Act
- Broad distribution of Sage-grouse



Data from US Geological Survey, SAGEMAP, [sagemap.wr.usgs.gov](http://sagemap.wr.usgs.gov)

# History of the Issue

- Petitioning under the ESA began in 1998 – eight petitions in five years
- Wyoming state management plan, 2000-2003
- 2005: “Not Warranted”
- 2007: Sage Grouse Summit led to establishment of SGIT
- 2007: December decision to remand 2005 decision for further review
- 2008: Executive Order
- 2010: “Warranted but Precluded”
- 2010: Revised Executive Order

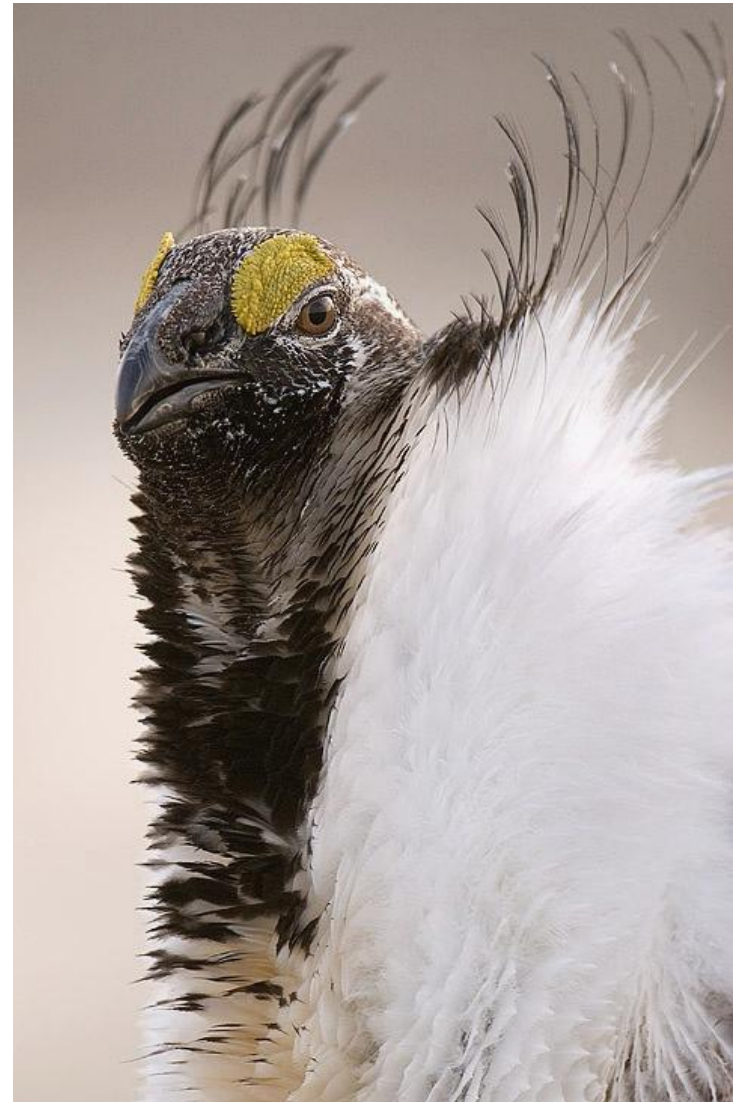


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# Sage Grouse Basics



Fidelity

Local or Migratory

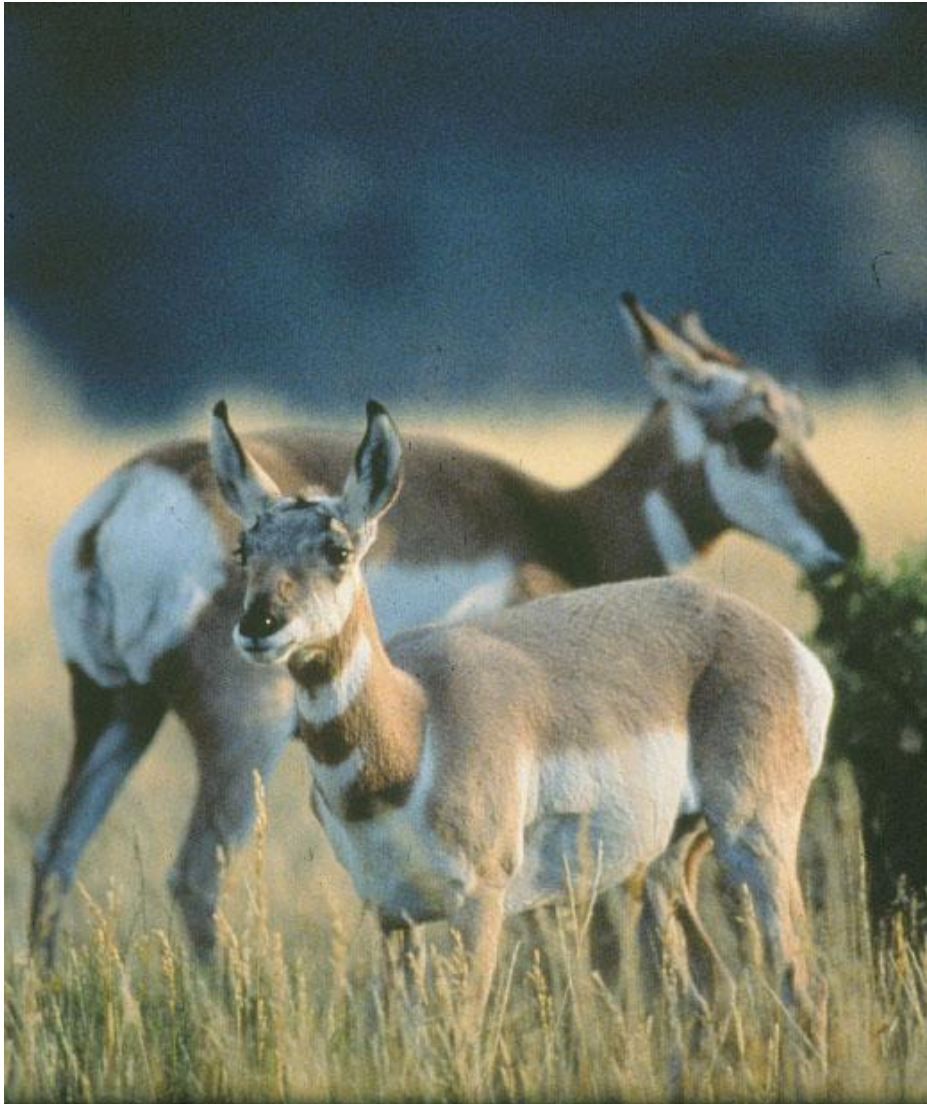
Habitat Preferences

- Later successional
- Early successional
- Other weird places

Sage Grouse are now known to be a “landscape” species that require a lot of area, and diversity of habitats

“Hard-wired” success strategies may not be totally suited to modern times

# Talisman for Other Species



- 73 species of greatest concern overlap with Sage-grouse habitats
- Nearly one-third of species of concern in Wyoming can be counted in Sage-grouse conservation efforts
- Some of these are less known, and may be more problematic.





# Sage Grouse Conservation Strategy



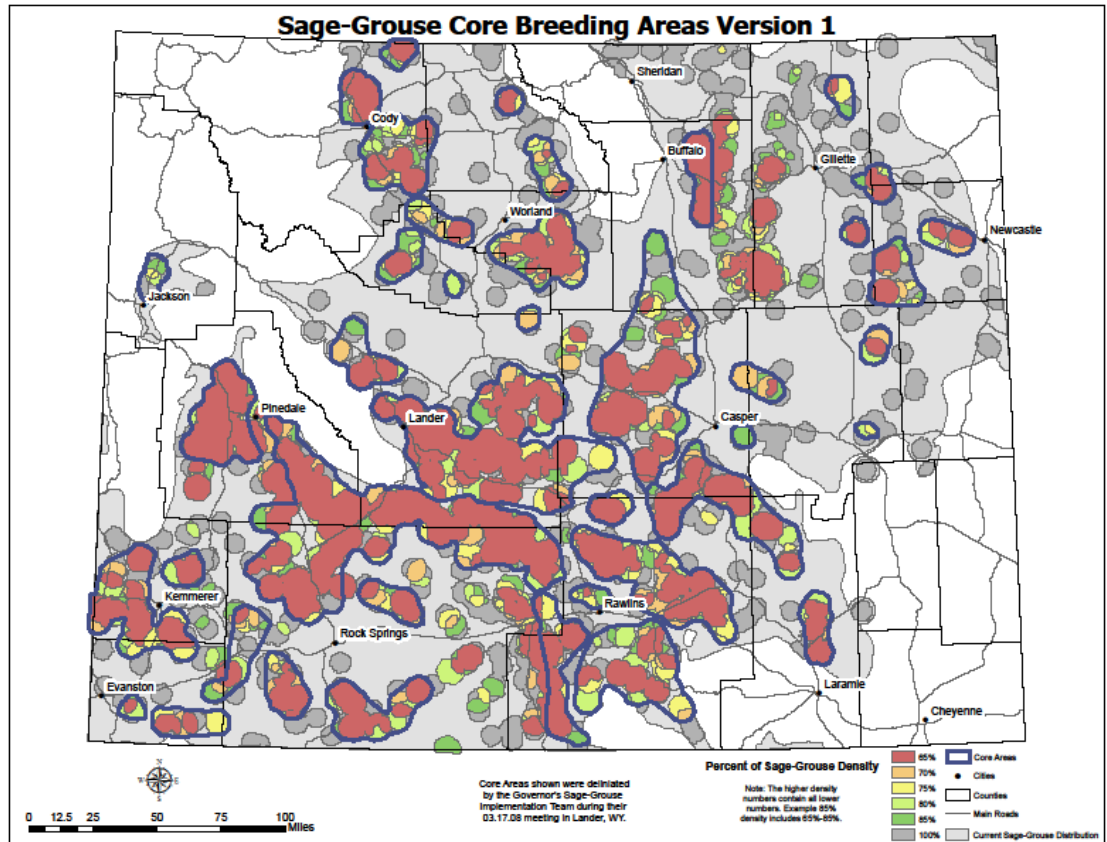
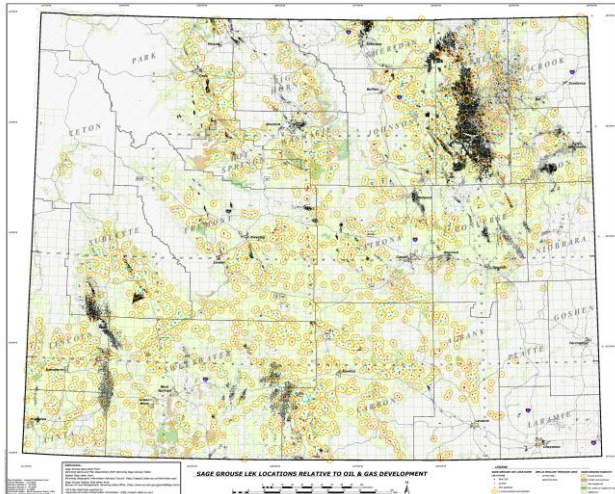
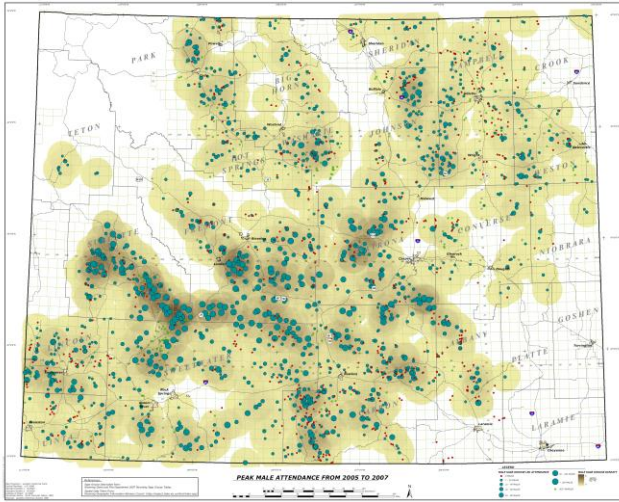
- Conserve the species and habitats where we can have the most effect
- Maintain opportunity for economic endeavors
- Build sound ecological and economic model for conservation
- Include major stakeholders in decision- making process

# Inclusive. interactive approach



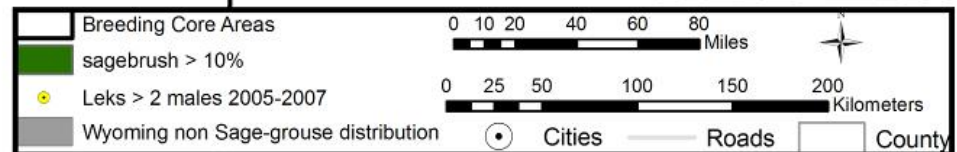
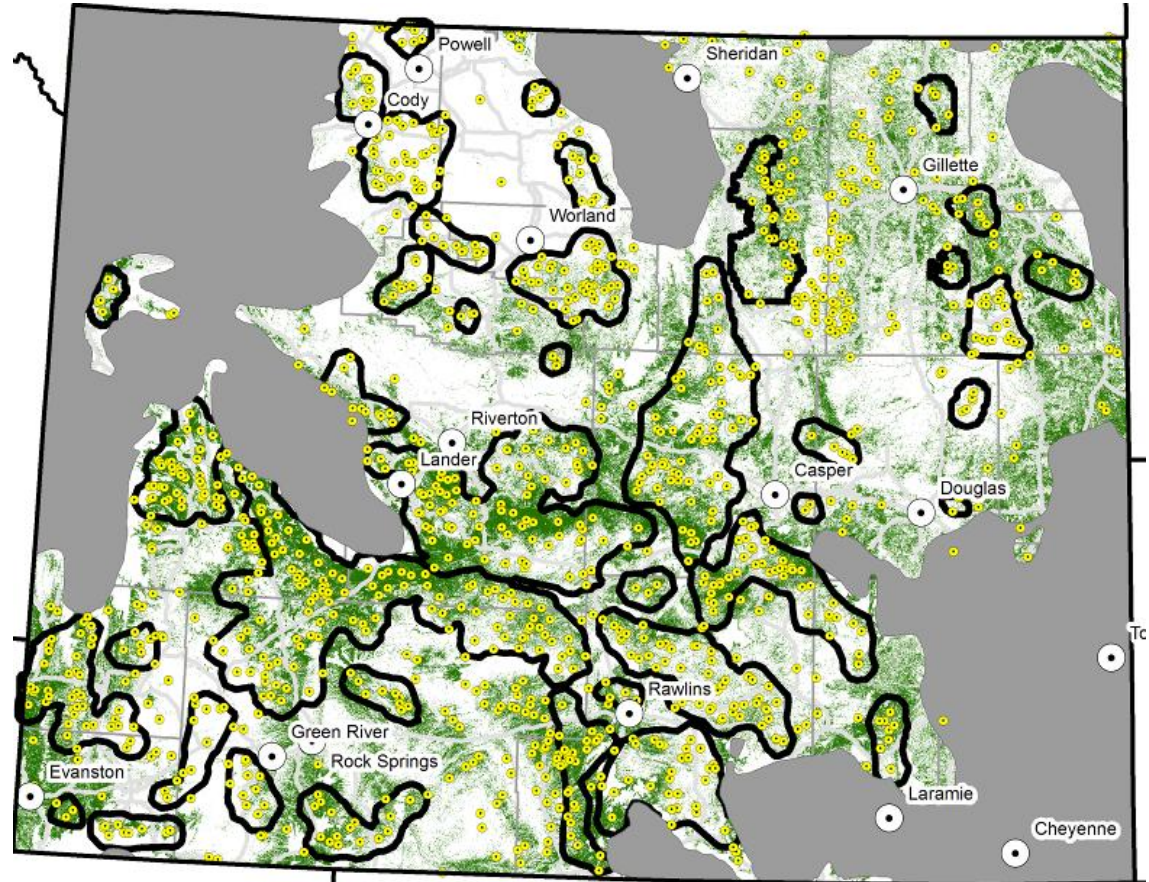
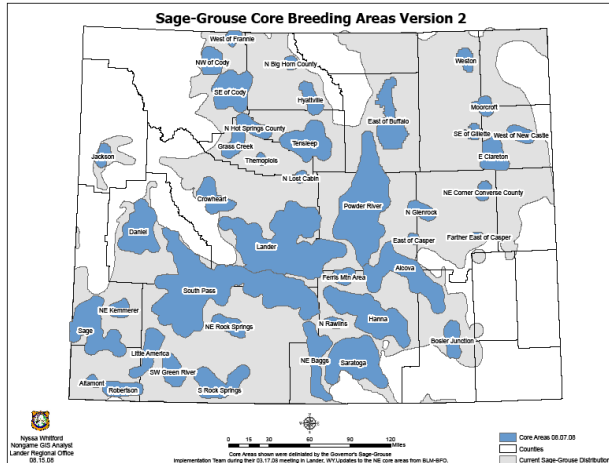
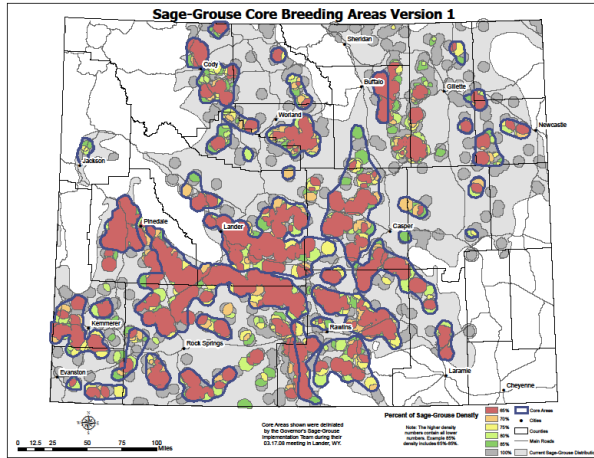
- Ranching
- Oil and gas
- Mining
- Biologists
- Land management
  - BLM, USFS, NRCS, state
- State agencies
- USFWS

# Strategy Came From Actual Data





# Verification of Data is "Spot On"



# Addressing Key Threats to Sage Grouse



## Habitat Fragmentation

- Energy Development
- Invasive Species
- Agricultural Conversion
- Residential Development

## Lack of Regulatory Authority

- Legislative Action
- Regulatory Process
- Executive Order
- VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE





# Recognizing Non-Threats to Sage Grouse

## Traditional Ranching

- Water Development
- Fencing
- Livestock Management

## Oil and Gas

- Human Disturbance
- Surface Disturbance

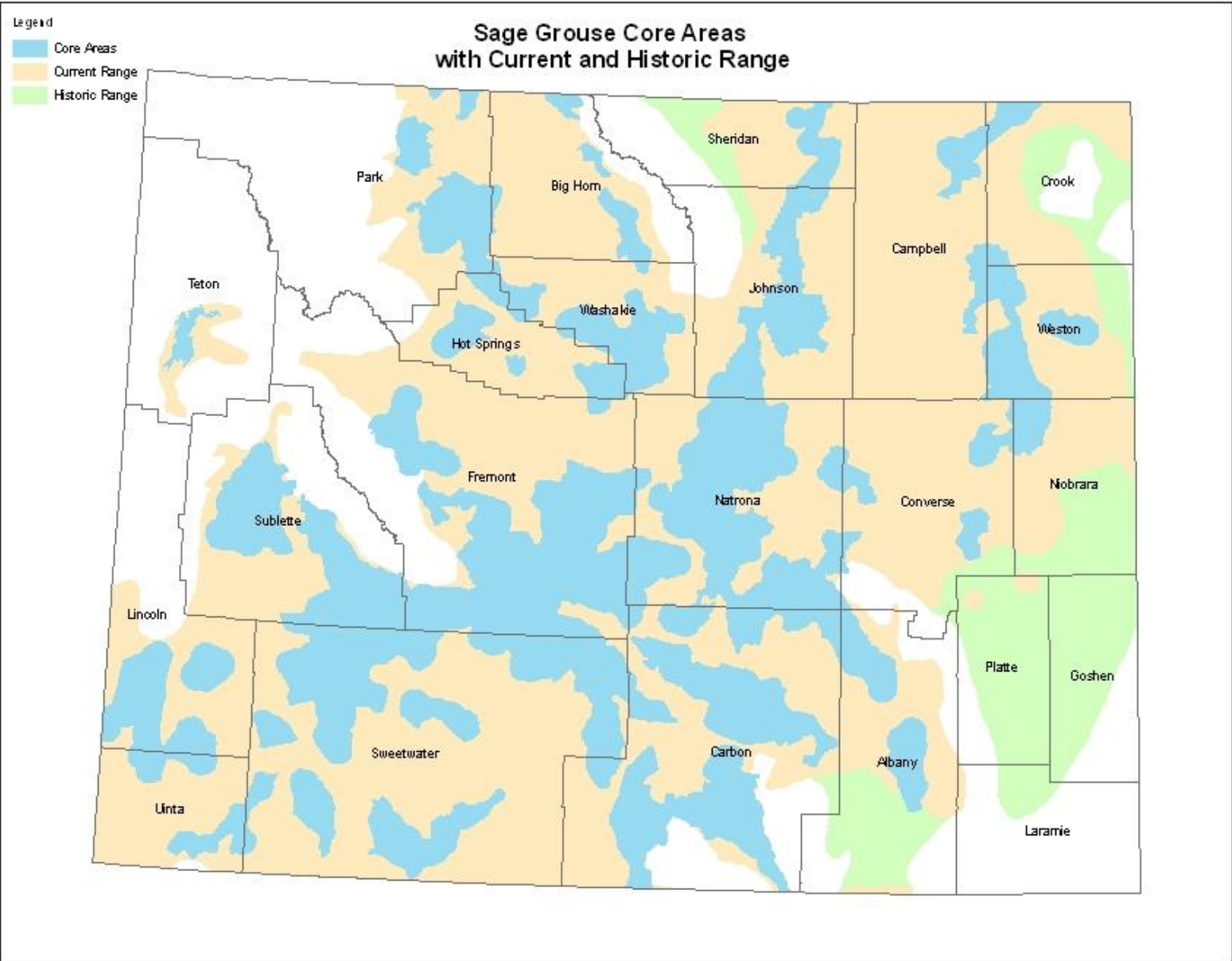
## Mining

- SMCRA
- Reclamation





# Realities of Inaction



# Sage Grouse Conservation Strategy



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1. Complete analysis of issues and KEY habitats
2. Mapping of key habitats and areas of major human activity
3. Review of process and scientific validation of assumptions
4. Engagement of local SGWG, conservation districts, and other publics
5. Monitoring coordination
6. Adequate funding

# Sage Grouse Conservation Strategy



- Defensible management strategy
- Flexibility in core areas with adequate data
- Better understanding of SG tolerances
- Avoidance where possible; mitigation where not
- Incentive-based conservation
  - NRCS Initiative
  - WWNRT Focus

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# Sage Grouse Conservation Strategy

“The Fish and Wildlife Service believes that the core area strategy...if implemented by all landowners via regulatory mechanisms, would provide adequate protection for sage-grouse and their habitat in that State” (75 FR 13910).

