

Greater Sage-Grouse Data Quality Act Challenge ^[1]



A coalition of western counties and ranching, mining, and energy associations filed three Data Quality Act (DQA) challenges to the information that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) used to make public lands and Endangered Species Act listing decisions for the Greater Sage-Grouse (GrSG). The coalition challenged the reports the agencies used to justify top-down restrictive measures that will damage western communities in sage-grouse habitat while discouraging more effective state and local conservation efforts.

The coalition consists of Garfield, Grand, Jackson, Mesa, Moffat, and Rio Blanco counties in Colorado; Carter, Fallon, Fergus, McCone, Musselshell, Phillips, Prairie, Toole, Richland, and Yellowstone counties in Montana; Elko and Eureka counties in Nevada; Carbon, Duchesne, and Uintah Counties in Utah; American Exploration & Mining Association; Colorado Mining Association; Colorado Wool Growers Association; Independent Petroleum Association of America; International Association of Drilling Contractors; Montana Association of Oil, Gas & Coal Counties; Montana Association of State Grazing Districts, Montana Petroleum Association; Nevada Mining Association; Petroleum Association of Wyoming; Public Lands Council; Utah Multiple Use Coalition; and Western Energy Alliance.

Coalition members support state, local and private sage-grouse conservation efforts over the one-size-fits-all plans being imposed by the federal agencies. The agencies are justifying their top-down approach with selective and faulty information that ignores a large body of scientific literature on the species. The states are much better suited, with their expertise as wildlife managers, to protect GrSG. Many studies show how misguided federal management will harm GrSG and the 11 states it inhabits.

The agency reports were prepared to develop range-wide conservation objectives for GrSG and to inform FWS in its listing decision. BLM and the U.S. Forest Service are using the reports to amend 98 land use plans across approximately 59 million acres of public lands in 11 western states. Prescriptions from the three reports are heavily influencing policies not just for federal lands but the full 186 million acres of GrSG habitat, yet the reports fail to meet basic standards of science, resulting in misinformed policy that will harm GrSG and the West.

Executive Summary

[Challenges to Federal Agency Science on Greater Sage-Grouse](#) ^[2]

DQA Challenge to the BLM National Technical Team (NTT) Report ^[3]

- [Exhibit A – The NTT Report Fails DQA Standards](#) ^[4]
- [Exhibit B – Studies Cited in The NTT and COT Reports Fail DQA Standards](#) ^[5]
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DQA Challenge to the FWS Conservation Objectives Team (COT) Report ^[9]

- [Exhibit A – The COT Report Fails DQA Standards](#) ^[10]
- [Exhibit B – Studies Cited in The NTT and COT Reports Fail DQA Standards](#) ^[11]
- [Exhibit C – Studies Not Included in the COT Report](#) ^[12]
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- [Appeal of the COT Report](#) ^[14]

DQA Challenge to the USGS Monograph ^[15]

- [Exhibit A – CESAR Review of Four Most Influential Chapters](#) ^[16]
- [Exhibit B – Wildlife Science Review of the Monograph](#) ^[17]
- [Exhibit C – Peer Review and Information Quality Breakdown](#) ^[18]
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Some of the links to Garton et al. 2011 within our challenge documents may have been broken. Click [here](#) ^[20] for the full study.

Agency Response to DQA Challenge

The agencies responded to the DQA Challenge on July 24th in a [consolidated letter](#) ^[21], which we appealed to each agency accordingly. BLM also made reference to a new review (the Buffer Report) which compiles and summarizes the same flawed GrSG studies. We subsequently filed a DQA Challenge of this study as well.

DQA Challenge to the Buffer Report ^[22]

- [Exhibit A - Studies Cited in the Buffer Report Fail DQA Standards](#) ^[23]

Feature content:

No

Related Content:

[Jackson County GrSG DQA Resolution](#) ^[24]

[Emery County GrSG DQA Resolution](#) ^[25]

[Garfield County GrSG DQA Resolution](#) ^[26]

[Duchesne County GrSG DQA Resolution](#) ^[27]

[Yellowstone County GrSG DQA Resolution](#) ^[28]

[Uintah County GrSG DQA Resolution](#) ^[29]

[Western Energy Alliance Greater Sage-Grouse FOIA Documents](#) ^[30]

[Letter to Interior Secretary Jewell on Scientific Integrity](#) ^[31]

[Economic Impact of 2013 BLM Sage Grouse Conservation Plan](#) ^[32]

[Inventory of State and Local Governments' Conservation Initiatives for Sage-Grouse: Western Governors' Association](#) ^[33]

Source URL: <https://www.westernenergyalliance.org/knowledge-center/wildlife/greater-sage-grouse/DQA-Challenge>

Links:

- [1] <https://www.westernenergyalliance.org/knowledge-center/wildlife/greater-sage-grouse/DQA-Challenge>
- [2] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/Final%20DQA%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>
- [3] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/BLM%20NTT%20Data%20Quality%20Challenge.pdf>
- [4] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/NTT%20Challenge%20Exhibit%20A.pdf>
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- [9] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/FWS%20COT%20DQA%20Challenge.pdf>
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- [14] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/15.08.12%20FWS%20COT%20Appeal.pdf>
- [15] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/USGS%20Monograph%20DQA%20Challenge.pdf>
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- [18] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/Monograph%20Challenge%20Exhibit%20C.pdf>
- [19] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/15.08.12%20USGS%20Monograph%20Appeal.pdf>
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- [24] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/Jackson%20County%20GrSG%20DQA%20Resolution.pdf>
- [25] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/Emery%20County%20GrSG%20DQA%20Resolution.pdf>
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- [29] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/Uintah%20County%20GrSG%20DQA%20Resolution.pdf>
- [30] <http://www.westernenergyalliance.org/knowledge-center/wildlife/greater-sage-grouse/greater-sage-grouse-foia>
- [31] <http://www.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/Western%20Energy%20Alliance%20Letter%20to%20Sec.%20Jewell%20on%20GSG%2011.19.13.pdf>
- [32] http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/Economic%20Impact%20of%202013%20BLM%20Sage%20Grouse%20Conservation%20Plan_0.pdf
- [33] <http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/Inventory%20of%20State%20and%20Local%20Governments%27%20Conservation%20Initiatives%20for%20Sage-Grouse%2C%20Western%20Governors%27%20Association.pdf>