



COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: January 16, 2024

ITEM TITLE, PRESENTER: Consideration and Approval of Comments on Gunnison Sage-grouse RMP Amendment/EIS; Nick Sandberg, Public Lands Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION: Approve comment letter

SUMMARY

BLM Colorado and Utah have issued a Draft RMP Amendment/EIS for Gunnison Sage-grouse open for public comment November 9, 2023 thru February 6, 2024. These documents are part of a process begun in 2014 shortly before the Gunnison sage-grouse was designated a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The EIS includes a planning decision area encompassing BLM-administered lands and federal mineral lands within San Juan County generally east of Monticello. This area includes federally designated critical habitat and adjacent lands.

The EIS includes 5 alternatives; one no action and 4 action alternatives including an Alternative E specifically for the Gunnison Basin in Colorado. Alternative D is the Preferred Alternative and most comments in the attached letter are directed to this alternative. Management prescriptions for each alternative are stated for vegetation, livestock grazing, wildland fire, recreation, travel, minerals, lands and realty and renewable energy. Proposed management prescriptions are designed to promote the maintenance or recovery of Gunnison sage-grouse habitat so as to facilitate the recovery of grouse to population levels such that listing under the Endangered Species Act is no longer necessary. In addition, certain ACECs are proposed in some alternatives for protection of Gunnison sage-grouse habitat. No ACECs are proposed for San Juan County in Alternative D.

HISTORY/PAST ACTION

San Juan County has been a Cooperating Agency throughout this planning process.

FISCAL IMPACT

Proposed restrictions on minerals and energy activities would likely have a negative effect on local economies.