Talking Points for Customers

- The US Fish and Wildlife Service on December 22, 2014 listed the Gunnison sage-grouse as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act and designated critical habitat for the species
- The Gunnison sage-grouse is now protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- With that decision, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has its own authority and responsibility to protect the species.
- Gunnison County will continue to implement its regulations related to the Gunnison sage-grouse. Our requirements are separate and distinct from federal ESA regulations that may affect land owners in critical habitat.
- **Property owners with questions about how the US Fish and Wildlife Service listing affects their land and or proposed actions on their land should contact the US Fish and Wildlife Service.**
- Gunnison County will issues permits and land use actions as it has done based on its current policies and regulations.
- A Gunnison County approval (for a land use action, building permit, driveway permit, reclamation permit) does not mean an action is approved by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Gunnison County has worked for over 20 years to prevent a listing and we continue to work towards minimizing the impact of this listing to our residents while working to conserve the Gunnison sage-grouse
- Gunnison County does not act on behalf of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. To prevent any confusion or miscommunication, property owners are responsible for determining their responsibilities and obligation under the Endangered Species Act.

The US Fish and Wildlife provided the following written guidance with regard to development and site disturbance activity within Gunnison sage-grouse designated critical habitat on December 22, 2014:

"Based on the information currently available to us, we do not expect projects falling into the categories below to result in take. Therefore, they would not need any review from us, and your permitting may continue to follow established county procedures:

- Development in areas outside of designated critical habitat (shapefiles available on our website at: http://www.fws.gov/coloradoES/), (unless new areas become occupied by Gunnison sage-grouse in the future). This includes the City of Gunnison urban area, which has been excluded from our critical habitat designation because it lacks sage-grouse habitat.
- Building projects falling within the boundaries of a CCAA or Conservation Easement existing prior to the effective listing date of Gunnison sage-grouse that are consistent with the terms of the CCAA or conservation easement.
- Routine repair and maintenance activities to existing buildings and infrastructure, such as the replacement of a roof, septic tank, or shed.
- Minor new structures within existing developed or disturbed areas, such as a new garage, shed, or other outbuildings adjacent to an existing, larger structure.
- Development on private land is unoccupied critical habitat (note an ESA section 7 consultation may be required if there is a Federal permit or funding involved.

Projects not meeting the criteria above should be submitted to our Grand Junction office for review. Submittals should include a description of the proposed project, a description of the habitats proposed to be disturbed, information about nearby Gunnison sage-grouse leks, if known, and a description of existing disturbances in adjacent areas. Maps, aerial photos, and ground photos are helpful in describing the existing conditions of the property proposed to be disturbed and adjacent properties. Electronic submittals can be sent to GrandJunctionES@fws.gov. Paper copies can be mailed to: Ecological Services, 445 W. Gunnison Ave, Suite 240, Grand Junction, CO 81501.

Notes:

- Mr. Kurt Broderdorp is currently the acting supervisor and can be reached at 970-628-7186."
- Gunnison County provides the above mentioned statement from the USFWS for your reference only.

NOTICE REGARDING U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE DETERMINATION THAT GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE IS A THREATENED SPECIES

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has determined, effective December 22, 2014, threatened species status under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, for the Gunnison Sage-grouse.

Gunnison County approval of this County permit is not U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval of any activity described or authorized by this County permit.

Gunnison County is not and does not act as your representative with regard to consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or performance of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requirements.