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Wildlife & Conservation - Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan

In 2015, the historic [Sage-Grouse Management Plan](#)⁴⁰ was finalized after a collaborative effort between conservationists, ranchers, and extractive industry groups to keep the iconic bird off the Endangered Species list. The plan placed limits on oil and gas drilling and other development on millions of acres that had been deemed as sensitive habitat.

However, in December 2018, the Department of Interior (DOI) [released revisions](#)⁴¹ to the plans that reversed years of collaborative work, removing protections for the Sage-Grouse habitat that could push the bird toward extinction. Sage-Grouse habitat extends across the Intermountain West with one-third of the remaining population in Idaho and Wyoming. In Idaho alone, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 8.8 million acres of Sage-Grouse habitat. The new management plans call for the revision of buffers around Sage-Grouse mating areas called leks. This would allow oil and gas development to occur dangerously close to sensitive habitat,

yet another move by the Trump administration to prioritize oil and gas drilling above all else on our public lands.

Already, land managers are seeing a [drastic decline](#)⁴² in Sage-Grouse populations with a 52% decrease in Idaho Sage-Grouse. Sage-Grouse are an indicator species in the [sagebrush sea habitat](#)⁴³ that spans much of the West, a habitat that could face steep decline if Sage-Grouse protections are not enforced. Now, with the Trump administration's revisions to the Endangered Species Act, the future of the iconic bird and Idaho's iconic sagebrush landscape is unknown.

The sagebrush sea provides migration routes for game animals such as antelope, that in-turn draw hunters to boost local economies. The destruction of this ecosystem by opening it up to unchecked oil and gas development means the destruction of numerous species, recreation, and a way of life.