

Grant Application



Skyler Vold

Email : Skyler.T.Vold@odfw.oregon.gov

Application ID : A65VS140

Custom Ref. -

Application Start Date: 2023-10-10 19:14:19

Application Completed Date: 2023-10-18 18:08:18

1 Have you previously applied for a grant from the Oregon Wildlife Foundation?

yes

1.Y.1 What was the name of the project?

SE Oregon Sage-Grouse Adopt-a-Lek Program 2023

2 Has a previously submitted grant application been denied funding support?

no

3 Title of your proposed project

SE Oregon Sage-Grouse Adopt-a-Lek Program 2024

4 Name of your organization

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

5 If your organization is not a 501c3 nonprofit, please identify your fiscal sponsor

If this does not apply to you, write N/A

N/A

6 Your name or the name of the Project Manager

Skyler Vold

7 organization mailing address

Please enter full address with city, state & zip

237 Hwy 20 S, PO Box 8, Hines, Oregon, 97738

8 your phone number or that of the Project Manager

541-589-4297

9 your email address or that of the Project Manager

Skyler.T.Vold@odfw.oregon.gov

10 a brief biographical statement about yourself or that of the Project Manager

I am ODFW's Sage-Grouse Conservation Coordinator (3+ years), and I have 10 years of experience with research and management of wildlife species of conservation concern.

11 social media handles that your organization uses

Enter social handles or URLs such as instagram, facebook, twitter, youtube, etc. so that we can use to cross promote on our channels - if you do not have any, please place N/A

https://dfw.state.or.us/social_media/index.asp

12 are you are currently following Oregon Wildlife Foundation on its social media channels?

- None of these channels

13 what is the total estimated cost of your project?

110000

14 Funding that you are requesting from OWF

If your request is for more than \$5,000, please contact Tim Greseth -tim@myowf.org before submitting your application.

10000

15 what type of project are you proposing?

fish or wildlife research

16 will your project address an Oregon Conservation Strategy habitat or species?

yes

16.Y.1 What habitat or species is addressed?

Greater sage-grouse

17 what is the location of your proposed project?

Southern Malheur County, Oregon

18 what ecoregion and Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) is your proposed project located in?

See <https://www.compass.dfw.state.or.us/> for the information you need to answer this question

Sagebrush habitats; Trout Creek Mountains COA, Soldier Creek-Upper Owyhee River COA, Middle Owyhee River COA, Crowley COA

19 what is the anticipated start date of your project?

Day/Month/Year

01-02-2024

20 what is the anticipated end date of your project?

18-05-2024

21 has a local, state or federal biologist reviewed this project?

yes

21.Y.1 What is their name and contact info?

Lee Foster, Harney District Biologist, Ph: 541-573-6582, Em: Lee.J.Foster@odfw.oregon.gov

22 have you already or will you obtain necessary permits from all requisite agencies as applicable to proposed project?

yes

23 what will the funds you are requesting be used for?

this would be a good time to review, if you haven't already done so, our grantmaking guidelines at www.myowf.org/grants

Wages for dedicated Adopt-a-Lek Volunteer Coordinator. This project would not be possible without a dedicated individual to coordinate the program.

24 provide us a brief summary of your proposed project

Since 2006, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Adopt-a-Lek program has been instrumental in completing greater sage-grouse lek attendance surveys in remote areas of southeastern Oregon. Now entering its 19th year, over 50 trained volunteers continue to monitor approximately 70 leks each spring. Data collected by Adopt-a-Lek volunteers are entered into ODFW's long-term sage-grouse database and are used to help evaluate annual population trends. As such, this volunteer contribution is necessary for the ongoing monitoring and conservation of sage-grouse in Oregon. Adopt-a-Lek volunteers supplement surveys conducted by federal and state agency biologists, among other partner biologists, and have been especially important to fill in data gaps, particularly in sage-grouse core areas that are located in rugged, isolated regions of southeastern Oregon. The Adopt-a-Lek program has been made possible for 19 years with funding assistance from Oregon Wildlife Foundation, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), ODFW's upland game bird validations (stamps), as well as in-kind contributions from volunteers and ODFW. In 2024, the Adopt-a-Lek program will continue its contribution to the estimation of PAC level population trends, as well as increase volunteer recruitment and training.

25 upload pre-project pictures or a video

By submitting these photos or video I warrant that I am the legal owner of this media and grant the Foundation permission to reproduce, exhibit, or publish them for all general purposes in relation to Oregon Wildlife Foundation's work. If you have questions about photo or video submissions please refer to myowf.org/grants for guidance.



26 fill out our budget form

Project Revenue	Cash	In-Kind	Committed / Pending
Oregon Wildlife Foundation Request	10000	0	Pending
AAL volunteer in-kind contributions	0	82153	Committed
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in-kind contributions	0	13243	Committed
BLM Cooperative Agreement AAL program support	5450	0	Committed

0	0	0	0.00
		TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSES	110846.00
Balanced budget? This cell should read "0" ---->		NET	0.00

27 upload a narrative of your proposed project

Please make sure your narrative is no more than 7 pages long, single spaced, 12 pt. font (Calibri preferred).

1 Document Uploaded

28 upload letters of support

letters of support are strongly encouraged. in particular a letter from a supervising biologist

2 Documents Uploaded

29 I understand that I am required to submit a Project Completion Report, copies of any publications or social media posts crediting the Foundation's support, and post-project pictures at the completion of my project

yes

Powered by **Submit.com**

— Grant Application

Skyler Vold

Application ID: **A65VS140**



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Oregon State Office
P.O. Box 2965, Portland, Oregon 97208
<http://www.blm.gov/or>

Mr. Tim Greseth
Executive Director
Oregon Wildlife Foundation
P.O. Box 30406
Portland, Oregon 97294-3406

Dear Mr. Greseth:

I am writing in support of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) application to the Oregon Wildlife Grant Program for \$10,000 to fund the Southeast Oregon Sage-Grouse Adopt-A-Lek Volunteer Program. This program coordinates volunteers to count sage-grouse displaying on leks during the spring breeding season. Lek counts provide the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with critically important data for monitoring the adaptive management thresholds identified in the BLM's Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment and the State of Oregon's Sage-Grouse Action Plan.

Estimating sage-grouse population trends from lek counts requires multiple visits to hundreds of leks spread across remote habitat. The BLM supports the lek survey effort through a Financial Assistance Agreement, providing ODFW with approximately \$120,000 per year to monitor leks both from the ground and from the air. In a collaborative effort, biologists with ODFW, BLM, USFWS, Burns Paiute Tribe, Pheasants Forever, and Oregon State University, in addition to volunteers in the ODFW Adopt-a-Lek Program spend over 4,000 hours monitoring more than 60% of Oregon's 1,215 sage-grouse leks. This huge monitoring effort provides crucial data for the ODFW to reliably estimate sage-grouse population trends. Funding provided by Oregon Wildlife would leverage the BLM's contribution to the ODFW Adopt-A-Lek Volunteer program.

The Adopt-A-Lek Volunteer program has proven to be a reliable, cost-effective way to obtain high quality population data for making management decisions impacting sage-grouse and local communities. The BLM encourages Oregon Wildlife to fund this proposal.

Sincerely,

Lee Folliard
Branch Chief for Biological Resources
Division of Resources, Lands, and Minerals

cc:
Skyler Vold
Sage-Grouse Conservation Coordinator
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
P.O. Box 8
Hines, OR 97738

Oregon Wildlife Foundation Grant Application – Supplemental Materials – ODFW Southeast Oregon Sage-Grouse Adopt-a-Lek Program 2024

Project Abstract/Summary

Since 2006, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Adopt-a-Lek program has been instrumental in completing greater sage-grouse lek attendance surveys in remote areas of southeastern Oregon. Now entering its 18th year, over 50 trained volunteers continue to monitor approximately 70 leks each spring. Data collected by Adopt-a-Lek volunteers are entered into ODFW’s long-term sage-grouse database and are used to help evaluate annual population trends. As such, this volunteer contribution is necessary for the on-going monitoring and conservation of sage-grouse in Oregon. Adopt-a-Lek volunteers supplement surveys conducted by federal and state agency biologists, among other partner biologists, and have been especially important to fill in data gaps, particularly in sage-grouse core areas that are located in rugged, isolated regions of southeastern Oregon. The Adopt-a-Lek program has been made possible for 18 years with funding assistance from Oregon Wildlife Foundation, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), ODFW’s upland game bird validations (stamps), as well as in-kind contributions from volunteers and ODFW. In 2023, the Adopt-a-Lek program will continue its contribution to the estimation of PAC level population trends, as well as increase volunteer recruitment and training.

Biologist Support Statement (Skyler Vold, ODFW Sage-Grouse Conservation Coordinator, below. Please see attached letters of support from Craig Rowland, USFWS, and Lee Folliard, BLM).

Oregon’s Comprehensive Conservation Strategy defines greater sage-grouse as a “strategy species,” or a species of greatest conservation need in Oregon. As such, substantial research and habitat management efforts have been dedicated to the conservation of sage-grouse in Oregon. Sage-grouse are also considered an “umbrella species” in sagebrush ecosystems due to their large geographic distribution and seasonal habitat needs, where management actions dedicated to habitat improvements for sage-grouse will also benefit many other sagebrush obligate wildlife species as well (Rowland et al. 2006, Hanser and Knick 2011).

Evaluating greater sage-grouse annual population trends in Oregon is a key aspect in the population monitoring objectives set by Oregon’s sage-grouse conservation plans (Hagen 2011, SageCon 2015). In Oregon, annual sage-grouse population trends are assessed using the data collected through an intensive spring lek monitoring program (see Hagen 2011). These resulting trends help inform Oregon’s sage-grouse management recommendations and are also used by BLM in their evaluation of annual sage-grouse adaptive management triggers (see BLM 2015). Additionally, this robust dataset was vital during the update to Oregon’s Core and Low-Density Sage-Grouse Habitat designations in 2023. The annual lek monitoring effort relies on collaboration from many entities to conduct surveys annually, including state and federal partners, as well as many dedicated Adopt-a-Lek volunteers.

The ODFW Adopt-a-Lek (AAL) program provides a significant contribution to Oregon's sage-grouse lek monitoring program and the AAL program would not be possible without a dedicated AAL Volunteer Coordinator. The additional effort AAL provides has helped Oregon exceed its statewide goal of surveying 50% of leks in every Priority Area of Conservation, or PAC, in the state annually. As a result, the program has also contributed to improving the accuracy of sage-grouse population trends and estimates in Oregon, and data collected by AAL Volunteers through the AAL program was especially important during ODFW's update to the Core and Low-Density sage-grouse habitat layers in 2023. Ultimately, AAL volunteers are necessary to help meet population monitoring objectives defined in multiple Oregon sage-grouse conservation action plans and the efforts described in this project proposal will benefit sage-grouse conservation in the short- and long-term.

Project Narrative

Oregon's Adopt-a-Lek program started in 2006 as a pilot project, with the goal of utilizing dedicated volunteers to monitor sage-grouse populations in southeastern Oregon. Since its initiation, the program has successfully trained citizens (over 140 individuals) as field technicians to collect important biological data and help monitor the status of sage-grouse populations in areas of southeastern Oregon that are not currently surveyed by state or federal biologists.

This proposal requests support to continue the Adopt-a-Lek program in Oregon through 2024. To date, 1,215 lek sites have been identified in Oregon, which comprise 819 lek complexes. On average, approximately 40% of these known lek complexes have been surveyed annually for population trend information. Lek monitoring effort has increased with the addition of volunteers through the Adopt-a-Lek program, providing ODFW with a greater understanding of the distribution of leks in Oregon. In 2023, the Adopt-a-Lek program greatly assisted ODFW during the sage-grouse lek survey season, as the program covered 12.7% of the total number of leks surveyed and 12.5% of the total number of individual surveys completed in the state during the 2023 lek survey season [See [Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse Population Monitoring: 2023 Annual Report](#) (link) for further information regarding population survey efforts and trends during 2023]. Due to the significance of sage-grouse populations to Oregon and adjoining states, high survey effort and monitoring effort continues to be necessary for providing accurate estimates of population trends.

The significance of these interstate sage-grouse populations was recognized in the range-wide conservation assessment of sage-grouse (Connelly et al. 2004). Moreover, Oregon's state strategy for sage-grouse identified a need for improved sampling within regions where only a small proportion of leks can be surveyed annually (Hagen 2011). As Oregon continues to implement its strategy for sage-grouse conservation, adequate data will be needed to monitor the success of conservation actions in the years to come.

Increased survey effort associated with the Adopt-a-Lek program has helped Oregon exceed its statewide goal of surveying 50% of leks in every PAC in the state. Support for the Adopt-a-Lek

program provided by Oregon Wildlife Foundation and BLM was instrumental to this effort in 2023, and has been for many years. Oregon's goal to survey more than 50% of leks in every PAC is being maintained in 2024, with the expectation that the Adopt-a-Lek program will once again be integral to its success. By hiring a dedicated volunteer coordinator for the program, the process of implementing the program will be streamlined and the probability of exceeding the state-wide monitoring goal improved. As in previous years, ODFW will provide training, maps, and other logistical support to the program's volunteer coordinator and the program's volunteers. Methodologies for conducting lek counts will be consistent with those in other states and will follow the protocol established by ODFW. Following completion of surveys, ODFW will incorporate data collected by Adopt-a-Lek program volunteers into the annual sage-grouse population estimate, as well as into BLM adaptive management trigger decisions.

ODFW has completed strategic planning for 2021-2025 to increase sage-grouse lek monitoring using multiple techniques, including agency and Adopt-a-Lek volunteer ground surveys, aerial infrared surveys by aircraft, and helicopter lek searches. A variety of funding sources have been identified for support of all facets of monitoring for 2021-2025. In particular, the BLM has renewed its cooperative funding agreement with ODFW to enhance sage-grouse population monitoring. Through this agreement, BLM will continue to support sage-grouse lek monitoring in Oregon by reimbursing Adopt-a-Lek travel costs in 2024. This will enable the Adopt-a-Lek program to grow and expand its lek monitoring contributions in additional areas of the state where ground surveys have been lacking. Goals for 2021-2025 also include increased volunteer recruitment, training, and deployment throughout the state.

Data collected by the Adopt-a-Lek program has been a significant addition to the statewide sage-grouse database and are used by state biologists and federal agencies to manage this sagebrush obligate species. It is anticipated that the project will have at least three types of benefits: a) increase ODFW's ability to monitor population trend and distribution of sage-grouse; b) assist our understanding of the effects of 2012 wildfires (e.g., Holloway and Long Draw) on Oregon's sage-grouse populations; and c) serve as a hands-on outreach and education tool for sage-grouse and shrub-steppe issues through participation in the program.

Oregon Wildlife Foundation will be recognized for their funding support for this program within the Annual Sage-Grouse Population Monitoring report, as well as in various presentations given regarding sage-grouse population monitoring in Oregon.

Budget Request Justification

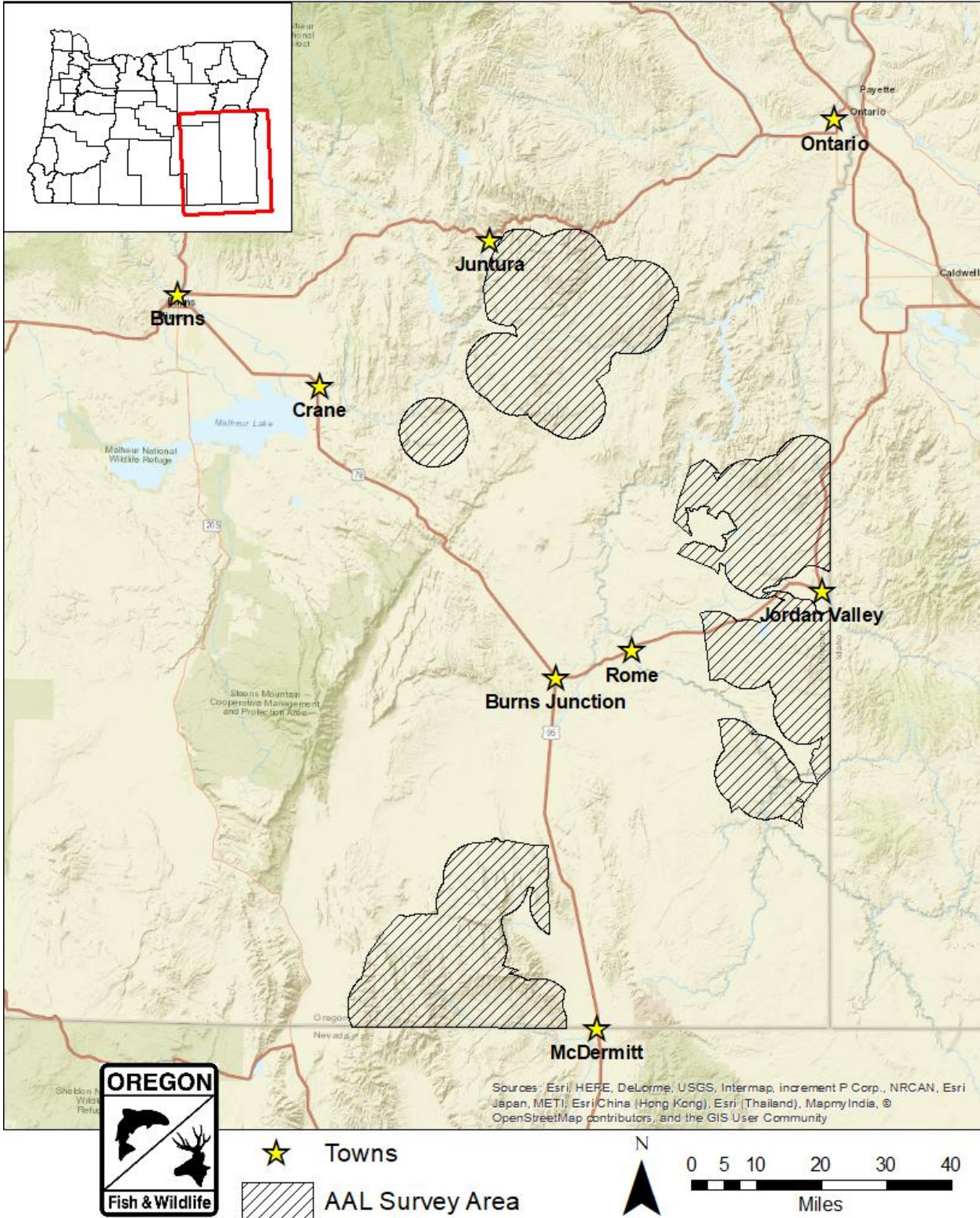
This budget request is at the same level as 2019-2023, and higher than that requested during previous years of the Adopt-a-Lek program. A sustained increase in the number of volunteers involved in the program has helped the program continue its success, but the additional volunteers has led to an increase in the time required by the Volunteer Coordinator to fully coordinate the program. During 2017, funding for the Volunteer Coordinator was budgeted for 412 hours of work, but the actual workload involved in managing the program was estimated at approximately 600 hours. During 2018-23, the workload was similar and is expected to remain

constant in 2024. Thus, the requested funds for the 2024 Adopt-a-Lek program year will eliminate any unpaid hours of work by the Volunteer Coordinator and help the program to retain a qualified and competent employee in the position. Ultimately, the AAL Program would not be possible without a dedicated AAL Volunteer Coordinator.

Literature Cited

- BLM (Bureau of Land Management). 2015. Oregon greater sage-grouse approved resource management plan amendment. Bureau of Land Management. Portland, Oregon USA.
- Connelly, J. W., S. T. Knick, M. A. Schroeder, and S. J. Stiver. 2004. Conservation Assessment of Greater Sage-grouse and Sagebrush Habitats. Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Unpublished Report. Cheyenne, Wyoming.
- Hagen, C. A. 2011. Greater sage-grouse conservation assessment and strategy for Oregon: a plan to maintain and enhance populations and habitat. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Hanser, S. E., and S. T. Knick. 2011. Greater sage-grouse as an umbrella species for shrubland passerine birds: a multiscale assessment. Pages 475–487 in S. T. Knick and J. W. Connelly, editors. Greater sage-grouse: ecology and conservation of a landscape species and its habitats. University of California Press, Berkeley, USA.
- Rowland, M. M., M. J. Wisdom, L. H. Suring, and C. W. Meinke. 2006. Greater sage-grouse as an umbrella species for sagebrush-associated vertebrates. *Biological Conservation* 129:323–335.
- SageCon [Sage-Grouse Conservation Partnership]. 2015. The Oregon Sage-Grouse Action Plan. Governor's Natural Resources Office, Salem, OR, USA.

Adopt-a-Lek Program Survey Area





United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office
2600 SE 98th Avenue, Suite 100
Portland, Oregon 97266
Phone: (503) 231-6179 FAX: (503) 231-6195

Reply To: 8181.0515
File Name: AAL LOS 2023.docx
TS: 24-26

Mr. Tim Greseth
Oregon Wildlife Foundation
901 SE Oak St, Suite 103
Portland, OR 97214

October 12, 2023

Subject: Oregon Adopt-A-Lek Volunteer Program

Dear Mr. Greseth,

We are writing to express our support of the Oregon Adopt-a-lek volunteer coordinator grant proposal being submitted by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). As outlined in the proposal, many agencies and organizations continue to implement the Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse Action Plan for sage-grouse conservation, now entering its ninth year and currently being revised. In 2023, ODFW surveyed just over 48% of the known leks in the state – a monumental undertaking. This landscape-scale project requires the coordination of a large group of volunteers, agency staff, conservation stakeholders, and landowners.

Continuation of the Adopt-a-Lek program will assist in our ability to understand the effects our conservation efforts are having on the greater sage-grouse by monitoring the changes in population abundance. Additionally, monitoring greater sage-grouse population trends provides essential information on habitat conditions, as well as information on other sage-steppe obligate species. This work is particularly critical now, as we work with ODFW to revise the Oregon sage-grouse conservation strategy and core area maps. The efforts described in this proposal are of high value, will be immediately beneficial in the short-term, and support long-term goal of keeping greater sage-grouse from needing the protection of the Endangered Species Act. Our

PACIFIC REGION 1

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AMERICAN SAMOA, GUAM, HAWAII, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

*PARTIAL

staff participate in the annual surveys and directly support this important work. We have encouraged the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to apply for future U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funding as well.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this proposal, and for the opportunity to be a part of this collaborative project. If you have any questions, please contact myself or Jeff Everett on my staff at 503-231-6952.

Sincerely,

Kessina Lee
State Supervisor









