

2.7 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

2.7.1. Introduction

Special status species is the term that Garfield County uses to distinguish the wildlife and plant species that the County considers to be threatened, endangered or worthy of special actions to recover or maintain population viability. While each of these species has value in its own right, and collectively play an important role in maintaining ecological integrity, the practical reason for protective action is to eliminate the possibility of a species being listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). When a species is listed under the ESA, the action generally results in restrictions that have an adverse effect on the productivity of private lands, public lands and the health safety and welfare of the public.

Determining Garfield County's Special Status Species is a fundamental first step in addressing special status species management. Sources used to identify the County's Special Status Species List are:

Utah Sensitive Species List The Utah Sensitive Species List was prepared by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) pursuant to State of Utah Administrative Rule R657-48 and includes "all wildlife species for which there is credible scientific evidence to substantiate a threat to continued population viability." Species on this list are identified as "Wildlife Species of Concern." Included are fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and mollusks designated as any of the following:

1. Federal candidate species (as determined by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)),
2. Federal threatened species (as determined by the FWS),
3. Federal endangered species (as determined by the FWS),
4. Conservation agreement species (subject to official conservation agreements between the U. S. Government and the State of Utah), and
5. Utah wildlife species of concern (species where the State of Utah has determined that conservation actions be taken to preclude their listing as candidate, threatened or endangered).

The Utah Sensitive Species List can be viewed at dwr.cdc.nr.utah.gov/ucdc/ViewReports/sslist.htm. A list, also prepared by the DWR, of sensitive species in Garfield County can also be viewed at that location. All Utah Sensitive Species that occur in Garfield County are considered to be Garfield County Special Status Species.

Utah Wildlife Action Plan The DWR's Utah Wildlife Action Plan's list identifies "Species of Greatest Conservation Needs." The Wildlife Action Plan analysis focused on three fundamental factors: 1) the likelihood of an ESA listing, 2) the consequences of listing, and 3) the potential for influencing a listing. For a description of how the species of greatest conservation needs were determined see the Wildlife Action Plan (wildlife.utah.gov/Utah.WAP.pdf). All Garfield County species identified in the Wildlife Action Plan are considered to be Garfield County Special Status Species.

Candidate, Threatened and Endangered Species Candidate, threatened and endangered species listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the ESA are included on the Garfield County list of Special Status Species.

Endangered, Threatened and Candidate Plants Plant species that the FWS has listed as endangered or threatened species or has designated as candidate species that are native to and are known to be present in the County are considered to be a Garfield County Special Status Species. Utah's DWR does not manage plants except as a component of habitat for wildlife, and plants are not included in the State of Utah Sensitive Species List. ESA plants are referenced in the Utah Wildlife Action Plan but they are not specifically included on the list of Species of Greatest Conservation Needs.

Federal Land Management Agency Sensitive Species The Bureau of Land Management and the U. S. Forest Service maintain sensitive wildlife species and sensitive plant species lists. Additionally, the Forest Service has a list of management indicator species (MIS) that, while not necessarily sensitive or vulnerable, do represent the types of species present in various vegetation associations, and the Forest Service considers them worthy of special management attention. A comparison of BLM and Forest Service sensitive species for Garfield County indicates that all of these species are also on one of the two State lists described above. Consequently, there is no need to duplicate the State's species by including BLM or Forest Service sensitive species on the County list of special status species.

Conservation Agreement Species Conservation agreement species refers to wildlife and fish species that are the subject of intergovernmental management agreements. In Garfield County all but one conservation agreement species are fish. The other is a bird. All conservation agreement species are included on the Garfield County list of Special Status Species.

Incidental Occurrence It is possible that species identified in one or another sensitive species list, but not identified as occurring in Garfield County, may at times be found in Garfield County as ranges shift and individuals make incidental or temporary visits due to weather events or other causes. These species are not included in the Garfield County List of Special Status Species.

Introduced / nonessential experimental populations (e.g. the California Condor) introduced species are often classified as a "nonessential experimental populations." Regulatory restrictions are not as intrusive for a nonessential experimental populations compared to the regulations for native and non-experimental listed species. Introduced and nonessential experimental species are included in Garfield County's list special status species on a case by case basis.

For example, the California Condor is included on the DWR list of Species of Greatest Conservation Needs (as an experimental population), but is not on DWR's Wildlife Species of Concern list. The California Condor is a listed ESA species introduced into Arizona north of the Grand Canyon and west of the Glen Canyon Reservoir. It is considered to occasionally visit Garfield County. But, given its transitory presence, vague classification and less restrictive regulatory status, the California Condor is not included on the Garfield County special status species list.

Summary. To summarize, Garfield County Special Status Species includes:

1. Native wildlife and plant species known to regularly be present in Garfield County that the FWS has listed as endangered (FWSE), threatened (FWST) or designated as a candidate species (FWSC), except for experimental populations.
2. Native wildlife species identified on Utah Sensitive Species List as “Wildlife Species of Concern” and that the State recognizes as occurring in Garfield County. (USC)
3. Wildlife species identified in the Utah Wildlife Action plan as “Species of Greatest Conservation Needs” and that the State recognizes as occurring in Garfield County. (USCN)
4. Wildlife species classified as conservation agreement species and known to be present in Garfield County, including in the Colorado River on the eastern boundary of the County. (CAS)
5. Wildlife species identified by federal agencies as special status are included in Garfield County’s management when identified on Utah’s list of Wildlife Species of Concern or Species of Greatest Conservation Needs. They are included in the chart below to facilitate consistency and coordination as BLM Sensitive Species (BLMSS), Forest Service Sensitive Species (FSSS), and Park Service Sensitive Species (NPSSS)

2.7.2. Current Setting

Based on the factors escribed above, the following species are considered Garfield County Special Status Species:

Common Name	Scientific Name	Group	Designation
Allen’s Big-eared Bat	<i>Idionycteris phyllotis</i>	Mammal	USC, USCN, BLMSS
American Pika	<i>Ochotona princeps</i>	Mammal	USCN
American Three-toed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides dorsalis</i>	Bird	USC, USCN, FSSS
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	Bird	USC, USCN, BLMSS
Arizona Toad	<i>Bufo microscsphus</i>	Amphibian	USC, USCN, BLMSS
Autumn Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus aestivalis</i> (= <i>acriformis</i>)	Plant	FWSE, USCN
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bird	USC, FSSS, BLMSS
Black Canyon Pyrg	<i>Pyrgulopsis plicata</i>	Mollusk	USC, USCN
Bluehead Sucker	<i>Catostomus discobolus</i>	Fish	CAS, USCN, BLMSS
Bonneville Cutthroat Trout	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii</i> Utah	Fish	CAS, USCN
Bonytail Chub	<i>Gila elegans</i>	Fish	FWSC, USC, USCN
Burrowing Owl	<i>Ursus arctos</i>	Bird	USC, USCN, FSSS, BLMSS
Colorado Pikeminnow	<i>Ptychocheilus Lucius</i>	Fish	FWSE, USC, USCN

Common Name	Scientific Name	Group	Designation
Colorado River Cutthroat Trout	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii pheuriticus</i>	Fish	CAS, USCN, FSSS
Common Chukawalla	<i>Sauromalus ater</i>	Reptile	USC, BLMSS
Desert Night Lizard	<i>Xantusia vigilis</i>	Reptile	USC
Dwarf Shrew			USCN
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Bird	USCN
Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	Bird	USCN, BLMSS
Flannelmouth Sucker	<i>Catostomus latipinnis</i>	Fish	CAS, USCN, BLMSS
Fringed Myotis	<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>	Mammal	USC, USCN, BLMSS
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Bird	USCN
Greater Sage-grouse	<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>	Bird	USC, USCN, FSSS, BLMSS
Humpback Chub	<i>Gila cypha</i>	Fish	FWSE, USC, USCN
Jones Cycladenia	<i>Cycladenia humilis jonesii</i> var.	Plant	FWST, USCN
Kit Fox	<i>Vulpes macrotis</i>	Mammal	USC, USCN, BLMSS,
Lewis's Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>	Bird	USC, USCN, BLMSS
Mexican Spotted Owl	<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>	Bird	FWST, USC, USCN
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Bird	CAS, USCN, FSSS, BLMSS
Northern Leopard Frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>	Amphibian	USCN
Pygmy Rabbit	<i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>	Mammal	USC, USCN, FSSS, BLMSS
Roundtail Chub	<i>Gila robusta</i>	Fish	CAS, USCN
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	Bird	USC, USCN, BLMSS
Smith's Black-headed Snake		Reptile	USCN
Southern Leatherside Chub	<i>Lepidomeda aliciae</i>	Fish	USC, USCN, FSSS, BLMSS
Spotted Bat	<i>Euderma maculatum</i>	Mammal	USC, USCN, FSSS, BLMSS
Townsend's Big-eared Bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendi</i>	Mammal	USC, USCN, FSSS, BLMSS
Utah Physa	<i>Physelia utahensis</i>	Mollusk	USC
Utah Prairie-dog	<i>Cynomys parvidens</i>	Mammal	FWST, USC, USCN
Ute Ladies'-tresses	<i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>	Plant	FWST, USCN
Western Toad	<i>Bufo boreas</i>	Amphibian	USC, USCN
Winkler Cactus	<i>Pediocactus winkleri</i>	Plant	FWST
Wright Fishhook Cactus	<i>Scierocactus wrightiae</i>	Plant	FWSE

As depicted above, the current Garfield County Special Status Species list contains 43 species, including 38 wildlife species and 5 plant species. The wildlife species include 8 mammals, 12 birds, 3 amphibians, 2 mollusks, 9 fish and 3 reptiles. Ten of the species on the County's list are on the federal ESA list, 5 wildlife species and 5 plant species. 26 of the species are on the DWR Sensitive Species List as Wildlife Species of Special Concern. 35 are classified in the Utah Wildlife Action Plan as Species of Greatest Conservation Needs. 6 species are conservation agreement species. Note that many Garfield County Special Status Species are on two or more of the above lists. Accordingly, combining the number of species on the individual lists results in a number larger than 43.

Three of the ESA species, the Bonytail Chub, Colorado Pikeminnow, and Humpback Chub are Colorado River mainstem fish that are classified as endangered. These three fish species are only located in the Colorado River, have been listed for several years and have a specific interagency management program in place. They are managed through a stable and longstanding agreement and have a relatively small effect on land use; these species receive little conservation attention from the County.

The other two ESA-listed wildlife species, the Mexican Spotted owl and the Utah Prairie-dog, are classified as threatened. The Greater Sage-grouse was a candidate species but the FWS recently decided not to list this species and it was removed from the candidate species list. The Mexican Spotted owl is often used by special interest groups as the rationale for opposing active forest management, though the species is rarely seen in Garfield County. The Utah Prairie-dog and the Greater Sage-grouse are widely distributed in Garfield County's sage steppe habitats, with the Sage-grouse being the most widespread of the two. Both species are considered to be of special concern to the County due to the effect of listing on grazing, development and public use.

The Garfield County list includes 2 endangered plants and 3 threatened plants. All 5 ESA listed plant species are located on federally-administered lands and are monitored regularly by federal botanists. Capitol Reef National Park has expressed concern that cattle trailing could affect the two cactus on the ESA list, though these species and grazing have coexisted for over 130 years. On occasion the presence of a rare plant requires change in a specific Forest Service or BLM activity, but not often. The ESA places no regulatory obligations on private property owners whose lands contain listed plant species. In addition to Garfield County's listed species, BLM and Forest Service have identified 3 species that are a concern to them, and the UDWR Natural Heritage Program has identified approximately 55 more plants in Garfield County that may be of concern at some point in the future. None of these additional plant species identified by BLM, Forest Service or UDWR merit protection.

Of the 6 conservation agreement species on the special status species list, 5 are fish and 1 is a bird, the Northern Goshawk. Three of the conservation agreement fish are mainstem Colorado River species managed through an interagency agreement. The other 2 are the Bonneville and Colorado River cutthroat, both coldwater stream sub-species. Both cutthroat sub-species are fairly widely distributed in Garfield County's coldwater streams, the Bonneville in the Sevier watershed and the Colorado River in the Escalante and Fremont watersheds. Due to their

disbursed character, and the value of coldwater streams to communities and the environment, the cutthroat sub-species are priorities for attention by the County. The Northern Goshawk, the only bird conservation agreement species, is one of the most widespread species in Garfield County's mature forests, and is considered to be of special concern due to the adverse effect of Forest Service goshawk management prescriptions on timber harvest.

There are additional species that, while not on the Garfield County special status species list, do warrant mention in the context of this list. The California Condor is a federally listed endangered species. An "experimental population" was established in Kane County and birds from that population are known to temporarily visit Garfield County. An experimental population does not bring about the same management concerns and requirements as non-experimental ESA species or populations. The condor population is therefore not on the County list. The Southwestern willow flycatcher, an endangered species, and the Yellow-billed cuckoo, a candidate species, are on the Utah Sensitive Species List but not in Garfield County. These species are rarely seen in Garfield County. Nonetheless, like the Mexican spotted owl, these species are often used by special interest groups as rationale to bring suit opposing forestry, watershed restoration, rangeland health and other projects in Garfield County.

All of the species on Garfield County List of Special Status Species are being managed for recovery or sustainability by federal land management agencies and the State and are subject to various levels of Recovery and Conservation Plans implemented by Garfield County. All ESA listed species have recovery plans or plans are being prepared. All conservation agreement species have conservation agreements and strategies, which are similar to recovery plans but not as detailed. Other Garfield County Special Status Species generally do not have species – specific management plans. However, they are typically considered in management plans prepared by Park Service, Forest Service and BLM units within Garfield County.

ESA recovery plans are typically prepared by the FWS, though plans prepared by a state or other entity may be adopted as "functional equivalents." Sometimes multiple species plans are prepared, but none for Garfield County species. While conservation agreement and strategy documents are not as detailed as recovery plans, and do not include recovery criteria, they do provide targeted conservation strategies and the interagency nature of these agreements helps to ensure implementation.

Specific conservation plans have not been prepared for several species on the County's list of Special Status Species. All of these are species from the State's Sensitive Species List and Wildlife Action Plan that do not have a direct federal connection as an ESA listed species or cooperative agreement species. A few of these species may have local area conservation plans, usually prepared by federal land managers, but most do not. For these species the County considers the Utah Wildlife Action Plan to be the best available surrogate plan until Garfield County completes a county specific plan. As plans are prepared for these species these plans will be evaluated by the County and, if suitable, recognized by the County. Following is the list of Garfield County Special Status Species, along with County's determination regarding the best available conservation plan for each species.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Recovery or Conservation Plan
Allen's Big-eared Bat	<i>Idionycteris phyllotis</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
American Pika	<i>Ochotona princeps</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
American Three-toed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides dorsalis</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Arizona Toad	<i>Bufo microscopus</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Autumn Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus aestivalis</i> (= <i>acriformis</i>)	ESA recovery plan
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	ESA recovery plan
Black Canyon Pyrg	<i>Pyrgulopsis plicata</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Bluehead Sucker	<i>Catostomus discobolus</i>	Conservation agreement and strategy
Bonneville Cutthroat Trout	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii</i> Utah	Conservation agreement and strategy
Bonytail Chub	<i>Gila elegans</i>	ESA recovery plan
Burrowing Owl	<i>Ursus arctos</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Colorado Pikeminnow	<i>Ptychocheilus Lucius</i>	ESA recovery plan
Colorado River Cutthroat Trout	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii</i> <i>pheuriticus</i>	Conservation agreement and strategy
Common Chukawalla	<i>Sauromalus ater</i>	None
Desert Night Lizard	<i>Xantusia vigilis</i>	None
Dwarf Shrew		Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Flannelmouth Sucker	<i>Catostomus latipinnis</i>	Conservation agreement and strategy
Fringed Myotis	<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Greater Sage-grouse	<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>	ESA recovery plan, State recovery plan
Humpback Chub	<i>Gila cypha</i>	ESA recovery plan
Jones Cycladenia	<i>Cycladenia humilis</i> <i>jonesii</i> var.	ESA recovery outline
Kit Fox	<i>Vulpes macrotis</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Lewis's Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Mexican spotted owl	<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>	ESA recovery plan
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Conservation agreement and strategy, USFS forest plan amendment
Northern Leopard Frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Pygmy Rabbit	<i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Roundtail Chub	<i>Gila robusta</i>	Conservation agreement and strategy
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Smith's Black-		Utah Wildlife Action Plan

Common Name	Scientific Name	Recovery or Conservation Plan
headed Snake		
Southern Leatherside Chub	<i>Lepidomeda aliciae</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Spotted Bat	<i>Euderma maculatum</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Townsend's Big-eared Bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendi</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Utah Physa	<i>Physelia utahensis</i>	None
Utah Prairie-dog	<i>Cynomys parvidens</i>	ESA recovery plan
Ute Ladies'-tresses	<i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>	Draft ESA recovery plan
Western Toad	<i>Bufo boreas</i>	Utah Wildlife Action Plan
Winkler Cactus	<i>Pediocactus winkleri</i>	Draft ESA recovery plan
Wright Fishhook Cactus	<i>Scierocactus wrightiae</i>	ESA recovery plan

Newer recovery plans for ESA species include range maps and critical habitat for the species. Conservation agreement and strategy documents typically do not include range maps and those that do have maps are quite general. Range maps are very general or non-existent for other Special Status Species. Distribution maps are finer in scale and delineate specific or general habitat locations. Except for fish species and species with limited ranges, these maps are generally lacking, especially for the Greater Sage-grouse. In some cases land management agencies maintain finer scale habitat maps, but these tend to be project-area specific. Where there is concern that the location of a species may place it at risk, researchers may purposely generalize habitat maps. These maps may represent range as large, general polygons or depict presence/absence at the county-wide level, with the map indicating whether the species occurs in a county but not where in that county. While helpful for general planning, these general distribution maps are not particularly useful for species conservation, management or project-level applications. Except for species and areas where site-level investigation has occurred, existing maps are largely inadequate or non-existent.

The Utah Natural Heritage Program maintains data on Greater-Sage-grouse habitat and distribution and species occurrence data for some ESA listed species. That program also maintains a crucial habitat unit assessment tool. These data can be found at <http://dwrcdc.nr.utah.gov/ucdc/downloadgis/disclaim.htm>.

Species Viability. Viability is the essential measure of whether a species or population is sustainable or under significant threat. There is no single formula for determining species or population viability. Rather, several specific biological determinations are involved, and the final call on species viability represents a consensus of scientific opinion. The Dixie National Forest has compiled a report that describes the viability of species found in that agency's boundaries, 40% of which is located in Garfield County. That report is considered the best available existing information concerning species viability in Garfield County.

Citation:

With 93% of Garfield County's land base in federal management, with sensitive species management plans in place for all federal lands, and with the State and County taking an active role in sensitive species habitat conservation on both public and private lands, the likelihood of further decline or extinction for Garfield County populations of these species is slight and species viability is not subject to significant threats.

Over the past several decades the pressure for listing of species and designation of critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act has been a prominent theme in Garfield County, even at a time when there is very little evidence that some special status species exist in the area or are actually in decline. The increased pressure for ESA-related designations has come at a time when there has been a significant increase in litigation and political pressure aimed at closing roads, stopping grazing, halting timber harvest (and closing mills), and prohibiting energy exploration and extraction, all of which significantly harm the County's economy, community stability, social structure, and lifestyle. This increased attention to sensitive species at a time when multiple use activities on public lands are under attack is not coincidental. Special interest groups – under the guise of conservation - use the ESA as a tool to raise funds and convert multiple use land management to single use management. While this strategy may be used elsewhere, the intensity of its use in Garfield County and surrounding southern Utah area is particularly acute.

Since 1996 timber harvest has decreased by 90%, public lands grazing has decreased by 70%, and energy production has nearly disappeared. Largely as a result of continuing attacks on the traditional activities that support local economies, population growth has slowed or stopped. County-wide the school population is in decline as young families leave to find jobs in larger communities, particularly in communities where the greatest dependence on natural based industries exists.

Endangered species have been a central factor in almost all of the efforts to halt logging, grazing and energy production. Proving that a species is not present and/or would not be affected by a proposed development is extremely difficult, and demonstrating species viability is highly complex and open to criticism. Special interest groups have frequently used species-related arguments in their extensive appeals and lawsuits. These appeals and lawsuits are the major impediment to properly managing resources that are resistant and resilient to fire and a significant reason that timber production has declined so drastically over the past several years. Only once in the past ten years has the Dixie National Forest been victorious in a species-related harvest law suit.

Pressures for listing of species and designation of critical habitat have been expanding, while site specific inventories, habitat designations and biologic assessments have become increasingly inaccurate. Discretionary funds intended for species conservation and recovery have been diverted to defend lawsuits and appeals, taking money away from critical on-the-ground species recovery actions.

The negative impact of special status species on Garfield County communities is compounded by agency movement toward landscape level and rapid ecoregion management. Federal management actions are increasingly influenced by generalized studies that lack site specific accuracy and are driven by political pressure. State and local governments, although most impacted by the decisions, most familiar with local conditions, possessing much of the expertise, and authorized by federal laws to provide the baseline for management of land, water, and species, are largely ignored.

Need for Management Change

- 1) Active management needs to be implemented to conserve and recover special status species in Garfield County. Secretive and prescriptive approaches need to be replaced with open and aggressive proactive recovery strategies.
- 2) Land managers need to aggressively and actively manage lands to delist species currently on the ESA list of candidate, threatened and endangered species and to prevent other species from being listed.
- 3) Land managers need to aggressively and actively manage lands to improve populations and habitats to remove species from Utah's Wildlife Species of Concern and Species of Greatest Conservation Needs lists and from BLM's and Forest Service's special status species lists.
- 4) In coordination with Garfield County, conservation agreements need to be reviewed and revised to bring them into consistency with Garfield County's plan, program and policy for species managed under such agreements.
- 5) Recovery teams dominated by federal officials focused on research and regulatory strategies need to be replaced with local officials that will implement structural and non-structural improvements that will conserve, recover and increase special status species populations and habitat.
- 6) Accurate maps depicting range, viable habitat, critical habitat, population centers and other mapping needs to be developed. Mapping should focus on watershed or local population scales rather than ecoregions or total range of the targeted species.
- 7) Local conservation strategies and plans need to be developed for each special status species in Garfield County.
- 8) Where habitat/populations cross agency or political boundaries, conservation efforts should be coordinated at the local level.
- 9) Critical, crucial, priority and other habitat designations need to be corrected to conform to target species life cycle requirements.

10) Species managers need to make annual counts of special status species under their jurisdiction to evaluate conservation and recovery progress.

11) Existing management plans for the northern goshawk threaten forest health and promote conditions that are not resistant and resilient to fire. Northern goshawk populations and habitats need to be inventoried; and conservation plans need to be revised to provide for healthy forests within 5 years or at the next forest planning cycle, whichever occurs first.

12) Federal agencies need to share annual counts and recovery information with Garfield County to document progress toward conservation/recovery directives.

13) Lands that do not currently contain special species populations or habitat meeting desired life cycle requirements need to be released from critical, crucial or priority habitat designations.

14) The existing system of ESA species, species of concern, species of greatest conservation need, and agency special status species is confusing and cumbersome. A single system needs to be developed to simplify recover and house all conservation plans under one agency.

Desired Future Conditions

The County desires that:

a) The need for future listings under the Endangered Species Act is precluded through the use of proactive habitat enhancements and sound resource management.

b) Currently listed special status species are recovered to the point they are delisted and their future as viable populations is secured.

c) The Utah Wildlife Action Plan is used as a principal guide for implementing species conservation strategies until Garfield County develops individual conservation plans for the various species.

d) When developed, Garfield County's species conservation plans replace the Utah Wildlife Action Plan as a principal guide for implementing species conservation strategies in Garfield County.

e) Restrictions on land use associated with special status species are removed from lands that do not contain a) permanent populations or b) high value habitat of the targeted species.

f) Conservation/recovery plans and habitat evaluation guides are developed for each special status species in Garfield County.

- g) Existing conservation recovery plans and critical, crucial and priority habitat designations are reviewed and revised to reflect only those lands suitable for species recovery and long term conservation.
- h) Goshawk management plans for forested lands in Garfield County are amended to prioritize first healthy forests that are resistant and resilient to fire, second restoration of traditional timber harvests, and third management of resources for goshawk conservation.
- i) The goshawk amendment to the Dixie National Forest Plan is discarded and replaced with an effective plan that meets Garfield County's priorities for the beneficial use of land and natural resources.
- j) Special status species conservation and recovery is managed in concert with traditional multiple uses such as livestock grazing, timber harvest and energy development to promote the productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment.
- k) Garfield County communities thrive and are sustainable due to a healthy balance between man, development, natural resources, and land health.
- l) Decisions regarding management of special status wildlife and plant species and their habitats are made based on the best available, site specific, biological and social scientific knowledge and information.
- m) Critical habitats and recovery plans are not based on landscape or ecoregion level analysis but are based on local population and habitat conditions.
- n) Scientifically accurate and scale-appropriate counts, data and maps concerning the location of special status species are available to assist with site-level analysis.
- o) Spurious attempts to halt responsible land use through species listings, designation of critical habitats and other ESA and sensitive species-related strategies are precluded through active management emphasizing habitat vitality and vigor.
- p) Garfield County is recognized as a full and vital partner with state and federal agencies in the management of special status species and habitats.
- q) The County's jurisdictional authority and expertise concerning land use, planning, zoning, site specific conditions, habitat, socio-economics, cultural impacts and other subjects is recognized, accepted and acknowledged by other levels governments.
- r) A single special status species list and a single repository for conservation plans are developed for all governmental entities in Garfield County.

SPECIAL STATUS WILDLIFE

Findings, Policies, Goals & Objectives

Policy: In accordance with its police power authority, it is the policy of Garfield County to use its land use planning and zoning authority to designate plans, programs and policies on private and public lands to ensure conservation and recovery of Garfield County's special status species.

Policy: By mandating Garfield County complete a Resource Management Plan which includes special status species, the Utah Legislature recognized and established the County's role in managing special status species.

Policy, Goal & Objective: Special status species conservation and recovery is managed in concert with traditional multiple uses such as livestock grazing, timber harvest and energy development to promote the productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment.

Policy, Goal & Objective: Recovery of special status species and precluding listing of other at risk species through active management, proactive habitat restoration and sound resource use is the central policy, goal and objective of Garfield County's special status species program. It is Garfield County's goal to have all special status species recovered to the point of removing them from federal, state and local lists prior to 2026.

Policy: Garfield County will support and participate in reasonable actions that will keep species from special status listing and will remove existing special status species from special management in the County.

Policy: Garfield County will take necessary actions to conserve and recover special status species consistent with its authorities and while exercising jurisdiction to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the County.

Policy: Garfield County will be a full and active partner in conservation, recovery, planning and implementation actions relating to special status species.

Policy: To the maximum extent allowed by law, species and land managers shall be consistent with Garfield County special status species plans programs and policies. Modifications shall be approved by the Garfield County Commission. Species and land managers shall incorporate modifications in their programs at the earliest possible date, not to exceed two years.

Finding & Policy: Plant and wildlife species not included on Garfield County's special status species list but a) designated by BLM or the Forest Service as sensitive or b) identified by the UDWR Natural Heritage Program as being of concern do not merit special protection. Best

management practices which employ avoidance/minimization/mitigation protocols shall apply unless other species-specific conservation plans are developed in coordination with Garfield County and approved by the Garfield County Commission.

Finding & Policy: Garfield County shall be included in all NEPA analysis impacting special status species to the maximum extent allowed by law. Failure to Coordinate with Garfield County and failure to fully include the County in NEPA actions is a violation of federal law.

Policy: Management of special status species and habitats to meet perceived native conditions for some arbitrarily selected time is inconsistent with Garfield County's Resource Management Plan. Management actions shall be based on current recovery requirements and settings

Policy, Goal & Objective: Prior to January 31st each year, land and species managers shall provide Garfield County with a progress report for each Garfield County special status species. The reports shall include but not be limited to: 1) current population counts; 2) population trends; 3) critical habitat acreages meeting species life cycle needs; 4) critical habitat acreages not meeting species life cycle needs; 5) progress toward recovery/delisting; 6) challenges to recovery/delisting; 7) accomplishments and proposed actions; and 8) other maps, data and information needed to describe the condition of the species.

Policy: To the maximum extent allowed by law, species and land managers shall modify existing conservation, recovery or management plans and critical, crucial and priority habitat designations to conform with Garfield County's special status species plans, programs and policies as contained herein prior to January 1, 2020 or their regular planning review process, whichever occurs first.

Goal & Objective: Establish conservation/recovery plans and habitat evaluation guides for each of Garfield County's special status species.

Policy: The Utah Wildlife Action Plan shall be used as a principal guide for implementing species conservation strategies until Garfield County develops individual conservation plans for the various special status species in the County. When developed, Garfield County's species conservation plans shall replace the Utah Wildlife Action Plan as the principal guide for implementing species conservation strategies in Garfield County.

Finding & Policy: Approximately 97% of the land in Garfield County is in federal or state ownership; there are no urban lands in Garfield County; and considerably less than one percent of the land is located in a city, town or municipality. Private lands are primarily occupied by vegetated fields or rangelands. Threats associated with urban development and housing are not applicable in Garfield County unless verified by site specific studies demonstrating Garfield County's development/housing exhibits significant adverse impacts to the targeted species' state-wide population or habitat.

Finding & Policy: Wildlife species, especially elk may impact health of aspen habitats. Where improper grazing is determined to be a threat to special status species in aspen habitat, site-specific studies will be conducted to determine the proportional impacts created by the various wildlife and livestock species. Any reduction in animal unit months for the various wildlife and livestock species shall be allocated on the same proportion as determined in the site specific study for the individual species.

Policy: Garfield County's species specific conservation and recovery plans, policies and programs shall be included, analyzed and disclosed in all NEPA actions. Failure to include, analyze and disclose Garfield County's species specific conservation and recovery plans, policies and programs to the maximum extent allowed by law is arbitrary, capricious and fails to provide a full range of reasonable alternatives.

Policy: Species and land managers shall focus conservation and recovery efforts on species included on Garfield County's Special Status Species List. The initial list consists of a) ESA-listed or candidacy wildlife and plant species; b) wildlife species on the Utah Sensitive Species List; c) wildlife species on the Utah Wildlife Action Plan list; and d) wildlife with State/Federal cooperative conservation plans. Species and land managers shall not consider non-essential, experimental, occasional/temporary, or introduced species as special status.

Policy: Species and land managers shall conduct annual counts of Garfield County's special status species within their jurisdiction. Where annual counts do not exist for the last five years or where annual counts are zero for five consecutive years, permanent populations of the individual species are deemed to no longer exist in Garfield County. Assuming a species exists in the County without verified counts in the previous 5 years is speculative, arbitrary and capricious.

Policy: It is the policy of Garfield County that an area only be considered as critical, crucial, priority or other habitat for a special status species if the species has been documented as using the area on a recurring basis. Periods of sporadic use with unused intervals of more than two years shall be deemed unused. Exceptions may be granted on a case by case basis after presentation of all relevant facts.

Policy: Prior to implementing prescriptions for conservation and/or recovery of special status species, land and wildlife managers shall inventory proposed areas and verify the existence and condition of populations and habitat. Management prescriptions shall not be applied to lands that do not contain special status species populations or required habitat.

Policy: Restrictions on land use associated with special status species are removed from lands that do not contain permanent populations or high value habitat of the targeted species.

Finding: Federal land managers have a) failed to accurately map general, critical, crucial, and priority habitat for special status species, b) incorrectly designated special status species habitat

where the species is not present, and c) ignored site specific conditions and special status species life cycle requirements to adopt generalized habitat polygons that are not consistent with objective science.

Finding: Habitat and crucial habitat mapping by state and federal agencies has no legal or regulatory meaning and generally depicts only the estimated range for the identified species. Mapping often includes developed areas that do not have biologic conditions necessary to support the species. Until state and federal maps are refined to accurately depict species habitat, the maps included in this RMP constitute the highest and best data available for site specific and landscape level planning.

Finding, Policy & Criteria: “Critical” and “Crucial” habitat shall be decisive for the success or failure of the local population of the designated species and shall meet the following criteria:

1. At least 85% of the Critical/Crucial habitat shall have permanent populations or annual seasonal populations of the designated species as confirmed by annual counts.
2. At least 85% of the Critical/Crucial habitat shall contain those physical or biological features essential to the conservation of the designated species. When a habitat evaluation guide exists for a designated species and habitat evaluation scores are less than 50%, the area shall be determined as not demonstrating those physical or biological features essential to conservation of the species, unless the area is subject to treatments which will improve the habitat score to at least 75% within two years.
3. Critical/Crucial habitat shall not be located within 200 feet of a State Highway or Class B County Road nor within 100 feet of a Class D Road or other motorized path, way or trail.
4. Critical/Crucial habitat shall not be located within 330 feet of a municipality, private land, human developments, or structural improvements.
5. Critical/Crucial habitat shall be located in natural environments consistent with ecologic site descriptions and shall not be located in habitats that have been heavily manipulated by man or are not consistent with recovery “in the wild.”

Policy: Species and land managers shall focus species recovery efforts on federal lands that make up majority of the land base in Garfield County. Private and state lands may be used for species recovery when such lands are consistent with native/wild habitat the landowner is supportive.

Policy: Only site specific, scientifically proven and verified data, consistent with the Data Quality Act, shall be used to make determinations regarding special status species and critical/crucial habitat. Landscape level and ecoregion data is too broad to accurately depict topography, vegetation, habitat conditions and other key life cycle elements.

Policy: Special status species or populations that have recovered to the point where they are no longer at risk shall be promptly down-listed or de-listed. Land managers shall remove land use prescriptions as soon as possible after a species is down-listed or de-listed.

Policy: Garfield County supports implementation actions consistent with County approved recovery plans and conservation agreements. Garfield County encourages other governmental entities to take actions consistent with these plans. The County reserves the right to reject a plan or a component in a plan when the County determines that the plan/component fails to make adequate progress toward species conservation/recovery.

Policy: Species and land managers shall not rely on landscape level or ecoregion species inventories and mapping for site-specific analysis unless the data includes sufficient detail to accurately depict population distribution and habitat conditions for individual population centers in Garfield County. The County also reserves the right to develop its own inventories and mapping if other data are deemed inadequate.

Finding: Special status species and associated habitat conditions are dynamic and are best managed under the principles of a) active management, b) multiple use / sustained yield, and c) adaptive management.

Policy: Habitat restoration, including vibrant and vigorous vegetation, is the fundamental component for species conservation and recovery in Garfield County. Restoration projects shall consider the natural variation of habitats in Garfield County, and - where practical – include a mosaic of vegetation types crossing land ownership boundaries and interagency coordination. Projects that provide multiple benefits for a variety of uses, species and objectives are preferable to single benefit/single species strategies.

Policy: Managers shall increase diversity in vegetation through optimization of native and non-native species to the maximum extent available by law. Limiting vegetative communities to “native species only” shall only be implemented when a) required by federal or state law, b) scientifically proven to optimize species recovery and/or desirable habitat conditions, c) consistent with Garfield County’s Resource Management Plan, or d) approved by the County Commission.

Goal: Prior to December 31, 2025, land managers will seek to have habitats supporting special status species meet the following seral stage ranges:

Early Stage	30% to 50%
Mid Stage	30% to 40%
Late Stage	Less than 25%

Policy: Class I pinyon/juniper stands impacting species conservation/recovery, species diversity or desired habitat conditions shall be eradicated in the most feasible manner possible at a rate of

10% annually. Based on a 10 year rolling average and consistent with desired ecological site descriptions, restore at least 25% of the Class II and Class III pinyon/juniper woodlands having a median age of less than 200 years to sagebrush / semi-desert grassland vegetation communities.

Policy: Decadent special status species habitat shall have 10% treated annually.

Policy: Where grazing is the primary causal factor in preventing species recovery, wild horses and burros grazing outside herd management areas and wild horses, burros and wildlife populations in excess of AML/population objectives shall be corrected within one year. Grazing restrictions, if any, shall be a) applied only after wild horses and burros are under AML and limited to herd management areas; b) temporary and not more than 2 grazing seasons; c) demonstrated to move the special status species toward significant recovery; d) limited to the smallest area possible; e) applied first to wild horses, burros and wildlife not meeting objective and second proportionally to wild horses, burros and wildlife meeting objective and permitted livestock.

Policy: Conservation and recovery actions employing prescriptive management strategies shall only be employed on a temporary basis and upon objective evidence that significant progress toward delisting will occur within

Objective: Establish coordinated efforts between Garfield County, the State of Utah, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service to implement large-scale, multi-year and multi-species habitat improvement projects to significantly move special status species toward delisting.

Finding and Policy: Garfield County recognizes practical limits to financial and staff resources. Resource expenditure for special status species shall be commensurate with: a) the risks of extinction, b) the potential for action to have a beneficial effect on recovery, and/or c) the potential for socio-economic disruption if action is not taken. At present the species recognized as highest concern by the County are: a) Greater Sage-grouse, b) Utah Prairie-dog, c) Northern Goshawk, and d) Mexican Spotted Owl. Priorities may change as recovery occurs.

Finding & Policy: Garfield County finds Greater Sage-grouse, Utah Prairie-dog and Northern Goshawk are not at significant risk and implementation of reasonable vegetative, rangeland health and forest health strategies assures conservation of the species. Garfield County opposes conservation/recovery plans, policies, and programs for special status species that are based on political or philosophical values and are not consistent with the best available science, multiple use/sustained yield management and existing conditions.

Objective: Remove the Goshawk amendment from the Dixie National Forest Plan prior to January 1, 2020 or during the next regular planning cycle, whichever occurs first.

Objective: Remove the Utah Prairie-dog from ESA protections in Garfield County prior to June 30, 2018.

Policy: Manage Utah Prairie-dogs in conformance with the UDWR Utah Prairie Dog Management Plan and in coordination with Garfield County.

Finding & Policy: Utah Prairie-dogs have adapted to human interaction and are often found in fully developed human environments. Permanent surface disturbance and facilities shall be allowed in Utah Prairie-dog critical, crucial, priority and focal area habitat with appropriate mitigation.

Finding and Policy: Utah Prairie-dog conservation/recovery and livestock grazing are compatible activities. Vegetation treatments, water development, predator control, and other management actions are mutually beneficial and shall be allowed to the maximum extent practical.

Finding & Policy: BLM and Forest Service Greater Sage-grouse management areas and habitat designations fail to comply with Data Quality Act requirements and are discretionary management determinations that are inconsistent with state and local plans, programs and policies. Prior to January 1, 2018 BLM and Forest Service shall bring their Greater Sage-grouse management areas and habitat designations into conformance with Garfield County's plan, policy and program, to the maximum extent allowed by law.

Policy, Goal & Objective: Support vegetative treatments and conversion of Class II and Class III pinyon/juniper woodlands to sagebrush/grassland communities to ensure recovery of Greater Sage-grouse and removal of BLM and Forest Service restrictions in Garfield County prior to January 1, 2025 or the respective agency's next regular planning cycle, whichever occurs first.

Finding: Species and land managers have a) failed to accurately map Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, b) incorrectly designated pinyon/juniper woodlands as Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, and c) ignored the two greatest impacts on Greater Sage-Grouse in Garfield County: invasive conifer encroachment and predation (primarily from corvids and canids).

Finding: Garfield County finds that sage-grouse populations and habitats are compatible with livestock grazing management which conforms to Garfield County's Resource Management Plan. Practices, such as rotational grazing systems can enhance plant community vigor, suppress noxious weeds, and sustain diverse plant communities with forb components that benefit sage-grouse habitat.

Finding & Policy: Large portions of Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA) and General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA) do not qualify as suitable for Greater Sage-grouse habitat. Prior to implementing provisions of the BLM/FS Utah Greater Sage-grouse Plan Amendment, land managers shall verify through site specific evaluations the current potential habitat conditions. Habitats where at least 75% of the area does not score higher than 0.75 on NRCS/Garfield County Evaluation Guide are not suitable for Priority management. Habitats where at least 75% of the area does not score higher than 0.4 on NRCS/Garfield County

Evaluation Guide are not suitable for General management. Habitats where at least 75% of the area scores lower than 0.4 on NRCS/Garfield County Evaluation Guide are not suitable Greater Sage-grouse habitat and need to be removed from management prescriptions.

Policy: BLM and Forest Service PHMA and GHMA objectives and management actions shall apply to existing sagebrush areas and areas with short term ecological sagebrush potential within the respective PHMA and GHMA polygons. In the mapped PHMA and GHMA there are significant areas that lack the principle habitat components necessary for GRSG, including but not limited to rock outcrops, alkaline flats, and pinyon-juniper ecological sites. These are areas that do not have existing sagebrush or ecological potential to contain sagebrush in less than five years. These areas of non-habitat shall be identified during site-specific project review by agency biologists and coordinated with the appropriate state and local agency.

Policy: Because of the importance of PHMA to conserve, enhance and restore GRSG and its habitat, objectives and management actions will only apply to those areas within the respective PHMA polygons providing principle habitat components. The GHMA objectives and management actions will not apply to the areas of identified non-habitat within the GHMA polygons one of the following conditions is met: a) the non-habitat provides important connectivity between areas with existing or potential habitat; or b) direct and indirect impacts impair the function of adjacent seasonal habitats, the life-history or behavioral needs of the GRSG population, as demonstrated in the project's NEPA document.

Policy: Preservation of Class II or Class III pinyon/juniper woodlands in PHMA or GHMA is a direct negative impact on sage grouse conservation and recovery and is considered a "Take" in Garfield County.

Policy: PHMA and GHMA boundaries and classifications on federal lands are discretionary planning designations and shall comply with Garfield County's plan, policy and program to the maximum extent allowed by law.

Policy: Prior to implementing livestock grazing restrictions for the purposes of conserving sage-grouse, federal agencies shall:

1. Implement effective vegetative manipulation to achieve sage-grouse habitat objectives and maintain or improve vegetation conditions or trends.
2. Design and implement grazing management systems that maintain or enhance herbaceous understory cover, height, and species diversity that occurs during the spring nesting season, consistent with ecological site characteristics and potential.
3. Maintain residual herbaceous vegetation at the end of the livestock grazing season to contribute to nesting and brood-rearing habitat during the coming nesting season. Amounts of herbaceous vegetation will be determined on a site specific basis in Coordination with Garfield County.

4. In priority sage-grouse management areas, minimize livestock and wildlife grazing within the lesser of 0.6 mile or direct line of sight of occupied leks during the lekking periods.
5. Minimize wildlife grazing effects on the cover and height of primary forage species in occupied habitat during the nesting season.
6. Manage wildlife grazing of riparian areas, meadows, springs, and seeps in a manner that promotes vegetation structure and composition appropriate to the site.
7. Place salt and mineral supplements to optimize benefits to sage-grouse breeding habitat and to improve management of livestock for the benefit of sage-grouse and livestock.
8. Minimize constructing new fences within 0.6 mile of occupied leks, near winter-use areas, movement corridors, and other important seasonal habitats.
- 9) Install fence markers or remove fences where sage-grouse mortality due to collision with fences is documented or likely to occur due to new fence placement.
- 10) Design new spring developments in priority sage-grouse habitat to maintain or enhance springs and wet meadows. Retrofit existing water developments during normal maintenance activities. Costs should be borne by the land managing agency unless other agreeable arrangements are made with livestock producers
- 11) Ensure that new and existing livestock troughs and open water storage tanks are fitted with ramps to facilitate the use of and escape from troughs by sage-grouse and other wildlife.
- 12) Avoid placing new water developments into higher quality native breeding/early brood habitats that have not had significant prior grazing use.

Policy & Finding: Garfield County supports agency efforts to convert undesirable pinyon/juniper woodlands to vegetative communities which fortify Greater sage-grouse recovery. Garfield County opposes efforts to mischaracterize vegetative treatments as “deforestation” and finds such characterizations disingenuous and inconsistent with Garfield County’s plan, policy and program.

Policy: NEPA proposals found to be disingenuous or inconsistent with Garfield County’s special status species plan, policy or program shall be fully disclosed in accordance with 40 CFR 1500.

Policy: Garfield County encourages and supports changes in procedures for implementing the Federal Endangered Species Act to make it more efficient, effective and supported by the general public, including changes that:

1. Deemphasize the punitive and divisive aspects of the Act and emphasize positive, mutually beneficial elements;
2. More fully embrace federal, state and local cooperation and coordination as the preferred means to implement the various elements of the Act, including but not limited to listing, critical habitat delineation, recovery planning, recovery action implementation, down-listing and delisting;
3. Convert the prevailing emphasis on a single species to multi-species, multiple benefit approach; and
4. Replace political/philosophical values and litigation with active, scientifically based strategies designed to optimize species conservation and recovery.
5. Remove incentives to use the Equal Access to Justice Act and the Department of Justice's litigant compensation fund to engage in sensitive species litigation.

Objective: Establish an agreement between the U.S. Government and the State of Utah to conduct a ten year ESA management experiment based on the four proposals enumerated above.

Policy: New water development for other multiple use purposes shall be allowed in special species habitat when it may benefit the habitat or designated species.

Policy: Special status species shall not be introduced, translocated, augmented, or reestablished in Garfield County without a) complying with Garfield County's special status species plans, programs and policies, b) government to government coordination with Garfield County, and c) concurrence from the Garfield County Commission.

Policy: Use of pesticides, rodenticides, herbicides and other viable techniques for the benefit of special status species shall be permitted to the maximum extent allowed by law.

Policy: Surface disturbing and disruptive activities are allowed in special species habitat with the application of best management practices and avoidance/minimization/mitigation protocols.

Policy: Site stability, hydrologic function and biologic integrity shall be optimized in special status species habitat by allowing the use of native and non-native plant species for vegetation and reseeded treatments.

Policy: Focus management areas shall not be designated within ½ mile of private property without a) site specific NEPA, b) detailed site specific and cumulative impact analysis for private properties within 1 mile of the focus management area, c) detailed disclosures identified in 40 CFR 1502.22, and d) government to government coordination with Garfield County.

Policy: Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities and permanent facilities in mapped pygmy rabbit habitat shall be allowed on a case by case basis.

Policy: All vegetation treatments shall be allowed in pygmy rabbit habitat as needed with appropriate conservation measures.

Policy: Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities in special status species fish habitat shall be allowed with appropriate mitigation or if the action will benefit the species or habitat.

Policy: Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities, new roads, and permanent above ground facilities within 0.5 miles of California Condor roosts or within 1 mile of occupied nests shall be allowed in Garfield County. Condors are only temporary visitors to the County and no management protection beyond existing law is provided.

Finding & Policy: Land and wildlife managers have not adequately inventoried Mexican Spotted Owl critical habitat and protected activity centers (PACs) for occupancy. Where critical habitat and/or PACs have not been inventoried for three consecutive years or where inventories indicate no occupancy in the last year, critical habitat and/or PACs are unoccupied; and no management prescriptions will be applied until occupancy is verified.

Policy: Where Mexican Spotted Owl critical habitat and/or PACs are occupied as verified by field surveys, the following management prescriptions shall apply:

1. Allow development and maintenance of recreation and administrative facilities in PACs outside of the breeding season if a) the activity is consistent and compatible with protection, maintenance or enhancement of the habitat and populations, or b) the activity is relocated or redesigned to eliminate or reduce detrimental impacts.
2. Issue recreation permits in the PACs from March 1 through August 31 if a) the activity is consistent and compatible with protection, maintenance or enhancement of the habitat and populations, or b) the activity is relocated, designed or managed to eliminate or reduce detrimental impacts.
3. Allow recreation activities, including hiking, camping and equestrian use in PACs and implement best management practices on a case by case basis to reduce impacts.
4. Allow OHV use on roads, paths, ways and trails designated in Garfield County's travel management plan.
5. Allow surface disturbing and disruptive activities within 0.5 miles of nests with appropriate best management practices.

Finding & Policy: Land and wildlife managers shall adequately inventory potential Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Southwest Willow Flycatcher habitat for occupancy. Where a) habitat has not been inventoried for two consecutive years, b) inventories indicate no occupancy in the last year, or c) habitat is occupied by Tamarisk, Russian Olive or other undesirable invasive species, potential habitat shall be deemed unoccupied; and no management prescriptions will be applied until occupancy is verified or undesirable vegetation is removed.

Policy: Where Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Southwest Willow Flycatcher habitat is occupied as verified by field surveys, the following management prescriptions shall apply:

1. Allow surface disturbing and disruptive activities within 0.25 miles of occupied breeding habitat if a) the activity is consistent and compatible with protection, maintenance or enhancement of the habitat and populations, or b) the activity is relocated or redesigned to eliminate or reduce detrimental impacts.

Policy: For the purposes of special status species and related analysis the following shall apply:

1. Immediate impact is defined as impact which lasts less than one year. Immediate impacts do not need to be mitigated, if desired conditions are achieved within the one year period.
2. Short term impact is defined as impact which lasts longer than one year but less than five years. Short term impacts do not need to be mitigated, if desired conditions are achieved within the five year period.
3. Long term impact is defined as impact which lasts more than five years but less than twenty years. Long term impacts do not need to be mitigated, if desired conditions are phased and achieved within a five year period of phased disturbance.
4. Permanent impact is defined as an activity which lasts longer than twenty years. Permanent impacts need to be mitigated or offset by other enhancements initiated within five years.

SPECIAL STATUS PLANTS

Findings, Policies, Goals & Objectives

Goal: Manage for the biological integrity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems to sustain or improve habitat for special status plants to promote ecosystem health and biodiversity.

Objective: Manage special status plant habitats to protect and actively promote the recovery of federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate plant species, and to prevent the need for federal listing of Garfield County sensitive status species under the Endangered Species Act.

Objective & Policy: Reduce environmental hazards, risks, and impacts to special status plants through conservation measures, avoidance, or implementation of best management practices. Use restrictions shall be avoided and if used shall be a) temporary, b) limited to the smallest time period, and c) limited to the smallest space necessary.

Objective: Increase available data through site specific inventories.

Policy: Garfield County will support and implement current and future special-status species recovery and conservation plans, strategies, and agreements in coordination and consultation with the USFWS, the UDWR, and other state and federal entities.

Policy: The augmentation of special status plants is allowed on appropriate sites where populations are in decline. Prior to reintroduction, land managers shall ensure threats affecting the persistence of a species have been adequately identified, remediated, or eliminated to allow for successful reintroduction.

Policy: The reintroduction of special status plants on sites where populations have been lost or on new sites shall not be allowed unless the action is a) required to prevent listing under the ESA, and b) coordinated with and approved by the County Commission.

Policy: Where authorized disturbances are allowed in special status plant-occupied habitat, lands shall be rehabilitated or restored.

Policy: Fuels treatment projects in special status plant-occupied habitats shall be established at strategic locations to minimize size of wildfires and limit undesirable disturbance.

Policy: The use of motorized vehicles to construct fire lines in occupied habitat for special status plants, shall be optimized to a) protect human life and property, b) improve and protect habitat, and c) improve rangeland and/or forest health.

Policy: Native and non-native seeding for land health, rehabilitation and emergency stabilization shall be allowed in habitat for special status plants with appropriate best management practices.

Policy: Surface disturbing activities shall be allowed in habitat for special status plants with implementation of appropriate best management practices to reduce or eliminate impacts to occupied special status plant habitat.

Policy: Multiple use activities shall be allowed in special status plant-occupied habitat if they would not result in long-term habitat loss or unacceptable fragmentation.

Policy: Maintenance of existing structural and non-structural range improvements in special status plant-occupied habitat shall be allowed.

Policy: Placement of new structural and non-structural range improvements in special status plant-occupied habitats shall be allowed if a) the activity is consistent and compatible with protection, maintenance of intact habitat, or enhancement of the habitat and populations, or b) the project is designed to eliminate or reduce detrimental impacts.

Policy: Wildlife and livestock grazing shall be managed to minimize adverse impacts to special status plants and their habitat. Managers shall implement vegetative treatments and range improvements to protect special status plants. Managers may also use adaptive management strategies and structural range improvements. Wildlife and livestock grazing restrictions shall be a last resort and shall be implemented in the shortest time frame and over the smallest area possible with County Commission concurrence.

Policy: Integrated weed management methods, including the use of herbicides and pesticides, for control of invasive species and noxious weeds is allowed. Methods shall be compatible with maintaining special status plant species and their habitats.

Policy: Fuel-wood cutting in special status plant-occupied habitat is allowed if it will not result in long-term habitat loss or unacceptable fragmentation.

Policy: Collection of non-special status plant seed in occupied habitat is allowed where it will not result in long-term habitat loss or unacceptable fragmentation.

References:

Utah Wildlife Action Plan Joint Team, 2015. Utah Wildlife Action Plan: A Plan For Managing Native Wildlife Species And Their Habitats To Help Prevent Listing Under The Endangered Species Act. Publication number 15-14. Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

Plant Information Compiled By the Utah Natural Heritage Program: A Progress Report, Publication Number 05-40, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Appendix 2.7.1 Garfield County Special Status Species List

Appendix 2.7.2 Garfield County Greater Sage Grouse Conservation Plan

Appendix 2.7.3 Garfield County Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Evaluation Guide

Maps Critical/Crucial/Priority Habitat maps for special status species.