



MEDIA ADVISORY

MONO COUNTY, *California's Eastern Sierra*

P.O. Box 696 · Bridgeport, CA 93517
Phone (760) 932-5410 · Fax (760) 932-5411

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Contact: Jim Leddy, (760) 932-5414
jleddy@mono.ca.gov

Mono County Praises Grouse Decision *County's teamwork on issue crucial to federal action*

Bridgeport, CA – On April 21st, 2015 the United States Department of the Interior hosted a multi-agency event announcing that the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of Greater Sage-grouse will not be listed as threatened. Mono County hailed this action as a step forward in achieving species preservation and ensuring that new regulatory burdens were not imposed on private and public land owners of the Eastern Sierra.

Mono County Board of Supervisors Chair Tim Fesko, representing Mono County at the announcement event, commented, “A listing would have been devastating to Mono County. The proposed critical habitat blanketed 82% of private lands in Mono County, and would have been a regulatory burden that would have deeply damaged our fragile rural economy. Today’s action by the Department of the Interior shows that Mono County’s ongoing commitment to resolving this issue through participation paid off for our communities and for the species. Mono County had a choice when the proposed listing was issued: Commit to the conservation effort based on the understanding that the Sage Grouse should not be listed for scientifically verifiable reasons, or fight the listing. Mono County chose conservation and the power of partnerships and collaboration over political grandstanding.”

Mono County has been involved since the early days of the Local Area Working Group (LAWG) in 2000 and was at the table for the 2004 Bi-State Action Plan, participated in the 2012 update, and regularly attended the LAWG meetings. Mono County has taken a local government leadership role and helped to:

- Develop a summary report of conservation actions and future agency commitments for the entire Bi-State;
- Support and host outreach and education forums on topics such as pinyon-juniper management and critical habitat;
- Encourage and enhance interagency communication and coordination;
- Work with private landowners to mitigate impacts, follow best practices, and secure resources for conservation work; and
- Count leks with agency biologists to assist with population monitoring.

If the Grouse had been listed, Mono County would have been forced out of a conservation role and into a regulatory role, directing Landowners to obtain clearance/permits from Federal agencies.

Mono County commends the USFWS for its decision to not list the species, and its recognition and support of the tremendous efforts of federal, state and local agencies, conservation entities and local landowners in the collaborative planning and implementation of the Bi-State Action Plan.

Congratulations also to Steve Nelson, BLM Area Manager, on receiving the STAR Award from Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell for his grouse preservation leadership during Tuesday's announcement.



Mono County offers a rural setting with the most spectacular landscapes in the state. Situated between the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the California/Nevada border, Mono County has a land area of 3,030 square miles, or just over 2 million acres, 94% of which is publicly owned. Much of this land is contained in the Inyo and Toiyabe National Forests. As a result, Mono County is home to vast scenic and recreational resources, and has unsurpassed access to wilderness and adventure.

The county is home to, and named after Mono Lake, which is a large high-desert saline lake. Also located in the county is the historic gold rush town of Bodie, which during its heyday in the late 1800's was home to as many as 7,000 people, and is today maintained as a State Historic Park for the public to come and enjoy. The county seat is proudly located in Bridgeport. Scenic Highway 395 weaves its way north-south through the heart of the county, effectively dividing the steep mountains to the west from the vast desert valley to the east. As it provides access to Yosemite National Park via Lee Vining, it passes beneath towering peaks, and past broad desert expanses.