

Wyoming Local Sage-Grouse Working Group Charter

1) *Purpose:*

- a. The purpose of Local Sage-Grouse Working Groups (LWGs) is to develop and facilitate implementation of local conservation plans for the benefit of sage-grouse, their habitats, and whenever feasible, other species that use sagebrush habitats. The plans will identify management practices and the financial and personnel means to accomplish these practices, within an explicit time frame, for the purpose of improving sage-grouse numbers and precluding the need for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

2) *Expectations of LWGs:* Within two years LWGs are expected to:

- a. Identify and prioritize issues affecting sage-grouse in their area.
- b. Identify actions that address problems affecting sage-grouse in their area.
- c. Develop an action plan geared toward addressing these problems with an emphasis on benefiting as many species as possible within a multiple-use context.
- d. Identify priority areas for implementation of conservation actions.
- e. Identify funding (amounts/sources) and personnel resources necessary to implement conservation actions.
- f. Recommend to private, State or Federal land managers at least one project that benefits the purpose of the Charter.
- g. Develop an implementation schedule of actions.
- h. Identify those responsible for implementing conservation actions.
- i. Provide annual written updates of progress to the WGF Commission and other affected agencies.
- j. Conduct public information efforts that will both inform the public of the LWG's goals, efforts, and accomplishments and build support for those actions.

3) *Authority:*

- a. LWGs are integral to the decision-making process but they do not have decision-making authority. LWGs may influence agency policy but they do not have the authority to change policies mandated by state or federal law.
- b. Agency personnel participating on LWGs are expected to have the authority to represent their agency in the development of the LWG plans. Commitment of personnel or fiscal resources and signatory authority for the respective agencies resides with agency administrators.
- c. LWG plans shall be presented to agencies, landowners and other interested parties. Each organization, in continued communication and cooperation with the LWG, shall implement these plans as feasible within existing project prioritization, budgets, and personnel constraints. It is anticipated that sage-grouse and sagebrush management will continue to increase as an agency priority.
- d. LWG plans shall not be designed to exclude any uses or activities or infringe on legally defined private property rights.

4) Time Frame:

- a. The Department is committed to a three year sponsorship. At the end of three years, each group will be evaluated by the WGFD and a recommendation made to the Commission to determine if the group has met the expectations outlined within this charter, and the Commission will determine if continued sponsorship is warranted.

5) Organizational Structure:

- a. LWGs shall be comprised of individuals equitably representing local interests such as agriculture, conservation, and industry, federal, state, local and tribal governments.
- b. The WGFD shall appoint LWG members from a pool of qualified and interested parties who are credible representatives of the various local interests and who live or work in the area affected.
- c. LWGs shall not typically exceed 12 members. Exceptions will be considered by the WGFD if a reasonable rationale is presented by the LWG.
- d. LWGs shall prepare a mission statement and develop ground rules by their second meeting. These ground rules shall, at a minimum, outline how the groups will handle member replacement (if necessary), address chronic absenteeism by LWG members, define procedures for decision-making, identify procedures for how to deal with media contacts, determine how a chairperson will be selected and their length of service in that position, how/if individual LWG members can be removed from the group if they fail to fulfill the responsibilities identified in the charter, and how additional parties may obtain representation at LWG meetings. Other necessary procedural ground rules may also be identified.

6) Roles and Responsibilities:

- a. Individuals participating in a LWG are expected to:
 - i. Read and learn information quickly and accurately.
 - ii. Attend meetings regularly.
 - iii. Articulate interests, concerns and perspectives on issues.
 - iv. Maintain an open mind regarding other views.
 - v. Focus on “the big picture” as described within the Charter’s statement of Purpose and the LWG’s mission statement.
 - vi. Work as a team member to address the identified issues and implement plans created by the LWG.
 - vii. Use the state conservation plan as a guide and a reference point when addressing the issues and developing action plans.
 - viii. Participate collaboratively in group decision-making.
 - ix. Constructively manage conflict between group members.
 - x. Participate in public meetings and other community-wide activities to make the public aware of the LWG’s goals, efforts and accomplishments.
 - xi. Communicate on a regular basis, in either written or verbal format, with the group/agency the individual was selected to represent.
 - xii. Not publicly detract from group decisions.
 - xiii. Commit to participating for the full 3-year charter period.

- b. Each LWG Chairperson is expected to:
 - i. Coordinate with the facilitator to ensure meetings run effectively.
 - ii. Ensure the LWG ground rules and procedures are followed during group meetings and activities.
 - iii. Serve as group spokesperson unless stated otherwise in LWG ground rules.
 - iv. Work with the facilitator to build consensus among different points of view represented within the LWG.
 - v. Ensure an accurate meeting record is kept and distributed to LWG members in a timely manner.
 - vi. Be responsible for ensuring an annual summary of the LWG's activities and progress is submitted to the WGF Department in January of each year.
- c. Each LWG facilitator is expected to help the LWG achieve their outcomes by:
 - i. Serving the LWG as an impartial "process" specialist, ensuring that meetings are conducted as efficiently and effectively as possible.
 - ii. Assessing the LWG's progress in meeting agenda items set for each meeting and managing the group's time accordingly.
 - iii. Working with the Chairperson to develop an agenda for each meeting, providing a recorder, and ensuring that flip chart records are distributed to LWG members in a timely fashion.
 - iv. Establishing a clear context and structured framework for deliberations.
 - v. Ensuring the participation of all LWG members by creating an environment where all parties are comfortable.
 - vi. Developing and maintaining trust and respect within the group so that all individuals can express their opinion.
 - vii. Helping identify participant interests (rather than positions) and encourage collaboration and creative thinking.
 - viii. Evoking and encouraging the creativity of the group.
 - ix. Asking appropriate questions as necessary to stimulate understanding and consensus among group participants.
 - x. Preparing a sign in sheet documenting who is in attendance at each meeting.
 - xi. Being responsible for determining the best way to incorporate formal and informal public comment periods.
- d. The WGF representative on each LWG, in addition to their responsibilities as individual LWG members, will:
 - i. Be responsible for compiling the elements of the plan developed by the group into a draft document.
- e. General Public:
 - i. All meetings will be open to public attendance and public participation will be encouraged.
 - ii. A public participation period will be scheduled, and strictly adhered to, during each meeting.
- f. The WGF/Commission as the sponsoring agency will:
 - i. Respect the opinions of each member of the LWG.
 - ii. Publicly support the LWG process.

- iii. To the extent possible, provide technical information and support needed by the LWG to complete their charter.
- iv. Identify any portions of the final plan that are the product of only the Commission and not the LWG.
- v. To the extent possible, lead implementation of the final plan.

7) *Funding and Support:*

- a. LWG operating expenses (meeting facilities/equipment/expert speakers/etc.) will be funded via the WGFD budget and various grants as available.
- b. Non-governmental agency LWG member travel expenses (motel/meals/mileage) will be reimbursed by the WGFD.
- c. Project funding (amounts/sources) shall be recommended by the LWGs within the plans.