Fire Operations Best Management Practices for Sage-Grouse Conservation

- 1. Compile district-level information into state-wide sage-grouse tool boxes. Tool boxes will contain maps, listing of resource advisors, contact information, local guidance, and other relevant information for each district, which will be aggregated into a state-wide document.
- 2. Provide localized maps to dispatch offices and extended attack incident commanders for use in prioritizing wildfire suppression resources and designing suppression tactics.
- 3. Assign a resource advisor with sage-grouse expertise, or who has access to sage-grouse expertise, to all extended attack fires in or near sage-grouse habitat areas. Prior to the fire season, provide training to sage-grouse resource advisors on wildfire suppression organization, objectives, tactics, and procedures to develop a cadre of qualified individuals.
- 4. On critical fire weather days, pre-position additional fire suppression resources to optimize a quick and efficient response in sage-grouse habitat areas.
- 5. As appropriate, utilize existing fuel breaks, such as roads or discrete changes in fuel type, as control lines in order to minimize fire spread.
- 6. During periods of multiple fires, ensure line officers are involved in setting priorities.
- 7. To the extent possible, locate wildfire suppression facilities (i.e., base camps, spike camps, drop points, staging areas, heli-bases, etc.) in areas where physical disturbance to sage-grouse habitat can be minimized. These include disturbed areas, grasslands, near roads/trails or in other areas where there is existing disturbance or minimal sagebrush cover.
- 8. Power-wash all firefighting vehicles, to the extent possible, including engines, water tenders, personnel vehicles, and all-terrain vehicles (ATV) prior to deploying in or near sage-grouse habitat areas to minimize noxious weed spread.
- 9. Minimize unnecessary cross-country vehicle travel during fire operations in sage-grouse habitat.
- 10. Minimize burnout operations in key sage-grouse habitat areas by constructing direct fireline whenever safe and practical to do so.
- 11. Utilize retardant, mechanized equipment, and other available resources to minimize burned acreage during initial attack.
- 12. As safety allows, conduct mop-up where the black adjoins unburned islands, dog legs, or other habitat features to minimize sagebrush loss.
- 13. Adequately document fire operation activities in sage-grouse habitat for potential follow-up coordination activities.