



## National Association of Conservation Districts

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December 23, 2016

Attention: Mike McGee  
Bureau of Land Management  
Boise District Office  
3948 S. Development Ave  
Boise, ID 83705-5339

Submitted via email: [blm\\_id\\_bruneauowyheesagegrouse@blm.gov](mailto:blm_id_bruneauowyheesagegrouse@blm.gov)

RE: Comments on – *BOSH Project Draft EIS*

Mr. McGee:

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents America's 3,000 conservation districts and the 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. America's wildlife is precious and needs quality habitat to thrive. The majority of the nation's wildlife habitat is dispersed over privately owned lands. For over 70 years, conservation districts have worked with various partners to assist landowners and managers with the multitude of problems and opportunities associated with wildlife habitat management.

NACD supports the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) continuing to move forward with the proposed western juniper removal in Owyhee County and looks forward to the publication of the finalized Environmental Impact Statement.

The BLM's proposed early-stage juniper control is critical in order to honor the government's commitment to maintain and improve the sagebrush-steppe landscape and conserve the greater sage-grouse's habitat on public lands. In southwest Idaho, the western juniper is the primary threat to protecting the sage-grouse. By removing the juniper early, the BLM would be able to prevent the conversion of the land to woodlands and allow the sagebrush growth to recover in the area.

The draft EIS shows that through appropriate management actions, the proposed juniper removal will produce effective, measurable, and long-term changes beneficial to the greater sage-grouse with minimal environmental and economic impacts. By focusing on the early-stage juniper encroachment within the specific area of Owyhee County, the BLM will be able to provide an immediate benefit to the landscape by removing the invasive juniper before it can drastically alter the landscape, making sage-grouse conservation efforts harder and more costly.

NACD would like to thank the BLM for the opportunity to comment on the EIS and the juniper removal project. NACD looks forward to working with the BLM as it weighs the benefits of using smart conservation management practices to protect our nation's natural resources.

Sincerely,

*Lee D. McDaniel*

Lee McDaniel  
President