

Feds weigh mineral mining ban on 10M acres to protect bird

October 5 2016, by Keith Ridler

The federal government is using a new assessment of mineral resources on 10 million acres in six Western states to decide whether to ban potential mining on the land to protect an imperiled bird.

Scientists completed the 800-page review requested by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and it was released Tuesday. It looks at areas with high numbers of [sage grouse](#) and high-quality habitat for the bird.

The BLM says the study will help it evaluate the economic and environmental trade-offs of withdrawing the public lands from mining in Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming for 20 years.

The agency plans to release a draft environmental impact statement in December outlining possible alternatives.

Sage grouse have declined throughout their range, but industry groups fear losing access to minerals.

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