



## **MONTANA MITIGATION HQT BASEMAP (v1.0)**

### **MONTANA SAGE GROUSE HABITAT CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The Montana Mitigation HQT Basemap (HQT Basemap) is a useful pre-project planning tool which the Sage Grouse Program (the Program) offers to proponents interested in implementing conservation and/or development projects in designated sage grouse habitat. As estimated by the HQT model, the HQT Basemap depicts the baseline conditions of habitat quality and quantity for sage grouse. The HQT model then compares the HQT Basemap with predicted conditions following project implementation to calculate the impacts of project activities on sage grouse habitat, expressed as the Raw HQT Score.

For Credit Projects, the Raw HQT Score represents habitat lift or preservation and, after applicable policy multipliers are applied, is expressed as Functional Acres Gained. For Debit Projects, the Raw HQT Score represents habitat losses due to development and, after applicable policy multipliers are applied, is expressed as Functional Acres Lost.

### **UNDERSTANDING THE HQT BASEMAP IMAGE:**

The HQT Basemap is currently available as a jpeg image. The map depicts counties (thin gray lines), major interstates (thick black lines), and major cities (circled dots). Specific to the Montana Mitigation System, the map depicts the four service areas (thick purple lines). HQT Basemap values are only computed for areas inside designated sage grouse habitat. All light gray areas are outside designated sage grouse habitat and are not eligible for mitigation. HQT Basemap values range from low (blue) to high (red), where low values depict areas of low habitat quality and high values depict areas of high habitat quality.

### **USING THE HQT BASEMAP IMAGE FOR PRE-PROJECT PLANNING:**

The HQT Basemap image can be useful for pre-project planning for proponents to obtain a general understanding of the existing habitat quality in their area of interest. For Credit Projects, the greatest number of credits generated per physical acre of land conserved will be projects located in redder areas, depicting higher habitat quality. For Debit Projects, mitigation obligations will be lowest for projects located in bluer areas, depicting lower habitat quality. Overall, the HQT Basemap is useful to proponents by providing an indication of the degree of impact to sage grouse habitat from proposed activities.

The Program [has incorporated the HQT Basemap as a layer into the Program's online interactive map](https://sagegrouse.mt.gov/ProgramMap) (available at: <https://sagegrouse.mt.gov/ProgramMap>). Among other spatial data, the Program's map currently contains geospatial information on designated sage grouse habitat.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Visit <https://sagegrouse.mt.gov> for general information about the Program, to read the Executive Orders, for detailed documents about the Montana Mitigation System (the Policy Guidance Document and the HQT Technical Manual), and to submit your project to the Program for review.

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**

If you have additional questions or need assistance with submitting your project online, please contact the Program at 406-444-1467 or 406-444-2613 or email us at [sagegrouse@mt.gov](mailto:sagegrouse@mt.gov).