

Sage-grouse biologist call
February 19, 2015

Attendees:

Holly Friefeld	Kathleen Hendricks	Terry Quesinberry
Jay Martini	Jeff Berglund	Jessie Gonzalez
Dawn Davis	Pauline Hope	Apple Snider
Terry Ireland	Alex Schubert	Amy Nicholas
Erin Madson	Kevin Doherty	Angela Burgess
Jesse D'Elia	Craig Hansen	Jennifer Siani
Pat Deibert	Lara Drizd	Jim Lindstrom
Lisa Solberg-Schwab	Kevin Shelley	Betsy Herrman
Kate Norman	Jeff Everett	Drue DeBerry

CED review – Holly –

- Almost every state has a voluntold person, sans OR.
- Lief and Holly are working with Justin Welty for reporting
- Webinar on 2/24 to educate folks on the process, with another one scheduled later if folks can't make Tuesday – information forthcoming
- 6000+ records, but first review will be approx. 350 – those projects that have been reported as completed and effective, and those addressing priority threats by MZ and greater than 500 acres.
- Completion due by mid-March

Evaluation of land use plans/regulatory mechanisms - Craig –

- may or may not be in the CED
- developing a method to review these efforts
- will be reporting results to the chapter writers for incorporation into the species chapters
- hoping it won't be a huge ask
- welcomes ideas on how to make this as easy as possible
- going to try for consistency with previous conservation plans for individual species
- Gunnison listing – Grand Junction received guidance on how to do – Craig will check in with Terry
- How will CCAAs be handled? Do they need to be final with permits issued? No answers at this time, will be part of the discussion as we move forward. The current draft flow chart being considered for other regulatory mechanisms may work for CCAAs review as well.

RD meeting – Kate

- notes are posted on status review sharepoint
- most of the discussion focused on the need for a facilitator, and the process of hiring (for May meetings)
- May meetings - 2 of them devoted to status review with the RDs; the first meeting more informational, and the second more focused on evaluation
- discussion of mitigation framework by the mitigation team (Shauna, Lee and Drue) – developing a process but is in very early stages - more info coming

Upcoming meetings

- State Directors webinar – 2/24 – will be happening monthly until June, then twice a month after that, agenda for this one is still pending (likely CED, fire, and species report status). Are field folks expected to check in before the webinar with their state to identify issues that may be of concern? guidance forthcoming.
- CED review webinar – 2/24
- NRCS 3/5 – to understand the data submission and ensure we have everything we need and to provide a further update on the status and objectives of SGI moving forward
- North American Conference and EOC meeting 3/8 – 3/13 – no agenda yet
- SGTF 3/30 – 31 – no agenda yet
- BLM implementation meeting in March has been cancelled

Grazing white paper – has anyone been meeting with any producers or grazing associations and what has been the response?

- WA has – the CCAA template has not worked well due to local concerns. The grazing paper was also presented with minimal pushback – but did concerns re: application of rest rotation practices because it was different than current processes.
- Predators are a continuing issue for landowners – we don't have a white paper or talking points – Pat will reach out to our EA folks to develop some outreach
- In ND, WNV is also a concern

Fire/FIAT – Dawn –

- FIAT reports were due by end of Feb.
 - Received drafts for 5 assessment areas and provided comments back.
 - Due to the level of comments received the deadline was extended (lots of revisions and new GIS information).
 - Assessments should be completed by 3/22.
 - If comments are not included in the final BLM will provide an explanation as to why.
- Closely tied to Secretarial Order on fire – development of implementation plan (road map to completing the SO – 9 action items); outline the actions completed before 2015 fire season (due in March); and actions for 2016 fire season and beyond (due in May).
- Draft implementation plan is out – FWS is on teams for the 9 action items
- Dawn Davis and John Segar are the POC for FWS on these
- may need to reach out to FOs in the future if specific items are needed.
- Listening session 2/18 to inform folks about the SO and the draft report.
- these assessments are currently limited to GB but will be RW at a later date

“Buffers” vs. “Area of influence” – Pat –

- Terminology clarification – *Buffer* should be used when it is providing a protective value, such as a lek buffer. *Area of influence* is the influence of a threat of on a landscape – indirect effects.
- GIS folks have been directed to only map the footprint of a threat and not include area of influence. However, species report authors should thoroughly discuss the indirect effects in their write-ups. Indirect effects will be an important consideration in the analyses, but not mapped.
- GIS team is developing a consistent measure for threat types for use across the range.
- information on this can be found on the sharepoint site under the GIS category

Species report update – Amy

- 6 or 7 chapters that are still in draft (grazing, Oil and gas, predation, small populations, conifers, tall structures, contaminants) –
- hope to be out for review by end of month then delivered to ARDs 3 weeks later

Mapping – Kevin

- Appears to be some discrepancies with the current occupied range – some leks appear to be outside the range
- How to resolve? Kevin will work with GIS folks and Pat to figure out how to move forward (and maybe bring in Jon Dinkins from U.W. for advice)

'Round the lek:

WA – Jessie – transmission line – COT consistency table – submit to agency directly or via NEPA? (either would work). When do we assess? Action agency would like it early to understand to see if alternative will change. We may not have enough time and staff to do multiple versions of the COT report so focus on the final alternative. If there is more time interim assessments are probably o.k. but the action agency can also do their own assessment.

ND – Kevin – conversation with SCS and NRCS – incentive based program for producers (CSP?) – in process program (not final yet). Could be an exciting opportunity and we need to be involved if it is beneficial to our trust resources (and provide incentives if possible). part of CRP - Kevin will do some digging on this program to see if we can figure out how to grow sage-grouse on private lands that also helps the landowner.

UT – Jay - Governor signed an EO for sage-grouse last week – primarily focused on directing state agencies to comply with Governor's conservation plan. Directed oil and gas folks to implement recommendations from UDWR (but remaining area for development within PACs is minimal); prioritizing fire and suppression; and prioritizing money to be spent on projects that would not remove sagebrush. Only 2 year life, but is a step forward.

MT – Jeff – State senate bill introduced to establish a stewardship fund for sage-grouse and facilitate compensatory mitigation for grouse. No movement on EO, but have heard that there will be a clarifying memorandum soon. BLM quiet.

WY – Pat – State has done a scheduled re-opening of the WY EO – have promises from the Governor's office that the new order to be signed by August will be no less than the current order. Mark Sattleberg is on the team for the state.

PEER FOIA – Jesse – all e-mails that have the word sage-grouse in them – R1 has over 3,000 emails