Free Roaming Equids and Ecosystem Sustainability Network

POPULATION MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP
12/15/2020

Attending: Rick Karcich, Kayla Grams, Ursula Bechert, Peggy Coleman Taylor, Celeste Carlisle, Beth Calloway, Eric Thacker, Mark Fraker, Brieanah Schwartz, Sarah King, Stephanie Boyles-Griffin, Esther Rubin, Kimberly Frank, Redge Johnson, and Rae Ann Hart

Next Meeting: January 19, 2021, at 1:00 PM Mountain Time

Discussion:
The meeting began with introductions of participants. Ursula gave an update on the toolbox paper (review of fertility control options). This will be published in *Human-Wildlife Interactions* (HWI) next year in a special issue. If others in the group have a case study of how to organize a collaborative project, this would be a nice addition to go along with current research. It was also noted that Botstiber has a nice repository of research papers on fertility control [link is on website].

The purpose of the meeting was to go over tasks and clarify any questions. In our next meeting we will prioritize tasks and ask for people to work on each task. These tasks originated from the Summit. The discussion on the research priorities included questions about how BLM determines their research goals and how do they contract researchers to do the work. How do we get buy in from BLM (especially at middle and upper management levels) when we identify research we would like to see done? There are parallel efforts from other groups who have ideas on research priorities. We need to understand what needs BLM has and what needs other concerned groups have. BLM might take a look at what we develop if we give a strong presentation. We can talk to BLM about questions people would like to address through research. When we show that various groups have similar questions, that should give the research more priority. BLM is working on a research plan. In the past, fertility control has been at the top of the list and it is hard to get other projects approved.

It was suggested to put a history of our discussions somewhere so people can go back and see what was said during meetings. SLACK is a good software to record conversations. Notes are taken at each meeting but haven't been posted to the website since they haven't been approved. We will review minutes at the first part of the meeting so they can be made public. Another thing we can do at each meeting is ask for updates on each task from the sub-group.

Organizing local working groups for each HMA or are is a good idea and effective in a lot of places. In other areas, it's too remote and hard to work so people aren't really interested. Cooperative monitoring agreements occur when the BLM agrees with other groups to do

monitoring duties (e.g., vegetation, help with contraception). It would be nice if we could share data between groups. How do we make it accessible and have a useful protocol? One hurdle is BLM is hesitant to accept data from other groups. The Science and Conservation center is trying to work on data collaboration. WIMS data is used to manage herd treatments so that volunteers can identify the animal and make sure the correct horse is treated. Contact Kimberly Frank if you need a connection to obtain data. They have been successful at obtaining data because people know how it will be used. Should we work on creating consistent methodology to collect data so it can be better used? This could be a real hornet's nest right now but we could work on it – perhaps in the future. Could we pick a subject and see how trainable volunteers are? Most research is collected based on the objectives; what questions are being addressed. We could ask BLM what data they have and see how to work with them using methods for data collection that they can accept or adopt. As a federal agency, BLM data is public data but doesn't seem to be standardized. It was collected for different research goals. The data BLM gathered may have used methods for a different goal than other group's goals. If we develop methodology for different goals that will allow a much easier transfer of data. We can ask who is in charge of BLM's database. As we think about methodology, we need to decide how in-depth data collection should be for volunteers. We should also consider what the BLM's agenda is. Perhaps we should look at a different avenue rather than continue on the same effort.

We all need to review the tasks and decide where we would like to put in some work. Should we add in creating a standard methodology for objectives so data can be compared effectively at different sites.

Action Items:

- Review group tasks and think about priorities

- Decide what tasks individuals want to work on

- Think about adding a task to work on cooperative data collection methods for specific goals

Next Meeting: January 19 at 1 PM (Mountain Time)

Note this is a change from our Noon meeting time in the past.

Agenda items will include

- Review and approve meeting notes

- Prioritize tasks

- Assign people to work on tasks (3-5 people who will give bigger group updates)

- Discuss adding new task on data collection methods