



POPULATION MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

1/26/2021

Attending: Eric Thacker, Mark Fraker, Rick Karcich, Holly Kennedy, Tolani Francisco, Kimberly Frank, Greg Hendricks, Mark Boshell, Kayla Grams, Ursula Bechert, David Stoner, Stephanie Boyles-Griffin, Celeste Carlisle, Sarah King, and Rae Ann Hart

Next Meeting: February 16 at 1 PM (Mountain Time)

Discussion:

FREES is growing and we are adjusting as needed. The Population Management Working Group will probably remain using the same focus as before. We want everyone to be heard and included but it's hard to get things done in large groups so we may focus more on smaller topics and completing tasks.

The notes from Dec. 15 were approved and will be posted on-line.

As we looked at tasks assigned to the group we want to work on what we can accomplish that doesn't require a lot of funding. Also prioritize what group members have time and interest in completing. Who is our consumer/audience? Why should we work on a task? We want to make that part of the process so our outcomes are valuable. Sharing information is important. We can find out what is happening, challenges people are facing, and how to help each other. Sharing expertise and information helps everyone in a timely manner. Although we don't all agree on a lot of things, we can work on common ground. One of the things we would like to do is work with local groups in regional areas. Redge had volunteered to use Utah as a trial to develop a blueprint to help others start creating partnerships on projects. We can work on creating a network to share data in an area and then document successes and obstacles. Mark B. could help reach out to groups in the state of Utah on a project. We would want to think about creating a way to share info and information updates and work progressed even some sort of project organizing software. One thing we have noticed across the range is that there are areas or HMAs that have received a lot of attention and we have very little info on others. It would be nice to work in some areas that are not getting much attention to see what needs are.

We discussed data sharing and how difficult it can be. There are inconsistent methods and it would be hard to standardize. Fear of data being misused or misinterpreted is also a problem. Transparency is important although some things like VHF frequencies cannot be shared. We could facilitate groups helping each other but really aren't in a position to be storing/sharing/interpreting data. To facilitate sharing we would need to identify who has data

for the particular area. Find out if the groups are willing to share and interested in working together. Once we know who is collecting data that is willing to work on a collaborative project, we can look and see where the holes are and what information is needed. We can work with group to figure out who wants to work and where they can help before asking for data.

We need to understand what data BLM has and how to find it for an area. Strategic planning is needed. AIM protocols are used when BLM collects vegetation data. We want to look across HMAs so that we have representative samples across the range. Counting animals that are moving around is difficult. We have encountered times when herd specialists have data that doesn't trickle up to administration. Once an area and/or project is identified, then we can form a directory of those who want to be involved. Then we can learn how projects are established and prioritized in that area. Be sure to check if we are making ecological management decisions for the good of the land as well. All species depend on the land (habitat) in the area they live. After we get a project/collaboration going, we can transfer the process from one area to another.

The WHB handbook is very old and needs to be updated. This handbook is given to new BLM employees but most new employees are unaware of current data practices. Turnover is high within the WHB program. Celeste will send out a copy of the handbook for the group. We want to work with BLM employees and be supportive since they have a difficult job.

One of our tasks was to Define a Thriving Ecological Balance. BLM may have to develop a legal definition to defend in court. It's a difficult task since thriving is so subjective; who gets to decide what it means? Simply monitoring water sites can be problematic.

For now our group will focus on Task 2 & 3 then the first Task becomes easier. We will assess data collection available from non-BLM sources and BLM data. Focus on feasibility and practical solutions ideas. Things we can work on together.

Let Eric know if you have ideas or want to work on the other tasks.

Action Items:

Celeste will send out a copy of the BLM's WHB handbook for the group.

Contact Eric if you have ideas or want to work on the other tasks.

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