

**BARM
BOX ELDER
COUNTY**

Date: Friday May 26, 2005

Time: 6:00 PM

Place: BLM Rosebud Cabin

Planning/scoping
meeting

Members Present: Todd Black (USU EXT), Kirt Enwright (DWR), Jan Knerr (USU), Sarah Lupis (USU EXT), Ron Greer (DWR), Allen Kunzler (Private Landowner), Ken Spackman (Landowner/Chair), Adam Kozlowski (UDWR), Terry Messmer (USU EXT), Tim Schlegel (USU), John Pratt (UDWR), Cindy Ledbetter (BLM), Dena Santini (USFS), Curtis Warrick (BLM)

Information Presented

SOP—The SOP was reviewed again; no comments were made.

MOU—The MOU passed out and reviewed. A few comments were made during the meeting and revisions were made on site. Todd and Terry stressed the importance of having the agreement to help with getting funding. The Group will have until the next meeting to review the new additions to the MOU and hopefully, the Group can finalize the document at the next meeting and begin getting signatures.

The Group reviewed the first draft of Chapter 2.

Discussion Highlights

The MOU map was discussed. Kirt suggested that we reword some of the site descriptions in the text (specifically language regarding making subunit divisions based on sage-grouse population distribution). Adam suggested dividing the subunits by HUCs, Ken suggested that the subunit divisions go along SCD lines. The group agreed that using existing boundaries would be a good thing to do. Karl also pointed that NRCS projects may be awarded based on watersheds.

Chapter 2 was discussed. Todd suggested that the population data be summarized in 10-year increments from the beginning of collection to 2000; after that, summarize lek count information annually. John pointed out that “new” and “historical” leks should be considered carefully because lek sites move around. Terry recommended trying to incorporate into the discussion a record of how leks have moved around, how monitoring has been conducted, and the expert opinion of UDWR biologists regarding population trends. John also pointed out that lek trends seem to fluctuate naturally and that this should be considered as part of management goals. Ken

and Allen reminded the group that population trends may be occurring on a larger time-scale than 10 years—that even 40 years may not be an appropriate time frame to evaluate population trends over. Karl suggested that Lynn James might be a good resource for historical information about the Grouse Creek area because he's lived here a long time.

The nesting section was discussed. John informed the group that radio-collars were put on sage-grouse in Grouse Creek by John Kimball in the 70s. Regarding the Curlew Valley study, there was not much information provided about nesting. Kirt believes that the study was done to learn more about migration and hunter harvest.

Wing barrels and check station data is available from the DWR, potentially going back to the mid-80s. Kirt has some data (about 10 years worth) of classified wings based on areas (there are about 8 areas or complex).

Predator sections will be covered mostly by Mike Bodenchuck. Todd also asked Allen and Ken to recount predator population information.

Development section—little development has been done in the area. A few sections have been developed. Terry said that it will still be important to mention this in the Plan. Kirt felt that perhaps a development broke up a lek at one point but, Allen didn't remember it that way.

Agriculture—Todd is hoping to get historical stocking rates for sheep and cattle allotments. Allen indicated that farming has not changed much.

Fire—does the group want to have this section?

Terry suggested having a paragraph on the Access Management Plan.

Habitat Projects were discussed. The Western Watersheds settlement was discussed. Ron gave a very brief update on habitat projects to be implemented in the fall. Terry pointed out that Extension will be doing monitoring on those habitat projects and would like to meet with Steve and Ron about that. Ron pointed out that the UDWR will also be doing some monitoring on those sites. Baseline and 2-years post monitoring will take place and then it gets fuzzy what will happen after that.

Todd updated the group on the treatment projects. Plots have been delineated; however, the Grouse Creek Grazing association has not yet approved the project because they are still getting bids on the work. Adam and John stressed that it will be important for those areas to be inventoried prior to treatments.

Actions Taken

Meeting minutes from March were approved.

The Group approved Chapter/Section 1 of the Conservation Plan.

Follow-up Needed

Group to review SOP and MOU—comments due on **JUNE 13th**.

Group will try to have signatures for the MOU by the next meeting.

Todd will look into HUC and SCD boundaries and try to adjust the subunit boundaries to conform to existing divisions.

Assignments for Chapters 1 & 2:

Kirt and John to update sage-grouse population and distribution information for the Resource Area with some narrative about past experiences. Allen will also provide a first-hand narrative on the history of sage-grouse populations in the area over his lifetime.

Todd to amend Chapter/Section 2 with language regarding population fluctuation, movement of lekking areas, etc.

Todd to find out more about past information on nesting.

Kirt to provide data about wing harvest/hunter harvest.

Todd to summarize wing data/hunter harvest data for the section on potential threats.

Deeni and Curtis Warnik or Mike Johnson (BLM) to provide historical information about stocking rates and livestock use in this area for as far back as they can find.

Todd to contact Lynn James about historical grazing practices, sage-grouse populations, and other information the group needs for the Conservation Assessment.

Lyle to summarize socio-economic changes in the area.

Todd to get a copy of the Access Management Plan and summarize as a section or paragraph in Section 2.

Assignments are DUE by Friday, July 8th

Next meeting is Thursday, July 28, 2005, 6:00 PM at the Rosebud Cabin.

Cindy will bring a synopsis of the Western Watersheds litigation settlement to the next meeting.