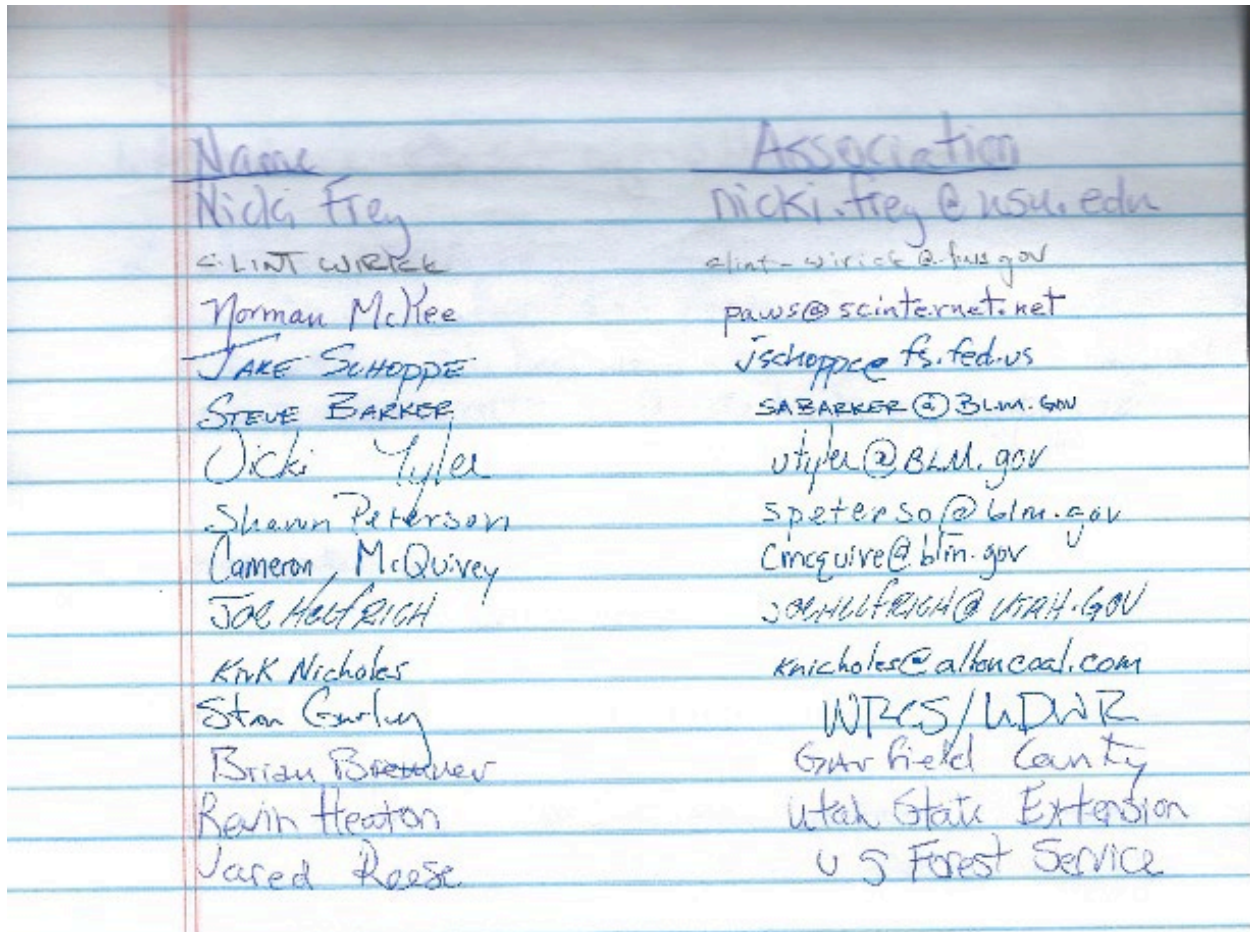


CCARM Meeting Minutes

Introductions -Attendance Sheet



| Name | Association |
|------------------|-------------------------|
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| Kirk Nicholas | knicholas@altoucoal.com |
| Stan Gurling | WRCS/WDNR |
| Brian Brannen | GWR field County |
| Ravin Heaton | Utah State Extension |
| Jared Reese | U S Forest Service |

I. Project Presentations

During this meeting, project managers were given time to present their WRI project proposals that might impact Greater Sage-grouse. This allows the local working group the opportunity to suggest ideas and collaborations to these projects. The presentations were encouraged to be very informal to allow a conversation about the project. The idea was to present the areas, the acres and the possible impacts. Notes are as follows

1. N Buckskin/Fremont — Little Bear

1. Continuation of last year's project to open up the valley and connect Buckskin to Dog north of highway 20

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2. Treatments occurring this year with NRCS to get trees out
 3. Phase 3 pinyon and juniper that needs to be opened up.
 4. There will be some wetlands clean up; could create some terrific summer habitat
 5. Grouse are already using this area; could help open up these corridors.
2. Hatch Bench S
 1. 800 acre lop and scatter, 300 ac mowing
 2. Removing old fence; lop and scatter in majority
 3. Will go through the state sections to the north
 4. Permittee has been contacted; also working with SITLA for rotational grazing
 5. Year-round habitat – this is where grouse move through between Alton and Hoyts
3. S Canyon/Sevier River
 1. Mixed treatment methods
 2. Private and federal property
 3. Multi-game species benefit – particularly Utah Prairie Dogs, grouse
 4. b/c NRCS is involved, grazing deferred for 2 years minimum
 5. project to restore sagebrush steppe habitat, ponderosa stands
 6. landscape looks dry but there is a history of the area responding well to treatments
 7. to increase corridor among locations (possibly to Bryce)
4. Upper Kanab Creek
 1. Part 1: Alton – maintenance lop and scatter (473 acres)
 2. Maintain sagebrush desert habitat for grouse
 3. Part 2: Buck Knoll lop and scatter, bull hog
 4. Part 3: P-J bull hog, phase 1 (423 acres)
 5. Is next to an area that burned but now needs ‘maintenance’

5. Mud Springs (USFS)
 1. This project encompasses 30,000 acres that need various treatments, with various stages of tree invasion and 'closed canopy' sagebrush
 2. This Mud Springs is located down Tom Best Springs road in Johns Valley
 3. Focused on managing pinyon-juniper encroachment
 4. Proposing to hand thin 1044 acres of sagesteppe
 5. Phase 1 is ready: hand thinning on sagebrush steppe
 6. Phase 2 (proposing in this year's WRI): bull hog and hand thin around Ponderosa to connect into Phase 1. The bull hog areas will require a rest from grazing; working with permittees to determine which will be willing to participate
6. Skutempah Terrace
 1. The monument (AKA the Grand Staircase – Escalante National Monument) has an EA about to be signed. This is a phased EA with multiple species and habitat objectives to remove pinyon and juniper from the area. Will need to seed but the area has demonstrated success with this method.
 2. Chain harrow to thin sagebrush
 1. Important to thin out the sagebrush to create usable habitat. Grouse are using area around this section, essentially avoiding the dense sagebrush
 3. Proposing cultural evaluation of Cutler Point to clear it for the next phase
 4. Prefer to chain harrow, because in that soil type, a pipe harrow essentially scrapes the vegetation down to the ground.
 5. Grazing will be rested a minimum of 2 years.
7. Upper Kanab Creek Tamarisk and Russian Olive Removal (19 private landowners' collaboration)
 1. Starting from Kanab right now, but propose to begin at UKC headwaters and work their way down
 2. Approximately 2000 acres, but 700 proposed for phase 1

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3. Cleans up the wet meadow restoring hydrology and vegetation; creates much needed brood rearing habitat for grouse
4. Multi species benefit
5. Russian olive invasion correlates to a Phase 1-Phase2 Pinyon-Juniper stand
6. Asking ISM for \$150,00 to help with costs
7. FFSL may partner up as well; \$9000 commitment from the landowners
8. BLM and USFWS Partners indicated they would be willing to partner with this project
 1. USFWS willing to help create and sign agreement to be a non-monetary partner
 2. Farm Bill bio offered to help draw up an agreement that the landowners can sign to indicate their intent to participate.

II. Revised Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-grouse in Utah; Ben Nadolski

The day before, at the Southwest Desert LWG meeting, Ben provided a presentation outlining the changes to the state Greater sage-grouse plan. Dr. Frey attempted to take notes as the information was printed on the presentation or expressly stated by Mr. Nadolski, as follows. He gave permission to allow these notes to be included in the CCARM meeting minutes.

1. Focus is on planning participation, litigation, policy coordination
2. Coordinating the implementation among state and federal partners
3. The BLM and the FS are both updating their plans during this time
4. State plan approved in 2013; FS and BLM plans approved in 2015; USFWS not warranted determination
 - State of Utah filed suit against USFS and BLM
 - Zinke issued SO 3353 in 2017 mandating USFS and BLM to coordinate with the states to make plans better
 - BLM and FS made recommendations, DWR and PLPCO represented the Governor at the WGA task force

- Zinke ordered a NEPA process for BLM; USFS followed suit
 - SO, state, USFS, and BLM are simultaneously re-writing their plans
5. PIC met in August 2017 to review; held 24 stakeholder meetings to get public input.
- All local working groups are considered stakeholders
 - About 12 other groups also considered stakeholders
 - About 12 NGOs special interest groups involved
 - About 15 state and federal agencies involved
6. the plan was broadly supported by a lot of people but lacks clarity and doesn't communicate the full suite of Utah's conservation efforts. All the partnerships should be mentioned to highlight the level of work that is actually going on in the state.
7. By 2017, the plan created in 2013 was outdated. We had more data, more knowledge, and more adaptive management to lead us.
- Things that didn't change
 1. Plan remains voluntary
 2. Still uses SGMAs
 3. Still have seasonal habitat classifications, but have a small tweak
 4. Emphasis on habitat protection and creation
 - Things that did change
 1. Structural, specific, adaptive
 2. Structural: reorganize, clarify, and consolidate, including an executive summary
 - Revised conservation goals and objectives to link directly to the threats and strategies
 - Conservation strategies will be linked directly to threats clearly
 - Categorized threats as statewide or local

3. Specific: Updated science throughout (e.g. don't map the opportunity areas because they were getting misused)

- Make it clear that this is a 5-year plan
- Focus on mesic habitat restoration
- Transition vs. 'other' habitats - clarify the definition of what this actually is. Will be using the term "transition" habitat.
- Clarify the roles of the LWGs explicitly

4. Adaptive Revisions

- Put the appendices online and reference these in the document
- Disturbance cap monitoring - we have to change the way we are doing that, in that we aren't actually doing it yet. Will align with the federal plans for monitoring
- Proposed MOU with federal partners - commitment to help each other with implementing their plans. We need each other to make our plans work.
- Incorporate new compensatory mitigation program
- Emphasis on controlling invasive weeds
- Describe duties and membership of Plan Implementation Council
- Incorporate implementation authorities
- Adaptive management framework to evaluate statewide and local population trends. Works with a 20-year rolling average; the hope is to have triggers that help us identify problem areas before they draw the attention of federal triggers.
- Using telemetry data to identify, model and map seasonal habitats. This map should be used simultaneously by state and federal groups.
- Habitat guidelines developed by USU will be used by state and FS plan.

8. Final Steps and Timeline

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- BLM DEIS is on the register and open for comments until the 9th of January
- Governor's signature is hopeful for next week so that we can have it ready to roll on January 1, 2018
- USFS DEIS is on the register and open for comments until the 4th? Of January

Questions: What happens after 5 years? We'll revisit the plan again and go through the process again. See what works and what didn't. The federal agencies will be revising their plans too.

III. Joe Helfrich is RETIRING

1. Todd Miller will be taking over for Joe, in working with the Alton Coal Mine activities
2. There is a new DOGM GIS specialist who is interested in using drones to assist with vegetation assessments.

IV. Federal Grouse Plans update

1. Jared Reese and Vicki Tyler provide a quick update
2. The BLM FEIS went out for review, comments due Jan 9, 2019.
3. The first part of February is the intended timeline for a record of decision
4. You can focus on Chapter 2

All Hands, All Lands conference February 5-7 in Salt Lake City.

<https://utahalllandsallhands.org/>

WRI Dates: Proposals Due Jan 11; Presentations February 12;

Next Meeting: March 13, 2019. 10am -12pm. Garfield County Court House meeting room, Panguitch UT.