

CCARM Minutes

1. Introductions - passed a sheet around, and I will post that to our CBCP website (cbcputah.org). 15 People in attendance

2. Watershed Restoration Initiative discussion

- proposals due January 19th
 - there have been a lot of changes to the format. Please read the guidelines prior to submitting your proposal. There are people that can help provided guidance and answer any questions (Vicki Tyler, BLM; Clint Wirick, USFWS; Nicki Frey, USU Extension)
 - In February, we'll go over the projects in CCARM meeting to discuss project issues.
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3. Adjustment to season classifications of Sage-grouse Maps. Led by UDWR - Rhett Boswell

- brought map of the GPS locations 2013-2015 (GPS satellite telemetry) and 2005-2009 (VHF telemetry). Coded by season for points, and then overlaid them with the UDWR seasonal polygons
 - there were several polygons that are classified as brood/summer where there have been a large presence of use in the winter.
 - Rhett proposed to reclassify that to year-round use.
 - Discussion ensued, much of it about the habitat map in general and concerns over occupied versus opportunity habitat.
 - Focusing on the question, most at the table agreed that it made sense to reclassify the polygons as year-round.
 - Will reclassify these seasonal use areas to "year-round" or "general" use; will not change the shape.
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3. General Mapping Discussion - led by those in attendance

- continued discussion on occupied vs. opportunity classification

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- a portion of the discussion centered on the differing definitions of "occupied" and "opportunity" of those in attendance
- Bill James, UDWR, provided clarification regarding the intent of the map, and the purposeful decision to map at a "distance" (e.g. 65,000:1), creating a broad-stroke map.
- discussion on how and when to adjust the maps based on data such as: changing opportunity to occupied to reflect habitat treatments; changing occupied to opportunity based on data and local rationale
- need to maintain a consistent mapping process throughout the state; be cautious of the "swiss-cheese" approach. This is created by excising "non-habitat" at a closer scale (e.g. 10,000:1). If we excise all "non-habitat" it eliminates areas that might be valuable for corridors. You might also end up putting development in that "non-habitat" that could lead to indirect impacts in adjacent occupied habitat.

4. Alton Coal Development North Lease mapping discussion

- Let by Rhett Boswell, UDWR - presented a map of all telemetry and satellite locations, separated as VHF locations collected prior to the mine, and GPS satellite locations collected after the mine has been active.
- Identified private and treated areas
- State has been asked to take a closer look at this and determine if we are classifying occupied and opportunity, and seasonal polygons, correctly.
- General thought was that we should keep it as it is defined until we have more data, particularly from birds after the mine has been active.

5. Mapping Habitat Definition Discussion part 2

- Started with a background provided by Bill James
 - the purpose of the map was to create a map from a broad brush planning analysis
 - once we get to specific decisions, we will then get to the smaller scale where we look at fine-scale definitions on the ground.
 - At that point UDWR looks at slope, ecological site descriptions, actual grouse use and other data that can help with fine details

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- Ben Nadowski (Utah Department of Natural Resources)
 - most concerns are that UDWR actually DOES review the maps at a fine scale.
 - currently they are working toward writing a mitigation plan
 - they are interested in how the working groups and the UDWR interpret opportunity areas and occupied habitat, and the non-habitat within the occupied habitat
- Need to ensure that the non-habitat within the occupied habitat be identified with each potential action
- Mitigation should focus on the type of habitat that will be lost, not just on the type of habitat that will be removed
- Concern that federal lands and private lands need to be considered. Don't just look to private lands!
- But much of the brood-rearing habitat is on private lands, so that will create mitigation
- How will mitigation plan address mitigation for wet meadow habitats?
- How to we handle opportunity areas in mitigation?
- Concern about the consistency of philosophy regarding using the ecological site descriptions to drive habitat treatments and habitat goals. We need to make sure this is actually happening when we create treated areas.
 - example: if the soil types and slope, etc. identifies that area as pinyon- juniper, these areas should not have pinyon-juniper removal
 - concern that different agencies are using different science to come to those conclusions

6. Future Research Plan

- Dog Valley 10 transmitters
- refurbishing about 6 transmitters, will decide where they should go and put those back out
- discussion followed about what the research has shown
- Current research in the area - 2 transmitters funded by Alton Coal in the Sink Valley area; 1 transmitter remaining (active) from the 10 placed in the general Panguitch

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SGMA area in 2014. See above about refurbishing 6 that were in hand as of September 2015.

7. Other research

- how do we get coordinated research for species other than grouse?
 - bring it to the table and we can discuss it
 - doesn't have to go through WRI
 - but then it doesn't really get "counted" toward habitat efforts in the state; not to mention that it can help other projects and help support management plans of other species.
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8. Candidate Conservation Plan with Assurances

- Jay Martini provided an overview of what the program is.
 - field questions about the pros and cons of the program
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9. Next Meeting Date

February 17th - Research Presentation; WRI projects presented and commented on
10:00 - 1:00 pm

Other meeting dates for 2016: April 13th; June 8th; August 10th; October 12th;
December 7th