

CCARM local working group minutes

Date: 1/21/09

Time: 10am -12 pm

Location: Triple C Arena, Panguitch

Attending: Joe Helfrich Div. of Oil, Gas and Mining

Susan White Div. of Oil, Gas, and Mining

Ingrid Wieser Div. of Oil, Gas, and Mining

Wally Dodds Upper Sevier Watershed

Steven Petersen Alton Coal/BYU

Dustin Schaible UDWR

Neil Perry UDWR

John Keeler Farm Bureau

Kevin Heaton USU EXT

Chris McCourt Alton Coal

Patrick Collins Mt. Nebo Science

Lisa Church BLM

Nicki Frey USU EXT

Proceedings:

- ❖ Chris McCourt from Alton Coal spoke regarding status of the mining operation.
 - The plan has already had a public comment and hearing period
 - It is now in technical review
 - Sept – Dec Alton Coal reviewed and responded to technical review
 - March 5th is the due date for the UDWR to finalize all comments
 - Alton Coal would like to start this summer, 2009
 - Draft EIS is almost complete, which is being conducted for the purpose of potentially leasing the adjacent federally owned coal resource. The BLM will determine if the coal will be leased based on the Final EIS. If the BLM decides to move forward with leasing, a competitive lease sale would then follow the EIS.
 - BLM has included the NPS in the EIS air analysis process so that they have input to the air dispersion modeling that will be used to quantify air quality impacts. Parking Services

- ❖ Steve Petersen presented a PPT (this should be attached to the minutes)
 - Discussed mitigation goals of Alton Coal
 - Need to enhance connectivity to increase the movement of birds between Alton and Heut's Ranch
 - Need to discuss the corridor size that would be created in the mitigation.
 - Plan to use current data on movements to refine the location
 - Approximately 1700 acres proposed

- Would probably want to have a field trip to see where the corridor would be
 - There has already been tree removal in approximately 75 acres located in the NE area above the lek site. We have found birds nesting in this area
 - Another mitigation concept proposed was to create a visual and auditory barrier via a soil barrier
 - Trapping in Alton – UDWR is currently not supportive of this, due to unknown stresses on the birds at a period when they can be further stressed by the mining activities
 - UDWR would support leg bands and flushing surveys in the fall
 - Would need to set up a monitoring schedule with the UDWR to determine how frequently we would survey
 - Would we use bird dogs for the survey/
 - The mining activity would be in the area of the lek for a maximum of 1 year. Intend to plant the disturbed area to grasses.
 - A Conservation Easement on the Heut's Ranch private property is a possible idea. Landowners may be willing to put that area away for conservation. Would Alton Coal and UDWR be amenable to using that CE as off-site mitigation? UDWR would need to hold the easement
- ❖ Oil Gas and Mining
- Responsible for reviewing the mining application
 - They are on the second set of reviews
 - Will do site visits with the UDWR
- ❖ WS Predator Control Update
- UDWR has a predator management plan for the areas of concern (Dutton, John's Valley, Paun)
 - UDWR will modify the plan to reflect our need for predator control to ease pressure on grouse
 - Group would like to see raven control at John's Valley dump site
 - We should ask Norm if he would like to monitor the raven activity before and after the predator control, to get a scientific measure of success

Regular attending meeting participants have determined the meeting schedule for the next year:

Jan 21, 2009
 April 15, 2009
 July 15, 2009
 October 21, 2009

All meetings will be held at the FS/NRCS offices in Panguitch unless otherwise notified.