

Ccarm June 13th 2012

Attendance sheet passed around:

Nicki Frey, USU EXT. Clint Wirick, USFWS. Bryant Shakespear, Garkane Energy. Kirk Nicholes, Alton Coal Development. Jake Shoppe, USFS. Norm McKee, county resident. Brian Bremner, Garfield County Commisioners rep and Garfield County EXT rep. Joe Helfrich, DOGM. Amy Defreese, USFWS. Lisa Church, BLM Kanab. Perry Thompson, OED/USTAR. Rhett Boswell, UDWR. Dustin Schaible, UDWR.

## Part 1

1. Nicki quick review of the Government Task Force process that we'll go over after Lunch
2. Dustin provided grouse update. Alton had 4, no new leks in skutempah , the rest of the leks are holding or increasing. Flushed a bird near Haycock. South canyon project looks great. ACD provide funding for 3 flights.
3. Skutempah update: after the field trip; to collect to gather information to determine how much shrub composition would be above average snow depth. NRCS looking at snowtel data now, the will run the transects. Trying to balance needs of permittees, blm and birds.
  1. Some project needed to allow the permittees to not default on GIP project
4. Joe- mitigation plan for Alton coal. Met with Peterson. Put final suggestions on the plan. Alton coal will provided edited plan back to DOGM. Includes Habitat management, predators, monitoring. Will go out in the field to identify areas next week.

## Part 2 Federal Lease Alton Coal Tract Mitigation Development Information Provided:

Map of Lease By Application

Map of Grouse Habitat

Got a copy of example mitigation plan via email and Ben handed out copies

Summary of last discussion posted on wall for review

A. Lisa gave a summary of example mitigation plan, explained the process briefly as to how to consider mitigation, focus on grouse, but how to consider the benefits to other species as well.

B. Amy requested a list of impacts and effects. Ben created a list to make sure we are all on the same page. We had basically made an assumption that we were on the Same page when we brainstormed mitigation ideas last week. So, we are taking a step back and make sure the impacts were all stated and nothing was missed.

1. Habitat loss and fragmentation - breeding, nesting, brood-rearing and winter
2. Effective habitat loss due to noise disturbance, traffic
3. Mortality of individuals by equipment, increased predators

4. What does this loss mean for the population in Alton/Sink Valley, adjacent populations, and the greater population of sage-grouse.

[120 acres of open activity process, with similar acres of land in rehabilitation, assuming 10 years for restoration process]

[Jake, Norm, Dustin: we shouldn't limit ourselves to looking at one population because we have no idea what the connectivity is. We really need to study this connectivity before we define our boundaries, discussion about whether or not there was connectivity, how we can use this information to the EIS, off-site and on-site mitigation]

Ben - sounds like we need to expand the analysis area, but we need to determine where we are going to see impacts from the mine versus where we are going to see benefits from mitigation

Amy - mitigation planning was a component in several actual mitigation plans. Collecting info (using research, continued monitoring, and others in order to establish what the limiting factors are to better target your mitigation and impacts.

Recap of the mitigation options list that was created at the last meeting. The following are clarifications:

#### A. Mitigation Issues

Who would be in charge of monitoring ? BLM, DoGM, 3rd party

Who has the authority to say if it worked or not? BLM, DoGM

Try to use adaptive management approach

#### B. Restoration/enhancements/protection

1. Onsite mitigation of vegetation treatment included directly and indirectly impacted area within the tract.

2. Offsite mitigation Garfield county has a policy of no net loss of private lands, so SITLA would be more appropriate for land acquisitions

#### C. Monitoring to track the mitigation efforts

1. Who develops protocols and enforces efforts? DoGM, BLM

2. Monitoring needs to be timed with the life cycle of the grouse

3. Add personnel for bird counts so that we have a more concerted effort

4. Additional research? Typically a study isn't considered mitigation

#### D. Avoidance

Activity to select mitigation strategies conducted during working lunch

Questions and issues:

1. What is the ratio we need? Science based on the area we are effecting (quality), risk Of mitigation success, some logical basis for the decision. Don't necessarily need literature references. Perhaps create a matrix that combines these things to offer different ratios. Need to take into account direct and indirect effects.

1. CCARM will take charge to create a matrix, bring examples to next meeting. Set up a meeting time for first week or so of July. FWS is gathering and summarizing examples of mitigation ratios.
2. We need to determine the boundary lines of offsite mitigation that captures the indirect effects of the mine ( connectivity issues).
2. Grazing resting 2 minimum of two years may not be needed. Perhaps have it say "when seeding is established" .
3. Purchasing land was a larger discussion that we tabled for later.

This represents Nicki's minutes of the SWCA process. Ben will forward a more thorough dictation.

1400-1530

Nicki attempted to facilitate a discussion of the Habitat Area proposed by the governor's task force.

Summary of Intro provided by Nicki: We have been given the opportunity to comment on this Polygon. The polygon was created by using the current occupied map with a buffer to provide for possible future expansion and currently undocumented dispersal. The goal is a conservation benefit. We want to identify areas that should be expanded (ex: habitat adjacent to current use could be treated to expand the population).

Additionally, we may reduce the perimeter of the polygon due to known reductions in potential habitat (ex: habitat has past the threshold for possible recovery) or long-term reductions in grouse populations. However, any reductions in habitat must have a biological defense in support off the reduction. Reductions should be limited; too many reductions would cause the task force to not take our suggestions seriously. Today we are just focusing on the purple perimeter, not what is inside. We need to know the will be inside before we worry about how to handle it. This introduction was interspersed with comments regarding the process.

There was comment that other Habitat Areas had already clipped interior areas out of their polygon. Nicki suggested that these groups were ahead of the panguitch group. We will use a step by step approach. But we need to be finished by the 20th with the comments to the perimeter.

Nicki Frey and Bryant Shakespeare have attended Task Force meetings. They explained the composition of the Task Force, and that the meetings were open meetings (in other words anybody could join the audience, but the task force followed their agenda, with opportunity for questions from the audience).

There was approximately 50 minutes of general discussion regarding concern over the management of areas *inside* of the polygon including: the road coverage used in the map, private land rights, unusable land inside the polygon (at which point Nicki got snarky and started demanding some realistic suggestions - sorry guys). Most members

felt that the polygon was too large and that a buffer around the occupied habitat polygon was unnecessary.

Norm McKee presented an area called 50 Mile that had sightings of grouse over the years. This may not be contiguous with the current polygon; it may also be in the Parker Mtn. Habitat Area. However, we will consider this area as we edit the polygon.

Jake Schoppe presented the shapefile that the USFS has created of current sage-grouse habitat. However, this shapefile was created using the Occupied habitat polygon, not the Habitat Area polygon. Nicki noted that would be a problem. She couldn't present a polygon with that much reduction to the task force with the expectation that it would be accepted.

No other members of the group presented edits to the perimeter of the polygon.

The members of the group agreed that the USFS shapefile was a good start. Nicki explained that much of it would need to be taken back to the red line. Bryant Shakespeare identified some areas of the polygon that should be left in because of possible connectivity and future habitat work. Nicki cautioned against using the USFS map, as it was created with their objectives in mind, not those of the other private constituents. Furthermore, the Federal agencies will have additional opportunities to provide comments to the proposed area. The members agreed that the USFS was suitable to accommodate their concern.

The BLM agreed to meet with the USFS to go over the perimeter to provide their comments. They will give their comments to Rhett and Dustin early next week.

Nicki, Rhett, and Dustin will meet next week to finalize the polygon edits that we will submit as comments for CCARM.

Nicki needs to talk with Jason Robinson to get guidance about how to handle Priority A and B habitats. Then she will send out instructions for that process.