

Castle Country CaCoARM

Sage-grouse LWG meeting

24 January 2013

DNR offices Price UT 6-8PM

Attendees

Nicole Nielson	UDWR	nicolenieson@utah.gov
Roger Barton	UACD	rogerbarton@ut.uacdnet.net
Ron Patterson	USU/EXT	ron.patterson@usu.edu
Natasha Gruber	NRCS/MDF/SGI	natasha.gruber@ut.usda.gov
Jim Spencer	NRCS	jim.spencer@ut.usda.gov
Clint Wirick	USFWS	clint_wirick@fws.gov
Jared Reese	BLM	jreese@blm.gov
Brad Crompton	UDWR	bradcrompton@utah.gov
Dorrell Barker	CCFD/Landowner	dlbarker@emererytelcom.net
Dana Truman	BLM	dtruman@blm.gov
Bill Butcher	landowner	wrbutcher@gmail.com
Rex Sacco	Carbon county	rex.sacco@carbonutah.gov
Todd Black	USU	todd.black@usu.edu

Items discussed:

Updates from the BLM sage-grouse plans

The plan is supposed to be out to public for comment. It is anticipated to be out by June 2013 for a 90-day comment period.

The NEPA review and the comments in May-June will help determine which alternative will be chosen (preferred alternative).

BLM will be using the Utah maps developed in the Utah plan (we assume).

Regarding GRAZING: the BLM has to look at grazing impacts. They are not looking at grazing, however, as a primary concern. The initial expectation will be that the Connolly guidelines should be met. Because they need to be able to defend their position, they do need to have literature available to back up their decisions if they deviate from those guidelines. So..... in dry areas particularly, the BLM is particularly interested in local research that gives us more nuances to understand grouse needs in those areas, to make sure the guidelines are relevant to the precipitation zones.

Cooperating agencies, including Carbon County, should receive a draft in the spring (a month prior to public release) 2013

There will be 5 final alternatives that may be a combination of multiple alternatives

- No action
- The Utah state plan
- One based on the National Technical Team report
- A compromise one based on BLM's efforts to find a good middle ground
- Somewhere in the middle of all of the above

Updates from the Gov's executive order/plan on sage-grouse

--Was supposed to be out first 2 weeks of January

--The USFWS has reviewed and they have made comments

--There have been some minor changes to the document. These have to do with USFWS review and they would like the plan to address the following; transmission lines—what is that magical distance, disturbance level for power lines, —what is a disturbance level that is going to be allowed, USFWS wants to include past/existing disturbances, —mitigation rates USFWS service wants there to be a 4/1.

--These changes have not been shared with the group. We don't know why?? “They are not changes that will change the documents purpose and meaning significantly”—UDWR).

--They have not done anything with the boundary/polygons.

--They are in the process of forming the implementation team.

--Supposed to be finalized by next week/early February.

NRCS will be strategically implementing the Sage-Grouse Initiative to get fences marked, P/J removal done, grazing management plans in place, and fire management done, among other practices. They are offering “regulatory predictability” for people with SGI contracts, through FWS, so it is worth discussing this with your local NRCS office. Natasha Gruber is the best contact, out of Roosevelt, to discuss this.

The group had discussion on splitting the group and moving the Carbon County portions of the group in with the UBARM group due to similar threats with oil gas. The Emery County part (Wildcat and Horn Mountains) would be included in the Parker group. The group agreed to do this.