

**MSARM  
LOCAL WORKING  
GROUP**

**Date: November 29, 2010**

**Time: 4:00 – 6:00 pm**

**Place: Wanship, Utah, Fire Station**

**Members Present: Arlin Judd (landowner), Adryan Slaght (Summit County), Ashley Koehler (Summit County), Steve Wilcox (NRCS/UDWR), Michele Devaney (NRCS/Uinta Headwaters RC&D), Mike Welch (QRM), Jason Robinson (UDWR), Dave Rich (UDWR), Pam Kramer (UDWR), Renée Chi (USFWS), and Lorien Belton (USU Extension)**

**Highlights**

The group discussed how best to provide information to the counties (Morgan and Summit) that would be helpful to them. Suggestions for what they would like to know included: where the leks and key habitat are located, how development affects sage-grouse, and where historical leks were located. In addition, an update on the FWS status would be helpful and an understanding of how the populations are doing here, and what threatens them. There are two levels where sage-grouse information would be helpful: the planning commissions and the county council/commissions. The planning commissions in Summit County include the Snyderville Basin Planning Commission, which has less sage-grouse habitat but which is currently considering amendments to its code to help address wildlife planning concerns, and the Eastern Summit County Planning Commission, which encompasses more sage-grouse areas. Snyderville meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month. The right approach might be to first present to the planning commissions, and make sure to invite the council members of commissioners. If they are unable to attend, a follow-up presentation at the council/commission meeting would be appropriate. Dean Mitchell and Pam Kramer have in the past presented information to these groups. Jason Robinson will be a lead presenter in this case. Dave Olsen was originally going to attend these meetings with Jason but is retiring so will not be involved. Jason will check in with Dean Mitchell about past issues that might be of relevance to the counties. The regions should probably ensure that region-specific information is included in the presentations; Jason will help coordinate that. Adryan and Ashley with Summit County will help coordinate getting these meetings set up.

It was noted that the counties are aware that there are GIS files of habitat available on DWR's website. Jason noted that those will hopefully be updated soon.

Grant Crowell in Morgan County should be invited to future sage-grouse meetings. Perhaps holding a future meeting in Morgan would be a good idea so it is convenient for other folks.

Two other organizations that may be relevant to sage-grouse work are the East Summit County Ag and Open Space Preservation Committee (ESAP) and the BOSAC, both organizations that can help fund conservation easements and are involved in advising the county on open space preservation. Susan Overt in Summit county planning is the contact for getting on the agenda of

these groups. Ashley will send Lorien additional information.

Pam updated the group on discussions with UDOT about signage to slow drivers on Highway 65 when the birds are strutting on the road. Lorien and Pam met with UDOT this fall and got specifications for low, temporary signs for the side of the road. The group expressed some concern that fold-down permanent signs would be much better than temporary, possibly even flashing signs. Pam agreed to contact UDOT again to discuss those options again.

The group brainstormed other ways to get the message out to people who live locally, such as Henefer residents. Several ideas were generated about places to post or convey information. We will explore several of them this spring. Lorien will draft a flyer to post and circulate in areas recommended by Ashley and Adryan. It will discuss slowing down in the area of the lek.

The group discussed our lack of knowledge about the landownership situation in the lek area and asked Lorien to look into it further and try to contact the landowner representatives.

The Henefer-Divide lek area has historic trails in the area. Lorien will contact Kent Wilkerson to learn more about the historical importance of the area.

The group wondered whether UDWR would be interested in discussing easements on the lek areas. It was noted that FFSL holds at least one easement in the area. Lorien will inquire about who has what land in easements in the area to see if there are ways to coordinate as well as making sure we are familiar with the present situation most of the land is in.

Sage-grouse initiative funds for this year are available again. Steve will work with Danny to see if there are opportunities to use the funds in the H-D area.

UDWR has an internally circulating draft of a telemetry study proposal for sage-grouse in the divide area. It will soon be sent to FWS and eventually made available for everyone. Kern River pipeline has offered to fund 1 year of a telemetry study, which provides opportunities to search for additional funds which require non-federal matching money. The hope is that we can fund a three-year study that includes collaring 30 birds on the three lek complexes, 2 in Morgan and 1 in Summit County. As Dave Olsen has just retired, Jason Robinson will be helping to finalize this study. Mike Welch noted that he may be able to help negotiate with landowners to gain access to private property in the area. If everyone moves quickly on the proposal, it could be possible to have a technician on the ground trapping this spring. That would be ideal.

Area lek counts: Someone at the meeting provided a report of strutting males last year at the top of the Two-Bear CMWU up Chalk Creek. Mike Welch asked whether the lek counts that are in Morgan and Summit counties but are done by Desert Land and Livestock are included in the county numbers. It was also noted that it would be helpful to have Todd's grouse numbers from promontory before the scope of work for the telemetry study is finalized. Lorien will mention this to Todd.

The group asked Jason what the status of Appendix 5 of the state sage-grouse plan is currently. Appendix 5 addresses development recommendations for sage-grouse areas. Jason said that it was still being worked on but there was a chance it could be done by next spring.

Jason noted that a range-wide sage-grouse study by Kevin Doherty, commissioned by BLM, has been completed. Jason will send the links to Lorien who will send it out to all LWGs.

### **Follow-up Needed**

- Jason will ask Dean Mitchell about past presentations to Morgan/Summit counties.
- Adryan and Ashley will contact the Summit planning commissions and the county council and help coordinate meeting scheduling.
- Lorien will contact Morgan county and discuss the possibility of a presentation.
- Jason will help coordinate getting region-specific and locally relevant information into the presentations.
- Lorien will look into having the next MSARM meeting in Morgan at the Courthouse.
- Ashley will send Lorien additional information on ESAP and BOSAC
- Pam agreed to contact UDOT again to discuss those options again, and let the group know if additional expressions of support would be valuable.
- Lorien will draft a flyer to post and circulate in areas recommended by Ashley and Adryan. It will discuss slowing down in the area of the lek.
- Steve Wilcox will inquire about having a sage-grouse highlight in the Conservation Corner of the local paper.
- Lorien will call and see if the Morgan County News and possibly the Odgen Standard Examiner to see if they would be interested in running an article about sage-grouse locally.
- The Henefer town planning commission is having an open house on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Scott McFarlane should attend if possible. Pam will take this information to them.
- Lorien will try to contact the owner of the Henefer-Divide lek property.
- Lorien will contact Kent Wilkerson to learn more about the historical importance of the area.
- Lorien will inquire about who has what land in easements in the area
- Steve and Danny will discuss whether sage-grouse initiative funds could be used to improve the lek area for the Henefer Divide birds.
- Lorien will mention to Todd that the telemetry scope of work would benefit from his additional input.
- Lorien will send out information to the group about the Doherty study and the new Sage-Grouse Initiative funds.

### **Next Meeting**

- The next meeting was not scheduled as NRCS was not present and their information on conservation district and other conflicts is helpful in scheduling. Lorien will find a time in February to suggest to the group. Coordinating with the scheduling of county presentations when they are confirmed may make sense.