

**MSARM
LOCAL
WORKING
GROUP**

Date: February 21, 2018

Place: Summit County Courthouse, Coalville

Members Present: Mike Welch (private citizen), Alan Clark (UDNR), Pam Kramer (UDWR), Dave Rich (UDWR), Eric Anderson (UDWR), Kate Sattelmeier (Summit Land Conservancy), Lorien Belton (USU Extension; MSARM facilitator)

Discussion and Updates

Mitigation Program update

Alan Clark presented to the group on the essentially final elements of the compensatory mitigation program for sage-grouse habitat in Utah. There will be three ways to generate credits (creation of functional habitat, creation of corridors, and protecting existing occupied habitat). There will also be three approaches for how to complete mitigation: via the state-sponsored program, via a “term mitigation credit” program, and through conservation banks. He reviewed the definition of functional habitat, and noted that sage-grouse use does not have to be documented to count credits, although it needs to be adjacent to occupied habitat and meet various other habitat quality criteria. Then he went into detail on the different ways to generate credits and the different programs.

For now, the database for the Credit Exchange Service exists, and will be housed at DNR within the WRI program until/unless it grows. Initial habitat verification will be done by the Ephraim range crew. The details of the program will be included in the revised state sage-grouse program.

WRI project in Huff Creek

The group briefly discussed a WRI project proposed in Huff Creek. The project may benefit local sage-grouse, although there are not officially documented birds in the immediate area. The project looks like it will be a good one; the group was very supportive of doing the work as it restores a riparian meadow in sagebrush.

Local working group plan revision

The sage-grouse conservation plan for the MSARM area is out of date and needs to be revised. The group considered possible approaches and recommendations for how to tackle the task, including:

- The LWG can focus on some items, and make clear when certain actions require initiative or leadership from outside the group to actually happen. The group, for

example, can have internal goals to be a focal point for conversations and feedback, can host info nights on key topics, such as mitigation, to make sure landowners are informed, and to disseminate information to NRCS, GIP, and others on key topics. The group can also host comment opportunities and make local recommendations, even when the group does not have decision-making power in a particular area.

- Focus area in this working group could include providing assistance with local ordinances, and including objectives in the plan that WRI projects can reference specifically that they are helping meet.
- Many things are not under the control of the LWG specifically, but objectives could include “involve the right people” to make sure everyone appropriate is engaged in conversations that affect them.
- There could be interest in having the LWG grow into a two-county CRM (coordinated resource management) group. A next step to explore that would be to discuss the idea with the conservation district, as CDs are actively trying to get more CRMs going, according to one meeting attendee, although maybe not in this area. Working together to pursue a CRM locally might be a plan focus, if it is determined to be of interest.
- Another suggestion was that the LWG could focus on improving the relationship between DWR and the counties, or other similar communication strategies

Follow-up Needed

- Lorien will look into the status of the county resource management plans in Morgan and Summit, and contact Loralie about CD efforts regarding CRMs.
- Lorien will continue to work on a process and template for a revised and significantly pared down LWG plan revision.
- Lorien will explore options for a local field tour to visit a project as a group.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was not set. In the past, the idea of holding a meeting to explain the mitigation plan and associated opportunities to local landowners; once that rule is final, this may be interesting to explore. A spring/summer field tour to a local project site should be planned soon.