

Meeting Minutes

PARM Meeting

Nov. 7, 2013

10AM – 12:30PM

Wayne County Courthouse, Loa, UT

Attendees:

Jim Lamb	UDWR
Comm. DeRae Fillmore	Wayne County Commission
Natasha Gruber	USDA SGI
Eric Thacker	USU Extension
Comm. Rob Williams	Wayne County Commission
Ron Torgerson	SITLA
Joanne Stenten	USFS (Wildlife)
Chris Perkins	USDA Aphis
Clint Wirick	USFWS Partners
Boyd White	UDWR
Brant Hallows	BLM
Brandon Jolley	BLM
Kendall Bagley	UDWR
David Chappell	Rancher (Leavitt herd)
John Keeler	Farm Bureau
Verl Bagley	USU Extension
Andrew Taft	Rancher (Co-Chair)
David Dahlgren	USU Extension

- Welcome and introductions completed.
- Local Working Group Surveys from USU are still active and looking for participants. These surveys will provide feedback for future programs and Utah's Sage-Grouse Summit Meetings in SLC (February 18-19).
- Natasha Gruber talked about the mission and purpose of the Sage-Grouse Initiative (SGI - USDA) working with private interests on private and public lands. There were questions about using USDA money on public lands, and Natasha indicated it can be done, but the priority is private lands. SITLA lands was a definite possibility for willing producers. We watched a short video produced by SGI promoting ranching and sage-grouse habitat, and further explaining the SGI program.
- Chris Perkins talked about Raven Control on Parker and throughout the state. USDA Aphis needs help in identifying important areas on the mountain for egg placement. Jim Lamb reminded us that he works closely with Kevin Dustin (USDA Aphis regional manager) to place

eggs on Parker Mtn. There was discussion for putting eggs in Grass Valley where ravens are occurring. Dave Dahlgren and Jim Lamb agreed to develop a document showing where eggs were to be placed and an official request from the PARM group to USDA Aphis.

- Jim also talked about trying to get mitigation money from the elevation-water electric plant (Piute County) to put some radios on grouse in Grass Valley and possibly the Monroe to better understand bird movements in those areas. GPS radios were suggested as a viable option to gather habitat use information with minimal effort. (Need further discussion in the future)
- Ron Torgerson (SITLA) talked about the growing cheatgrass problem on the mountain. He went up and sprayed some of the cheatgrass along the Red Knoll road with Plateau in October. However, he found more cheatgrass than he could deal with using his small sprayer and ATV. Commissioner DeRae Fillmore suggested using their county weed guy (Rex Griffiths) to help. The county has large equipment for these things. Ron had the chemical or could get more without much issue. Andy Taft also offered the use of his spray rig, with large capacity containers. We decided the remaining part of this fall would be too cold to accomplish the task with snow already on the ground. We will plan on completing this project next fall. There was also some discussion from Joanne Stenten (USFS) about cheatgrass issues on the forest on the road to the cabin above Pine Creek. However, there would need to be more paper work (NEPA) done before that area could be treated. Cheatgrass may be more of an invader with less snow pack in future years, even at higher elevations.
- Dave Dahlgren presented a powerpoint on the Utah Governor's Statewide Plan for the Conservation of Sage-Grouse. We talked about the common ground between the statewide plan and the local PARM plan...namely to prevent a federal listing. We talked about the past effort of the Association of Utah County Commissions to have all counties sign off on some statewide agreement to manage for sage-grouse. This effort has fallen by the wayside, and no particular vegetation/grazing requirements are part of the statewide plan. In fact the plan specifically states that grazing and grouse are compatible uses, and cites work done on Parker Mountain as the reason for this. Concerns were raised about overstepping the current local plan, which took the last 13+ years to get into place. Discussion ensued about finding the common ground between the local statewide plan, and to move forward from there.
- We then talked at length about areas where PJ treatment may be useful for the Parker Area sage-grouse population. We also talked about how some of the SGMA boundaries may not be quite appropriate, and may need to be expanded especially in the Mormon Mountain area, north of Koosharem Reservoir. Clint Wirick talked about how he had seen grouse in that area recently, and Jim Lamb reported finding a small lek (3 males) up around Mormon Peak last spring. Kendall Bagley talked about past and future treatments north of there on a private ranch (Bar J?). These areas may not lie within the current SGMA but may be helping sage-grouse and could be counted as conservation acres to help meet the objectives of the local and statewide plans.
 - Specific Areas/projects in the future discussed
 - **Dan Jorgenson (Bar-J ranch):** Dixie Harrow, PJ Treatment, Grouse Transplant from Box Elder County (K Bagley, J Lamb)

- **Mormon Peak** PJ Treatment (K Bagley, B Hallows)
 - **Praetor Slopes and Oak Springs** PJ Treatment: many areas already done, but need to expand
 - **Cedar Groves** PJ: take care of the expanding PJ, leave the groves in place
 - **Pass Reservoir-Post Hollow** PJ: could be rabbitbrush issues
 - **Last Chance Tidwell** PJ Treatment
 - **Dog Flat Lek area** PJ Treatment
 - **Fremont Valley (King Sheep)** PJ treatment
- We had a discussion about future sagebrush treatments on the Parker. Ron Torgerson reported that the money to do all the spike treatments in the past has been spent, and there is no money currently to do more treatments. He also talked about the need in the future to keep doing treatments with brush encroachment and grazing on the Parker. We talked about the large scale nature of the treatments and how they may have been detrimental to sage-grouse in some small temporary way, but ultimately did not negatively impact the population. The small active ingredient in the spike did not do permanent damage. In the future treatments could be spread out a little bit more both temporally and spatially. We came to the conclusion that we'll let these sagebrush treatments suffice for now, and focus on PJ treatment. We can return to the sagebrush treatments in about 5 years. Some concern was given that if sage-grouse get listed we may not be able to do sagebrush treatment in the future. However, Parker is one of the few areas we have documented and published data on sagebrush treatments being beneficial to sage-grouse. PJ treatment is needed, especially on the north end of the SGMA and in wintering habitat. Some areas north of the Highway and in the PJ band north and south of Moroni Peak where the PJ is expanding and where sage-grouse could winter at lower elevations could help alleviate the harsh winter pressures for the Parker sage-grouse population.

Specific Tasks To Do:

1. Official PARM comments on EIS BLM/USFS Sage-Grouse Plan (R Williams, J Lamb, A Taft)
2. Send out UT Sage-Grouse Summit Information when available (USU Ext –D Dahlgren)
3. Prepare an official request from PARM to USDA Aphis for Raven Control (J Lamb and D Dahlgren)
4. Follow up on mitigation money to put radio collars in Grass Valley (J Lamb)
5. Get Kreig Rasmussen's Telemetry Data from Hell Hole Lek on Monroe (J Lamb, D Dahlgren)
6. Prepare a document for future PJ treatments in the Parker-Emery SGMA, coordinate with WRI, and rank projects from PARM (B Hallows, J Lamb, K Bagley, D Dahlgren)
7. Adjust the SGMA boundaries (Mormon Mountain Area) to reflect work going on that could benefit sage-grouse in the area (D Dahlgren)
8. Coordinate treatment of Cheatgrass on Red Knoll Road for Fall 2014 (Ron Torgerson)