

PARM Meeting Notes

January 19, 2021 (Virtual meeting – hosted by David Dahlgren)

Attendees: Dave Dahlgren (USU), Kaya Kukulka (BLM), Jim Lamb (DWR), Scott Chamberlain (State Trust Lands), Jared Reese (BLM), Heather Talley (DWR), Dave Christensen (Parker Grazers), Tom Tippetts (Grazing Improvement), Levi Watkins (DWR), Ryan Jones (UDAF), Joe Chigbrow (BLM), C.J. Buttars (USDA WS), Avery Cook (DWR), Christine Fletcher (BLM), Jacob Hall (DWR/NRCS), Cindy Buttars (Richfield Office), Clint Wirick (FWS), Wade Paskett (DWR), Trent Wilde (USU), Brant Hallows (BLM), and Rae Ann Hart (USU).

Dave opened the meeting with introductions.

Joe gave a report that the NEPA project is close to getting the BA and then can add to the EA. It is on the manager's desk waiting for approval. This will then be added to the fuels portion of the proposal.

Clint reported on projects in the northern SGMA that are happening on FS and private ground. Some mastication is happening over by Durphy as well. (Side note of interest: He saw a bird over on the Durphy project.) This project should be done by March. Aerial seeded both projects and shredding trees was done as part of the project. Estimated acreage was: Burrville ~1000 acres, Durphy ~ 100 acres along with ~3500 on FS, 100 private, 300+ on trustlands.

We have received some feedback on a proposed spike treatment but no specifics. Some things to think about is to have treatments around good water sources so water is available throughout the year. We want ponds that will stay good. A caution is to avoid treating within a quarter mile of water when possible. We don't want to lose resilience. Most of the places chosen for treatment are close to water. There is some concern that this area doesn't have a proper rest/rotation pattern. We can do treatments to have spatial and temporal distribution so the treatments will be spread out. There were 8 ponds cleaned and clayed last year so water will be available longer in those areas.

Dave showed his map on the screen where treatments have been proposed – there are some technical issues so a new draft of treatment areas will be sent by email to the group. The new maps will show what was discussed in this meeting.

South end of area: Jim L. will work with FS to do a treatment on their property. SITLA also has a couple of areas of big sage in small areas. SITLA is in one piece and tried to keep areas intact and combine with other treatment areas. Proposed treatments stay out of recovery areas.

White side Pond – target areas marked but not treated yet. Will leave some big sage areas intact by Merrill Pond. An old treatment near Barrell pond is doing well. There is an ARC file that shows proposed and old treatments. We should add the prairie dog treatment to the map. It will probably be a 2-way Dixie treatment. There will be 350 acres done on BLM land on the bottom end against the FS fence. This should encourage current dog colonies to expand. These projects can also be good for sage-grouse; Dave has seen brooding birds use the area in an old FS treatment just southwest of the proposed new treatment.

Nick's pasture – Some areas will be retreated and new areas. On #18, could this be adjusted to carve out the area just adjacent to the pond? Scott will send a few minor changes to some areas. Another revised polygon was #14 to extend it to the south. Tom had no changes suggested and has shown the maps to a few other people in the area.

Shay Spring – not too much has been done in this area so this new treatment is fine.

Floyd's Pond – holds good water, so is a good candidate for a treatment in 2 areas

Deer Hollow pond – treatment runs along 3-Buttes in some big sage. Black sage areas are avoided and will need to work closely with pilots here not to treat black sage. A comment suggested avoiding the area right next to the buttes. There is some PJ in the area but not too much of a problem now.

Parker Knoll – the 3 bigger polygons are on slopes where nothing has been treated so far so map shows about a 50/50 split. This is a very rocky area. We have good success with spike treatments in the area. We have to focus more on spike than mechanical treatment for economy and results. This will be less disruption to cattle movement. We can try to rest for a year if possible with herd rotations.

Dave will send out revised maps for review. The maps can show that grouse have benefitted from previous treatments. The treatments have also benefitted range management. We will probably get a petition for groups so we need to plan the timing of treatments in a defensible way. Data is needed to show that our treatments don't cause a loss of forbs that are important. Dulfon's thesis has some of this information and can be found on the CBCP website. How do we want to approach treatment priorities? We want to move ahead as fast as possible with getting funding. Jim can submit proposal and add Jacob (NRCS) as a partner. The fall of 2022 would be the first application time. Once we have funds, we can proceed to work on timing and contracts.

Monitoring is important. What do we want to see for data? We will need to establish the value of ongoing treatments. Can we get enough monitoring data without a grad student? There are costs either way. A master's student for 2 years would cost around \$50,000 to \$60,000 plus project costs depending on what we want done so the total project would run about \$120,000 to \$150,000. WRI funding was discussed which could cover some project costs but there usually aren't funds for monitoring. Funds are becoming harder to get especially for monitoring data. We can try for a public lands grant that would cover monitoring with a 50% match. We are concerned that data will be needed in the political arena especially if there is a proposed litigation. We will probably be litigated again. Range trend data isn't enough. We need a person assigned on this task to get the best data. In the future, sagebrush treatments may be more restricted. A small group will work on funding for monitoring, perhaps combined with treatment funding, and report back to the group.

Parker lek counts weren't done in 2020 by the group. Everyone agreed a PARM group needed to participate in lek counting. Dave will get the event approved through Extension.

There is a short survey going out requesting information about the local working groups. Please watch for it and participate. It is very short and will let us know how to improve.

There was a question about an article in the CBCP newsletter regarding how the research and database work affects PARM members. Dave explained that Simona is added survival data at a state-wide level to

the database. She has a great skillset at working with huge databases. This will give us a single database for Utah that all entities can use. This is only Utah data.

Action Items

Dave to send out revised maps and temporal plan for treatment

Funding monitoring data small group will be organized

Dave will get PARM lek count field trip approved through Extension.