

PARM

Sage-grouse LWG meeting

25 January 2013

USU/EXT Room Loa UT 10-12PM

Attendees

Robert Williams	Wayne County Commission	williams4you@scinternet.net
Mack Morrell	Parker Grazers	
Clint Wirick	USFWS	clint_wirick@fws.gov
Jake Owens	NRCS	Jacob.owens@ut.usda.gov
Paul Pace	FSA	paul.pace@ut.usda.gov
Joann Stenten	USFS	jstenton@fs.fed.us
Kendal Bagley	NRCS/UDWR	kendall.bagley@ut.usda.gov
Jim Lamb	UDWR	jimlamb@utah.gov
Brandon Jolley	BLM	bjolley@blm.gov
Brant Hallows	BLM	bhallows@blm.gov
Ron Torgerson	SITLA	rontogerson@utah.gov
David Christensen	Parker Grazers	daveteri@scinternet.net
Wade Paskett	UDWR	wadepaskett@utah.gov
Verl Bagley	USU/EXT	verl.bagley@usu.edu
Andrew Taft	Parker Grazers	andrewgtaft@yahoo.com
John Keeler	UTFB	keller@manti.com

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: 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 in understanding 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 spring (a month prior to public release) 2013

There will be 5 final alternatives 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.

A table of NRCS threats used in their SCI rankings was presented to the group (attached) there was much discussion with the group about this table. It is not clear how the NRCS came to the rankings they did but many of them are not applicable or ranked by PARM or represent their rankings in the integrity table/matrix in the plan or the revised table in the (in draft) plan to be coming out this next month. Jake Owens (NRCS) indicated he would look into it further and take comments back to Casey Burns (NRCS).

The group had discussion on bringing in the Emery County part (Wildcat and Horn Mountains) from the CaCoARM LWG into the PARM. The group agreed to do this.