

West Box Elder Coordinated Resource Management Plan



Planning Inventory Analysis
Update
April 17, 2012



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DESIGN INC.

CRMP Work Plan

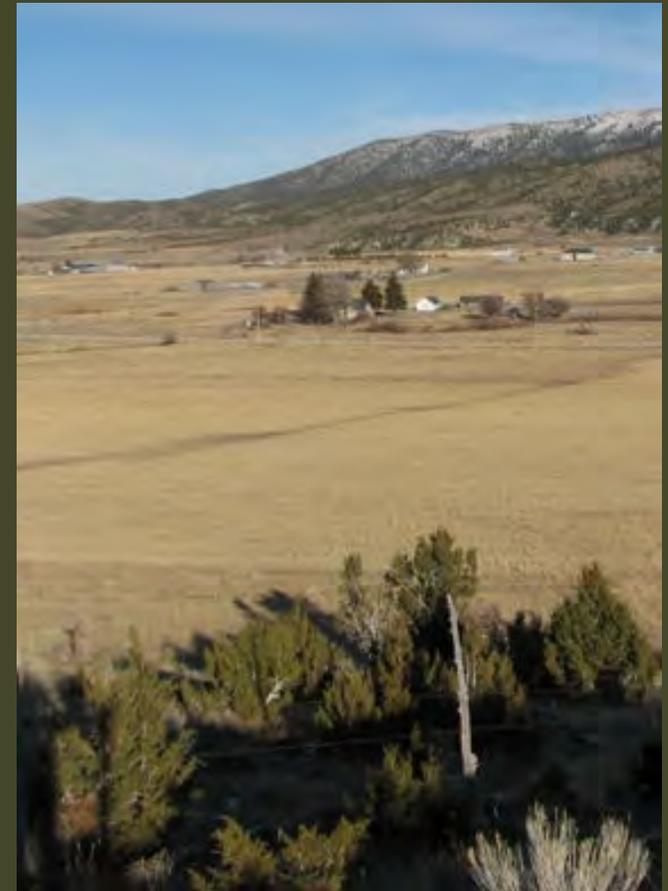
- Task 1 (April) – “Planning Inventory Assessment”
- Task 2 (May-June) – Data Assessment and Local DFCs for high priorities
- Task 3 (July-Aug) – Data Analysis; Draft Strategies
- Task 4 (Sept-Dec) – Create and Refine CRMP
- Task 5 (Jan-...) – EITHER Complete plans for lower priorities OR Begin implementation for higher priorities

What's a "Planning Element"

- ◉ Water
- ◉ Agriculture and Livestock
- ◉ Vegetation
- ◉ Wildlife
- ◉ Socioeconomics
- ◉ Land Use and Legal Environment
- ◉ Others
 - Recreation
 - Forestry
 - Soils
 - Cultural heritage

Progress Report

- ◉ Planning by others - Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) and Strategies
- ◉ Prepare for data assessment
 - Data available for past plans
 - Data they counted on for future planning
 - ***Ask: Is it adequate for this WBE planning?***
- ◉ DFCs in local community meetings in May
 - Use time efficiently
 - Prompt creative thinking
 - Extract local knowledge on constraints



Types of Plans Reviewed

- Local Community and Long-term Plans
 - Box Elder County
 - Conservation District
 - WBE Coordinated Resource Management Committee
- Agency General Planning
 - Resource Management Plans
 - Land Management Plans
- Agency Resource-specific Planning
 - State and West Desert water plans
 - Wildlife—general
 - Species-specific wildlife plans
 - Noxious weeds
- Other Organizations
 - Partners in Flight
 - Intermountain West Joint Venture

Documents Reviewed (partial list)

- Box Elder County's General Plan (1998)
- West Box Elder Soil Conservation District Long-range Plan (2006)
- West Box Elder Greater Sage-grouse Local Conservation Plan (2007)
- West Box Elder CRM Noxious Weed Plan (2012)
- BLM Box Elder Resource Management Plan (1986) and Amendment for Bear River Resource Area – Acquired Lands (1998)
- USFS Sawtooth National Forest LRMP (Chapter III, Management Area 18) (2003)
- Utah State Water Plan (May 2001)
- Utah State Water Plan – West Desert Basin (April 2001)
- UDWR Watershed Restoration Initiative
- UDWR Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) (2005)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (Multiple species-specific plans. Specific planning for each species will be documented a later stage, as required)
- UDWR Utah Greater Sage-grouse Management Plan (2009)
- UDWR Boreal Toad Conservation Plan (2005)
- UDWR Least Chub Conservation Plan (2005)
- Utah Partners in Flight Avian Conservation Strategy Version 2.0 (2002)
- Intermountain West Joint Venture Coordinated Bird Conservation Plan Version 1.0 (2005) and Coordinated Implementation Plan for Bird Conservation in Utah (2005)

Common Ground



- Agriculture main industry
- Remoteness and large size
- Differences in watersheds
- Key elements of sustainable system: wildlife, natural vegetation, stable soils, and clean water
- Threats to sustainable system: noxious weeds, juniper encroachment, aspen loss, soil erosion, and insufficient water
- Need for sound, data-based management and decision-making
- Need for collaboration

Conflicts due to...

- ⦿ Different resource focus (planning element)
- ⦿ Difference in geographical scale
- ⦿ Different time horizons
- ⦿ Resources assumed to be available
- ⦿ Age of plans
- ⦿ Planning *for* vs. *with* WBE

Water—Common Ground

- ◉ Water essential to all aspects of natural and socioeconomic system
- ◉ Intelligent and informed irrigation practices
- ◉ Few surface water sources undeveloped—reservoirs expensive
- ◉ Ground water may still not be fully used
- ◉ Vegetation management (PJ removal and aspen restoration) increases water yield
- ◉ Minimizing soil erosion improves water quality
- ◉ Support weather modification programs
- ◉ Communication and coordination among agencies, landowners, and other stakeholders



Water—Conflicts

- ◉ Urban (culinary) vs. local (agricultural) water demand
- ◉ Agricultural water demand and efficiency vs. wildlife water needs
- ◉ Private benefits vs. public costs of reservoirs
- ◉ Protection of existing wells vs. establishment of new wells
- ◉ Conservation tillage vs. wildlife impacts of agricultural chemicals
- ◉ Desire for conservation easements vs. limited funding
- ◉ Wetland protection vs. 2012 Utah DAF Task Force recommendations prioritizing agricultural land over wetlands

Ag and Livestock—Common Ground



- Agriculture central to local economy and way of life
- Some areas in better condition than others as a result of grazing history and natural differences
- Range development and improvement projects needed
- Data-based forage allocation and grazing planning
- Communication and coordination among agencies, landowners, and other stakeholders

Ag and Livestock—Conflicts

- Urban water demand vs. agricultural demand
- Water and riparian areas for wildlife vs. livestock
- Flood vs. sprinkler irrigation
- Water conserving tillage vs. traditional practices
- Limits on natural resource development in sage-grouse use areas
- Grazing management for sage-grouse vs. strictly livestock needs
- Fencing stipulations in sage-grouse habitat (fence strikes and predator perches)
- Needs vs. available funding for improvements and personnel
- Grazing management to reduce spread of weeds vs. other objectives
- Limits on timing and location of construction adjacent to deer winter range, raptor nests, sage-grouse leks, and riparian areas
- Limits on livestock and vegetation management in IRAs

Vegetation—Common Ground

Photo by:
Richard Old
www.xidservices.com



- Importance of healthy, functioning plant communities (multiple functions)
- Desirable and diverse seral stages (pinyon/juniper encroachment, decadent sagebrush, loss of aspen)
- Invasive species (cheatgrass) and noxious weeds
- Protection of special status plants (including Cottam cinquefoil and Grouse Creek rockcress)
- Communication and coordination among agencies, landowners, and other stakeholders

Vegetation—Conflicts

- ◉ Development vs. preservation of natural landscapes
- ◉ Native vs. non-native species; role of desirable non-natives
- ◉ Fire use in areas prone to cheatgrass invasion
- ◉ Pesticide and herbicide impacts on special status wildlife species
- ◉ Benefits of fire vs. risk of damage to facilities, infrastructure, and resources

Wildlife—Common Ground

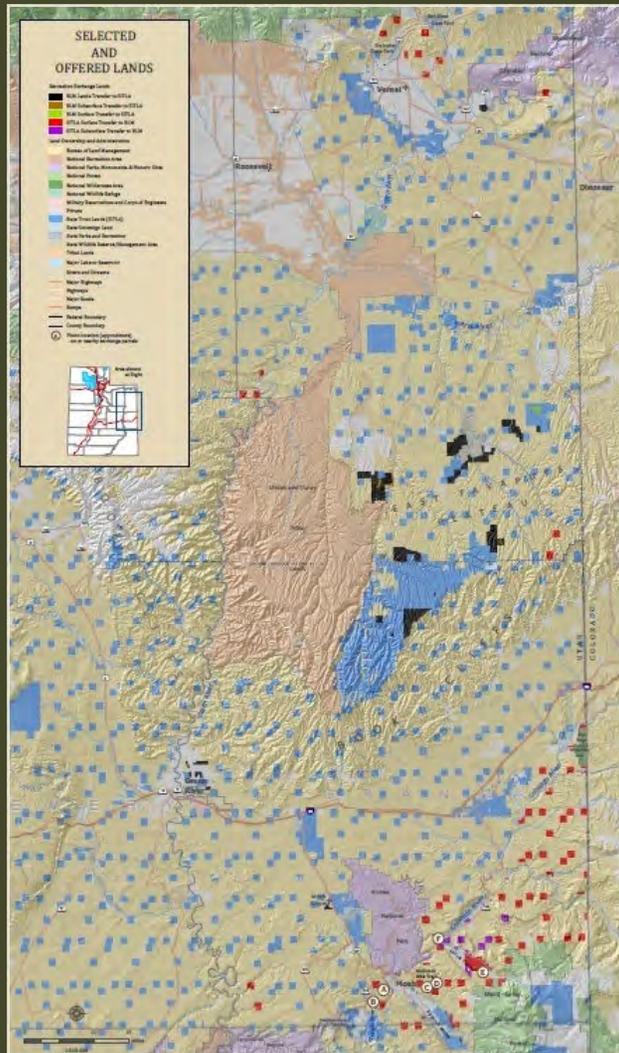
- Importance of diverse wildlife for residents and ecosystem
- Low value of decadent sagebrush stands
- Need for locally-sensitive wildlife policy
- Ungulate population goals generally accepted
- Greater sage-grouse habitat should be protected and improved to prevent listing under ESA



Wildlife—Conflicts

- ◉ Water for agriculture vs. wildlife
- ◉ Need for pinyon/juniper (e.g., ferruginous hawk) vs. shorter brush communities (e.g., sage-grouse)
- ◉ Roads and other development corridors vs. habitat fragmentation
- ◉ Raptor protection vs. sage-grouse protection
- ◉ Fences to control livestock can provide perches for sage-grouse predators

Land Use—Common Ground



- Ethic of managing for some version of multiple use
- Respect for private property rights—water, land, etc.
- Support for agriculture on private lands by the County and federal agencies
- Mechanisms for sensible land exchanges between agencies and private land owners
- Protection for a variety of access and use opportunities

Land Use—Conflicts

- ◉ Wilderness: BLM/Federal versus County/Local
- ◉ Land exchanges need to benefit both parties and the resources involved; difficult standard
- ◉ Levels of government have changing conflicts over land use, rights, ownership, and access
- ◉ Species conservation plans very stringent; other plans not (e.g., sage-grouse authorizations)

Socioeconomics—Common Ground

- ① Unique rural social and economic conditions
- ① Changing “social” or “economic” conditions grounds for plan amendments or updates
- ① Communication and coordination among agencies, landowners, and other stakeholders



Socioeconomics—Conflicts

- ① Urbanization vs. improvement of existing enterprises (e.g., water resources)
- ① General Plan has specific rural goals and strategies, but strong policy of NOT promoting rural development

Conclusions—so what?

- ◎ Lot of common ground
- ◎ Finer scale = more conflicts
 - Real question is how? where?
- ◎ *This* CRMP should address conflicts, exploit opportunities for implementation

Next...

● Task 2 (May-June)

- Data Assessment and Local DFCs for high priorities
- DFCs in local community meetings
 - Use time efficiently
 - Prompt creative thinking
 - Extract local knowledge on constraints

