

**STRAWBERRY
VALLEY
LOCAL WORKING
GROUP**

Date: November 13, 2012

Place: Wasatch County Health Building

Members Present: Robert Riddle (Wasatch County Public Lands), Jan Anderson (Utah Farm Bureau), Brian Maxfield (UDWR), Jim Spencer (NRCS), Natasha Gruber (SGI/NRCS), Tammy Koldyke (SGI/NRCS), Anthony Gray (USFS), Richard Mingo (Mitigation Commission), Lorien Belton (USU Extension, facilitator)

Information Presented/Discussion Highlights

Planning updates

Lorien provided brief updates on the State of Utah and BLM/USFS planning processes. Comments based on the working groups' concerns were provided to the state over the last few months. We are now waiting for updated drafts for comment for both processes. The state draft will feed into the EIS for plan amendments (BLM and USFS). The final maps for the state plan have also not been released yet.

The working groups will hopefully have significant input on both the finer-grained mapping (delineating habitat, non-habitat, etc.) within the general management area boundaries. The working groups may also need to play a key role in helping counties determine how best to implement the state's recommendations on a local scale. Lorien will keep the group apprised of any comment periods or other opportunities for input.

Bob Riddle asked how the recent announcement by Salazar regarding removal of lands from consideration for oil shale and tar sands may affect sage-grouse management area boundaries and stipulations. Lorien will look for additional information.

The group is staying aware of the TransWest and Gateway South transmission lines proposals. No opportunities to comment are currently open.

There is a proposal for a large development in the Strawberry Highlands area (not in sage-grouse habitat) at the south/east end of Strawberry Reservoir. The Wasatch Planning commission is meeting on Thursday (Nov 15) to discuss possible density and other plans for the development, but there are still many factors up in the air, such as secondary access that does not involve the road over the dam and water rights for the area. Lorien may attend the planning meeting at the end of this week.

Project Updates

A Dixie Harrow project on the DWR Wildcat area finished this fall. About 250 acres were harrowed on the sagebrush flats at the top of Wildcat, with polygons (one pass on

the outside perimeter and two passes on the inside) finished in early fall. An adjacent Sage-Grouse Initiative project on private land was also completed; about 7 acres of mowing (also done by DWR, in November). The polygons were set using BYU's sage-grouse data, and worked to avoid nesting areas but open up brood-rearing areas. The areas had dying sagebrush as well as bitterbrush. The goal is to increase grasses and forbs. Because it is a high moisture area, no seeding is necessary.

Richard noted that the Mitigation Commission has some recently purchased lands in the general area of Wildcat, and would welcome discussions about sage-grouse habitat projects they could do.

Outreach to Landowners

The group decided that an evening meeting in January would be a good way to reach out to local landowners about SGI and other information, such as research, state plan, USFS plans, successful project stories from Brian or Anthony, etc. We meeting should be Daniel's Summit or somewhere else convenient for landowners. Jan Anderson will see if he learns of any more convenient location than Daniels Summit for a landowner meeting, and let Lorien know. Lorien, Natasha, and Tammy will coordinate to plan a landowner meeting. The meeting should be held before January 18th because that is the sign-up deadline for the next round of SGI funding. Jan Anderson will help advertise in the UFB newsletter. Randall Thacker has contacts for the Fruitland landowners.

Follow-up Needed

- Lorien will keep the group up to date with opportunities to comment on the federal and/or state sage-grouse planning processes.
- Lorien will look for additional information/maps on the oil shale/tar sands news
- Richard will coordinate with DWR to discuss possible projects on mitigation commission property to complement other ongoing projects.
- Jan Anderson will see if he learns of any more convenient location than Daniels Summit for a landowner meeting, and let Lorien know.
- Lorien, Natasha, and Tammy will coordinate the landowner meeting. Jan will advertise in the UFB newsletter; Randall Thacker can reach out to Fruitland landowners.
- Lorien will send an email to the list about the SGI sign-up deadline of January 18.

NEXT MEETING:

There will be a dinner meeting for landowner outreach in mid January, sometime before January 18. A field tour (Fruitland, weed-focused) is on hold until next year.