

**STRAWBERRY
VALLEY
LOCAL WORKING
GROUP**

Date: June 11, 2012

Place: Wasatch County Health Building

Members Present: Robert Riddle (Wasatch County Public Lands), Brian Maxfield (UDWR), Matt Phillipi (NRCS), Doug Braumberger (private citizen), Kim Hersey (UDWR), Susan White (Office of Energy Development), Curtis Miles (Moon Lake Electric), Mike Tamllos (USDA Wildlife Services), Andrew Wallace (NRCS), Scott Chamberlain (SITLA), Covy Jones (UDWR), Lorien Belton (USU Extension, facilitator)

Information Presented/Discussion Highlights

Map Revisions Recommendations

SVARM met for a special meeting to review draft maps of a Strawberry Valley sage-grouse management area, as proposed by the Governor's task force on sage-grouse. The task force is in the process of creating maps and recommendations for a Utah sage-grouse plan that will, if approved by the USFWS, supplant the BLM interim guidelines as well as provide direction on sage-grouse stipulations on state and other lands.

The SVARM group carefully reviewed and discussed the draft map boundaries provided by the governor's office. Brian Maxfield provided technical support for the discussion and showed overlays of grouse locations. After over an hour of discussion, several recommendations were made and recorded in GIS files. Lorien and Brian will make sure the files are provided to the Governor's team.

Included in the suggested map changes were alternations of the line south of Hwy 40, east of Red Creek, and south of the headwaters of White River. An area north of workman's road was also suggested to be removed from the core area map.

A concern was raised about how existing power lines would be handled. The understanding we have currently is that existing uses will be protected and not restricted, so there should not be problems.

The group was asked to identify key concerns in the SVARM area. They listed weeds, predators, conifer encroachment (mostly PJ) and land-use change (conversion to cabins and away from agriculture, for example) as the main issues in the area.

In addition to the map and identification of key concerns, the group provided recommendations on sage-grouse management stipulations in general. These included:

- Treat predators like weeds: manage them consistently and don't wait for large

- outbreaks that create really big problems and are harder to get under control
- Make sure that motorized access to weed-infested area is not restricted, as that would seriously hinder efforts to keep habitat in good condition (some areas are too remote or require too much chemical to be handled with backpack spraying).
 - Make sure that the percentage disturbance limitations apply only to actual habitat, not non-habitat within the larger boundaries. Perhaps consider a minimum size of non-habitat that would be excluded from stipulations, so that something just on the edge of habitat but actually in non-habitat wouldn't disturb birds. This issue needs to be carefully considered to be done right.

The group also wondered how much disturbance would be allowed in winter habitat, and what information is out there to help understand that.

Follow-up Needed

- Lorien will keep the group up to date with opportunities to comment on the federal processes and what is happening with the state sage-grouse task force.
- Lorien and Brian will check final map boundaries with Randall, then forward the shape file recommendations to the state team.

NEXT MEETING:

TBD. A field tour (Fruitland, weed-focused) is on hold until we know what additional meetings we may need to have to provide feedback on state planning processes.