

SWARM field tour summary October 19, 2010

9am – Met in Milford at Penny’s Diner

Those participating in the tour: Nile Sorenson, NRCS/UDWR; Kevin Williams, NRCS; Chad Reid, USU Extension; Jason Nicholes, UDWR; Mark Nelson, USU Extension; Kevin Wright, BLM; Dan Fletcher, BLM; Molly Galbraith(tour leader), BLM; Becky Bonebrake, BLM; Michelle Downey, BLM; Gaylord Robb, Paiute Tribe; Craig Egerton, BLM; Chad Hunter, BLM; John Keeler, Utah Farm Bureau; Douglas Hansen, FSA; and Kenneth Ure, FSA.

Stop 1: North of SR-21 in Pine Valley. We looked at an exclosure that was established in 1932 on the North Pine Valley winter allotment. We discussed grazing issues and the allotment renewal for the North Pine Valley allotment.

Stop 2: South of SR-21 in Pine Valley. BLM staff discussed Pine Valley allotment. Craig Egerton reported on the status of water rights/allocations in Pine and Wah Wah Valleys, and the issues with Iron County Water Conservancy District as well as the Southern Nevada Water Authority and Beaver County Water Conservancy District. Chad Hunter discussed the issues surrounding management of wild horses in general and specifically in the Pine Valley area. BLM personnel also discussed the RMP process and encouraged comments.

Stop 3: UDWR cabin on the Indian Peaks Wildlife Management Area. BLM staff discussed the Hamlin Valley Environmental Assessment. A draft EA is expected to be available to the public this winter. A Proposed Action will be provided to the SWARM at their December meeting. Cedar City Field Office has begun the process of preparing a Resource Management Plan (RMP). Scoping meetings for the RMP are scheduled for December 7-9 in Cedar City, Beaver, and Salt Lake City. The SWARM and attending agencies were encouraged to provide comments or letters of support for the Hamlin Valley EA and RMP. Riparian issues (i.e. overgrazing and excessive trampling by wild horses, elk, and livestock) were also discussed.

Stop 4: Pine Valley near mouth of Water Hollow. We looked at an NRCS range project on SITLA property that is starting to show some perennial grass establishment. We also looked at a pasture fence and a cattle guard installed on the south side of the treatment. BLM personnel discussed the fence marking. Plastic markers were installed to minimize grouse mortality. Jason Nicholes discussed the sage grouse status in the area, including the lek counts for the past few years.

Next SWARM meeting is scheduled for December 14th at 10 a.m.