

SWARM Meeting Minutes

December 7, 2021

Hybrid meeting

1. Attendance

Nicki Frey, Mark Nelsen, Randall Violett; Utah State University Extension

Clint Wirick, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Dan Fletcher, Derek Christensen; Bureau of Land Management

Via Zoom:

Jason Deforest, Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office

Amy Harvey, Rocky Mountain Power

Stan Gurley, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Christine Fletcher, Lara Kitchen, Martin Esplin; Bureau of Land Management

Mike Worthen, Iron County

Joe Moore, USFWS

2. Threats Table update: please see attached original and revised threats tables. This table is excerpted from our 2005 management plan. As BLM updates its planning, it is helpful for us to provide our updated view of the current threats to healthy sage-grouse populations.

3. GRSG Planning and scoping

The notice of intent to amend the Land Use Plan (2015 version) has been posted. There will be a 75-day public scoping period. There will be public meetings, which we will advertise as we get this information. There were several issues identified in the petition; and each state may address different issues within their state's plan. In 2021, BLM addressed the 2019 amendment, but please note that now they are going back to the 2015 plan.

4. Watershed Restoration Initiative proposals. We reviewed the following proposals and provided comment:

a. Greenville Bench – last section of what was going to be a prescribed fire to remove stage 2 and 3 Pinon and Juniper. Will tie in to previous chainings; the 10-year-old treatment nearby looks very good right now.

b. Fremont – the continuation of this project in the Buckskin/Bear/Dog Valley area.

c. Bear Valley – The NEPA is almost finished with this project. Multiple stakeholders involved. It is already funded, BLM will look into putting in a carryover request in May.

d. Kane Spring – permittee to the west is not interested, thus the shape of the project. Project focused on getting springs reinvigorated. Has some spring snails that are endemic to the spring. Will add some connectivity.

e. Lee Springs – located between Bald Hills and Panguitch SGMA. Within a couple miles of multiple use habitat. In stage 2-3 pinon juniper, with some intact understory. Mule deer habitat as well. Based on the photos this will require an aggressive seed mix, maybe ½ native.

5. Research Updates

Aiden Beers, PhD projected to finish in June 2022. Presented analysis of thermal refuge in southern Utah for Greater sage-grouse, and how that influences habitat uses in the summer.

Derek Christensen presented first year of accomplishments on the pinyon jay study. They found 4 new nesting colonies, took tree and vegetation data of these colonies.

Randall Violet and Dan Fletcher – presented accomplishments of the collaboration with SUU to research the propagation of native shrubs and forbs for future restoration.

Randall Violet and Dan Fletcher – presented accomplishments of their sagebrush seedling plantings in November 2021. Still in early days. Used 5 different methods of planting seedlings and wildlings in 5 different sites and will study to see which methods work the best.

Next Meeting: March