

SWARM
Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2009

Members Present

Christine Pontorolo, BLM
Jason Nicholes, UDWR
John Keeler, UFBF
Sherry Whitfield, BLM
Becky Bonebrake, BLM
Kevin Williams, RCD, Color Country

Items Discussed

A. Christine presented vegetation and pellet group data collected in Sage Grouse habitat in Hamlin, Pine Valley and the Indian Peaks area this past summer. 29 Transects in Hamlin, 24 in Pine Valley, 9 on the Indian Peaks range.
She will have a complete written report for attendees at next meeting.
Data will be great baseline data for all of us when proposing future vegetation projects.

B. Hamlin Valley EA
Is still out there but is not complete yet, Melanie is still the lead on the project.
BLM will report back to the group on its status.

C. Becky passed out info on pending decisions on proposed projects within sage grouse focus areas.

1. Horse gather on the sulfur herd 380 head.
2. Possible horse gather in the on the bible springs herd (200 head over AML)
3. Problem of unwanted domestic horses being dumped on the range.
4. Wind farm development
5. Transmission lines
6. Invasive species weed control
7. Livestock permit renewals

BLM will update us about the status of horse gathers and sales by email or at next meeting.

D. Jim brought up topic discussed at Color Country group about the Alton Coal production possibly starting this summer and the effects it will have on sage grouse.

1. Decoying sage grouse to an area using a bright white object or sound.

E. Observation of many in the group that rabbit use in some areas has been as much as large ungulate use.

1. We are hopefully passed our population peak in the rabbit cycle.
2. Predator control possibly has been too much in some areas causing the population peak to be larger than normal.

F. Raven predation on Prairie Dog young and sage grouse eggs

G. Milford Flat seeding BLM waiting to seed what the spring brings in the way of seed before determining if additional seeding is needed. We should have good soil moisture from recent precip.

H. Parowan and South Beaver oil exploration did not turn up any reserves and will be plugged and rehabbed.

I. Group asked if DWR intended to do new sage grouse lek surveys in SR this year. DWR will just be doing established long term lek surveys this year due to budget cuts. Group suggested private funding may be a source for continuing search.

J. Lek surveys in Cedar City district planned to start the first week in March. Anybody interested in coming out and helping please contact Jason.

Set next meeting date and time:

Next Meeting: April 21st, 10:00 – noon. Iron County Extension Office