

SWARM Meeting Minutes

April 1<sup>st</sup>, 10:00-12:00

In attendance:

**1. Lek Counts: mid-February Present**

Counts are about average

Dog Valley lek and New lek south of Dog Valley

Pine Valley birds are moving around

**2. Trapping Update**

Looking good, 5 more to go.

**3. Summit Update**

In SLC; Curtis, Randy, Becky, Mark, and Jason attended from SWARM

“Focused toward the state plan and how the state wanted to do things”

“We were hoping that there was going to be some sort of direction that would help us focus our goal”

**4. NRCS SGI**

application deadline closed on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

no new applications but do have maintenance on past projects.

Taking applications for next year

Keep your eyes open for areas that could use fences or private property opportunities

**5. Pocket Gopher Study with Mark**

Comparing bait to piercing trap. Already seeing decline in new mounds with both treatments

6. BLM Becky – UPD activities that also are in SG areas.

UPD counts will be starting in March

Section 7 survey training in May

Will be dusting to control plague with contractors this summer, overlapping in Wild Pea Hollow and Little Horse Valley, Buckskin Valley. Will probably hold off until May 15<sup>th</sup> to avoid strutting areas.

BLM would like questions and concerns from the group to allow for support on comments on projects that might impact sage grouse.

Little Horse Valley – Low Cattle Pipeline. Extension and maintenance of existing pipeline. Livestock water pipeline. 1.18 miles of new pipeline. 0.4 that needs maintenance.

- Escape ramps for grouse and other wildlife in the troughs and ponds.
- Make attempt to have overflow into the eastern pond.
- In the SW line, it would be a good place to allow a “trickle” that creates a small mesic habitat patch. Nothing large is necessary, even 48 square feet would be enough.

Northern Little Horse Valley – Pipeline. 6.3 miles of new pipeline. Alternatives presented for proposed new pipelines. Box the pond to make a water lot so that it could be used by 3 pastures.

- Can't construct in the summer b/c grouse will be nesting.
- Any attempts to create small mesic habitat patches where possible with the troughs and ponds

Private Marshall Well – new pipes and new troughs. Don't run water year round, run the water when the cows enter and leave any that is remaining when the cows are removed. Big storage tank.

- This is an area where grouse move through when heading to the north. In particular Marshall Well and Trough 14 could provide summer habitat for moving birds if there is some mesic habitat created.
- The new pond could be effective in helping provide some summer habitat to grouse that move through the area during that time. Again, this doesn't have to be a large area, 48 square feet would even help.

Habitat Treatment. 3683 acres over the course of 8-10 years. North side of Little Horse Valley. Some of the northern boundary of the proposed treatment abuts the previous burn from 2010, but most of it has not burned. Small treatment areas of various type of treatments. This is a UPD habitat treatment that would result in <10% cover.

- Acreages are small enough that you would not impact sage-grouse with these treatments, given the scheduling of the treatments
- In areas where there is potential nesting habitat, please put off treatment during the nesting season.
- Treatments can start as early as July 15<sup>th</sup>. Small treatments should allow broods to move away from treatment areas.

Figure-Red Butte Mitigation Treatments. 950 acres treated up to February 15<sup>th</sup>. 100 acres of small trees and small chaining on young trees. The rest was mitigation for RMP.

For Fall 2014, applied for funding to treat 2000 acres. 5 polygons. 4 would have the purpose of creating habitat for Sagegrouse (a couple in Mudsprings and a couple in Long Hollow. 1 pasture near west Jackrabbit Alotment, treated for UPD to create grass alotments. This is all under NEPA just looking for funding.

BLM Fuels – Melanie Mendenhal – Greenville project. Field trip with fuels team, Nicki, Jason, Gary, and some others to outline a sagebrush treatment project. Objective is to provide habitat to keep birds in the hills rather than go to the ag fields. Smooth chaining. Fly seed on the whole polygon and then chain in a mosaic. Would like to do this before the fall seed sets on the sagebrush. Not many comments from the group, Jason and Nicki have already consulted. About 2500 acres.

BLM Fuels – Melanie Mendenhal – Buckskin Valley. Bullhog to push the treeline out of the valley. Harrow and handthin to get some of the trees out of the middle pasture.

- There are some areas that are already treated for UPD; there were some islands left for grouse. Please do not treat those islands that were purposefully left. Maybe retreat the previously treated areas instead.

- Would like to see the trees removed on the western side of the valley, because trees are creating perches for the lek that is there.

## 7. Field Tour Planning