

SWARM Meeting Feb 15th, 2011 10am

Attendees

Nicki Frey, USU Extension

John Keeler, Utah Farm Bureau Federation

Mark Nelson, USU Extension

Becky Bonebrake, Bureau of Land Management

Christine Pontarolo, Bureau of Land Management

Chad Reid, USU Extension

Kevin Williams, RC&D

Clint Wirick, USFWS Partners Program

Nile Sorenson, Natural Resources Conservation Services/Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Jason Nicholes, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

1. What is the USFWS Partners Program: Clint's program is highlighting sage grouse projects on private land.

2)Updates:

NRCS Sage grouse initiative –Nile: mou between USFWS and NRCS. Provides certainty that cooperators will be in full compliance if USFWS lists grouse in the future.

1 million dollars for EQIP and WHIP. Sign up deadline is March 1st. NRCS will be sending out post cards to particular landowners that would have potential projects to benefit sage grouse. Also talked with Alma and Kelly Evans. Looking at upper Bear Valley and the Harris' south of HWY 20. Also looking at a project on Hatch Bench as well as an application for work in Hamlin Valley.

There is a threat checklist that you go through with landowner. Addresses things like fence obstructions, marking fences on winter range, pinyon juniper encroachment, prescribed grazing (deferring until after May), noxious weed removal. Ranking takes into account how many of those threats are addressed in the plan.

3) Agency updates

UDWR: starting lek surveys 1st week of March.

USU EXT: have 2 grad students going on the projects we started with BLM

NRCS: updating their priority maps for grouse

USU Beaver: Watershed day. 7-9th graders. Will be cutting out stems of pinions and junipers. April 29th. Purpose to teach them conservation and instill stewardship.

BLM: M3 project. Project # 1980 in WRI database. M3 grazing allotment. Driven by UPD but don't want to do anything negative for grouse in the process. There are 3 treatment areas in close proximity to each other.

- 1) Old crested wheat grass seedings from the 1960s on BLM. ReTreated in 1999 and it started out being really good then crashed with the drought, then conditions were right for sagebrush conversion. Want to remove the sagebrush, but leave the hills and tops for the grouse. Take out the flats and swales. Want to move it to a grass/forb ecosystem. About 280 acres inside the planned polygon. Plan on doing brush control in summer and then come back in the fall and reseed. This will be several phases because it is a grazing allotment, with goal of a couple thousand acres.
- Want to move some fences, clean out some old ponds, place some pipelines. Goal to redistribute the cattle to improve utilization throughout the allotment. Will partnership with the county and use the same equipment
- 2) SITLA and Iron County property (County Name: Little Horse Valley). About 250 acres. Baboon fire came through the area. County been thinking about using Plateau to treat the area and then reseed. Trying to control the amount of cheatgrass in this area. BLM administers the grazing. Mike Worthen has been working on it for the county. County portion tied up in the Iron County Habitat Conservation Plan. Nathan Brown been discussing it for the UDWR. Will also be considering water developments, new Fenceline placement. Chad has been discussing putting in several treatments and monitoring it to see what would work best.
 - We should consider a field trip to see what perennial grasses are out there.
 - **At our April meeting, we should pick a date for a field trip for SWARM**
- 3) Iron County Wild Pea Hollow site. Part of the Golf Course/Paiute Tribe Habitat Conservation Plan. Need to improve habitat so that Piute Tribe can have the ability to move UPD from their lands. This area has a rabbitbrush issue. Chad Reid is planning on using an herbicide product to control the rabbitbrush. This area will have to be mowed in order to decrease the vegetation height to a suitable level for UPD. This is a sheep allotment, so it will be easier to manage the grazing on this land. (Wild Pea Hollow)

BLM Hamlin Valley EA is out!! Posted on their Environmental Notification Bulletin Board. RDCC –The Resource Development Coordinating Council will also post it. Also proposed a project in Hamlin Valley in the event that the decision is created. Christine will send a link for this project for the minutes.

- Chad Reid Iron County: Chad Reid Iron County: Owner wanting to lease or sell the Endrody Property. A mile as the crow flies from the Parowan Gap lek. It would be beneficial to stay informed as to how this proceeds. It would be nice to have access to this property as there used to be grouse there in the past, perhaps we could work with new owner or leasee to restore the land. Chad will try and stay abreast of the situation.
 - **Arizona Utah Range Livestock Workshop will be the 5-7th April. Wash Co fairgrounds on the 5th.**
 - **Utah SRM summer meetings will be June 2nd-3rd up in Logan.**
 - **Stan Kitchen (FS Shrub Lab) wants to have a field trip to the Desert Experiment Station on June 17th. Details to follow.**
 - **UPD Day at Bryce Canyon June 24th.**

4) **please review strategies and actions and get that to Nicki by April meeting**

Get copies of Coates paper to the group

5) Sage grouse trapping plans

- Graduate students down first weekend in March. Go out and survey area
 - Walk in traps
 - Air gun

6) **Next meeting date April 19th**

SWARM field tour: Hamlin Valley. Talk about projects that were mentioned in the new EA. Visit different land ownerships.