

**WEST BOX
ELDER CRM
2020 STRATEGY
SESSIONS**

Date: January 28 and 30, 2020

Place: Grouse Creek and Park Valley

Present: Jan 28 (45 people) and Jan 30 (40 people). Attendees included many local residents, landowners, and agricultural producers; board members of the local Conservation District; and representatives from Bureau of Land Management, Utah Chukar Foundation, Box Elder County Weed Department, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Grazing Improvement Program, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Box Elder County, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bear River Water Conservancy District, and USU Extension.

Meeting Summary

At two meetings on January 28 (Grouse Creek) and January 30 (Park Valley), the same agenda and questions were brought to the CRM group. The meetings were organized by Danielle Kunzler (local conservation districts) and Calee Garn (Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance coordinator), and facilitated by Lorien Belton with Utah State University.

Current CRM Plan Overview – progress by objectives

Calee Garn presented the objectives from the existing CRM plan (developed in 2008), and progress against those objectives. Many were accomplished (gas station card reader, considerable acres of pinyon-juniper treatment, etc.), and some were not completed although progress understanding the situation or limitations was made (for example, on development of a reservoir).

Facilitated Feedback Sessions

The majority of the meeting was focused on determining current community needs across a broad spectrum of ideas (e.g. natural resources, infrastructure, communication, etc.).

Everyone was asked to write down their top three concerns relating to community or natural resource issues locally. Lorien asked for individual responses on cards to be brought to small-group discussions, and key ideas to be shared with the full group. All ideas discussed in the full group were recorded on flip charts. Results are as follows:

In Grouse Creek, focus areas of discussion included the following:

- Water: develop something to hold spring run-off past June
- Roads: paving/development
- Weed control/prevention, especially in fire areas
- For business development: have fiber optic, need other things
- Emergency services and roads so families are comfortable coming out to live

- Continuing resource work (PJ, etc.)
- Make meeting logistics easier for producers (like BLM meetings)
- West Box Road RDA
- Flooding issues on roads off Hwy 30 (tell the county) – roads should be protected
- Master drainage plan for road issues
- Pre-fire strategic planning/containment
- Enhance post-fire communication
- Water distribution for livestock and wildlife: programmatic EA
- Water storage and dispersal systems
- Water conservation (pivots, etc.)
- Roads
- More flexibility with BLM permits
- Better communication and project/range improvement maintenance

Additional ideas from individuals and follow-up discussion included:

- Maintain what we've got: roads/EMTs etc.
- Continually improve ranching efficiency to keep it viable
- Raven control
- Continued communication with CRM (WRI project reviews)
- Dam/reservoir project move forward
- Places to move to: infrastructure development opportunities: (consider SITLA requests for sale/development of parcels)
- Discuss fish potential/incentives at reservoir: look at technology to bring back fishing and address garbage issues
- Improving cell service. 5G?
- Community economic development foundation has some money (\$100,000?). redirect it? Use it differently? Using it can mean increased availability of federal dollars
- How to expand tourism without causing damage to private lands/livestock
- EMS: 4WD ambulance, additional training/people helpful, maybe a side-by-side
- Tap county tourism funds w. grant requests: (quick grants) available for events
- Public/BLM signage needs to be improved/refurbished
- Continue momentum with ideas and the CRM process
- Distance options for landowners remotely
- Self-advocacy = planning and devoting time
- Wildlife habitats and healthy wildlife
- Cell phone service
- Increase agency-landowner communications even more
- Fire rehab coordination and dollars (for Goose Creek fire especially)
- Immediate fire response
- Water conversations (past not so successful, but important for future)
- Road paving
- CD Board: changing from elected to appointed: is that still going to be a good home for the CRM?
- Need for landowner involvement in subcommittees to decide where and when

In Park Valley, the conversation brought up the following points

- Fire prevention: fire breaks (and maintaining fire breaks) and cheatgrass
- Water: speed up process of pipelines across federal ground
- PJ treatments- keep momentum on new projects; but work on maintenance as well
- Wildlife: better collaboration on wildlife (opportunities for information and input locally)
- Maintain projects we have, like fences, soon enough to not have to redo them
- Predator issues for sage-grouse, deer on alfalfa, etc.
- Economic development-jobs
- Infrastructure: roads, cell service improvements, internet access maintenance
- Aquatic sensitive species – suckers in Raft River drainage, springs with mussels
- Water conservation for many uses (wildlife, livestock, fire, etc.)
- Community involvement: keep communication open with agencies about what's working
- Keep community involved in case something big comes in from the outside
- Water conservation- creating storage, slowing runoff (try with local bentonite to line existing storage)
- PJ treatment maintenance
- Irrigation projects
- Range projects
- Small farm projects: help people out
- Recreation – find a way to promote it
- Need for diverse economic draws to get visitors
- Fuel station in Park Valley
- Range improvements and water conservation efforts: continue, and update
- Weed management
- Equipment rental for less common machines, like a range drill
- Predation: cougars and coyotes on livestock
- New wildlife: moose, elk, antelope
- Hunter ethics: stronger penalties for private lands violations
- Fuel station for public use
- Cattle guards to help handle public/recreation leaving gates open
- New wildlife- DWR more on top of changes (turkeys, elk → hunters) and more communication (on hunting especially)
- Keep and increase collaboration for efficiency and common sense (for many community topics)
- Stay on top of fire management
- Mapping water sources for fire control (including where irrigation systems are and adding 4-inch hookups)
- Adding storage—working with fire folks [when designing pipelines, consider fire and storage systems, like what is uphill and gravity feeds fire systems]
- EMS vehicles: connections between cab and back
- New EMTs to help manage burnout

- Ability to take tourism dollars for EMS to 3rd-tier counties – call your representatives to get that changed
- Health dept wants to know how to help

After everyone had shared their priorities and had a chance to comment on the overall scope of items discussed, the facilitator asked for a general show of hands/thumbs regarding whether they were in favor of having an updated CRM document. At both meetings, there was general interest in continued coordination toward these goals, as well as agreement that that coordination would be useful for maintaining momentum. There was less enthusiasm for a planning process as involved or lengthy as the original CRM plan.

Discussion then followed about how to design a process that would meet needs for engagement and involvement but did not feel burdensome or unneeded. Comments included:

- Communication preferences to keep people engaged and informed
 - Email list updates (maybe consider an open list)
 - Paper/mail announcements (bright postcards)
 - postcards to remind to check my email for meeting details
- General process
 - Every other month meetings is too much.
 - tell CD board if you need a topic added to the meeting that you can't make it to
 - Wildlife tours/field trips – every other year? (good motivation)
 - Changing who's in charge of the CRM and sub-committees to avoid burnout, get new ideas
 - Report our successes to keep the energy going
- Partnerships and other ideas for leveraging resources
 - FSA – Rebecca Dilg add to lists (USDA at meetings)
 - Bear River Health Department wants to be involved
 - NRCS can give more \$ for projects if there's a CRM plan backing it
 - Economic Development Committee for Box Elder County – designate someone to reach out to the Tourism Advisory Board (TAB) Joan Hammer. Grant requests usually between \$500 and \$15,000 (max)

The groups then discussed what breakdown of subcommittees would be most valuable to handle the scope of topics that arose in the meeting. The two meetings developed similar lists of subcommittees. Although needs may evolve, potential starting subcommittees will likely be:

- Infrastructure (roads/cell service)
- Weeds and Range
- Water
- Wildlife (broader than the past, including predation and other problem discussions)
- Economic/tourism development

Next Steps

- Calee, Dani, and Lorien will propose a structure for the CRM to consider for how to lead the CRM into the future with some of these ideas.
- The CRM will discuss possible directions at the next meeting.