

**WDARM  
LOCAL WORKING  
GROUP**

**Date: Friday, April 28, 2006**

**Time: 9:00-12:00 AM**

**Place: USU Extension Building, Tooele, UT**

**Members Present:**

Planning/scoping  
meeting

Sarah Lupis (USU Ext.)  
Boyd White (Chair)  
Jason Robinson (USU)  
Ashley Green (UDWR)  
Lans Stavast (USFS)  
Kim Asmus (UDWR)  
Tom Becker (UDWR)  
Linden Greenhalgh (USU Ext.)  
Burk Davenport (NRCS)  
Mark Farmer (UDWR)  
Scott Chamberlain (SITLA)  
Jerney Maestas (NRCS)  
Cindy Burton (NRCS)  
Ron Davidson (NRCS)  
Jared Reddington (BLM)  
Brook Chadwick (BLM)  
Randy Larsen (BYU)  
Victor oppenheim (Goshute Tribe)  
Richard Clark (Tooele County)  
Mark Peterson (UFBF)

**Information Presented/Discussion Highlights**

Jason presented information on new leks, radio-collared birds, and initial results of habitat preference. See attached map.

Brook presented information on BLM fuels management. In 2003, an EA was prepared for the Ibapah Allotment. Treatments conducted in 2003 are outlined in the handout, attached. Implementation in some parts of the allotment (Cold Springs) was hampered by cultural restrictions. The BLM also implemented non-surface disturbing treatments including brush crunching and bullhog (see attached maps). In 2005, small E-W strips were put in in some areas with an aerator (based on lessons from the 2003 treatments about the effects of treatment on sage-grouse—N-S strips appear to hinder movement). Strips were 40-50 feet wide and variable distance between strips. The seed mix used in the treatment was provided by the UDWR and included: blue bunch, snake river wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, bee plant, yarrow, sagebrush and forage coshiah were flown on in December. Any chemical treatments require an EA. However, a nationwide EIS is being prepared for chemical treatments that would include the use

of Plateau and spike.

Burke reported on treatments planned for Tribal ground. They have a >50 y.o. stand of crested wheatgrass. A fire went through the area and resulted in some healthy conditions (good forbs and grasses, left many shrubs). Decided to mimic fire and treat the area chemically. Use of herbicides allowed for avoidance of cultural resources, snow capture by brush skeletons, and retention of grasses. Another project is an 800 acre chaining. The site was a black sage site that has been encroached on by juniper over the last 100 years. The chaining will be located in the spring/fall pasture and they plan to chain in June and burn in the fall (if BIA fire plan is prepared), then to plant and back chain over the seeding. They are working with the UDWR to use a seed mix that is good for both livestock and wildlife. Tom indicated that the area was important winter range for deer and elk and some grass species should be included in the mix to accommodate this type of use. Mark indicated that they might use bitterbrush and Jeremy noted that the soils cannot support a great many grasses because they are thin. Tom also suggested leaving some islands of thermal cover. Several folks (Sarah, Jeremy, and Scott) recommended consulting with managers from Parker Mtn. who have a lot of experience with spike.

SITLA is not planning any treatments for this year.

Randy presented some information on pygmy rabbit work he has been doing in the area. Randy is currently a M.S. student at BYU and will be headed up to USU in the fall to work with John Bissonette to continue work with pygmy rabbits. Randy would like to know where treatments are planned so that they can search those areas for PYRA prior to treatment. He also encouraged managers to do the following: leave residual cover in bottoms, minimize number of small islands, maintain connectivity between large patches of sagebrush. A quarterly report will be provided.

Richard Clark gave a presentation on trail. He is in charge of developing a plan for trails in the county. They are always interested in feedback (both positive and negative) on proposals. Please contact any time. The plan given out at today's meeting is about 2 years old. In cooperation with the State Parks Division, they would like to develop an OHV complex that ultimately connects all of Utah and surrounding states. Looking at routes on already maintained county roads. They would like to develop maps and enforcement to keep people on trails. They would like to use this complex to provide a place for people to go to keep OHV users from endangering themselves, developing new trails, and display other irresponsible behavior. They (state parks, primarily) are currently negotiating with the BLM and USFS to get approval for signage. The County has purchased the signs and they are just waiting for approval for them to be put up. The plan has been approved and is part of the County's General Plan (2000 or 2001). They would like to avoid RS2477 rules; rather they would like to make agreements with other land management agencies. The County is focused on cooperating with other agencies and landowners in support of the common goal of keeping users to designated routes, and vehicle safety. They are not currently making RS2477 claims on the roads themselves. A formal trails committee has been established in the County. Tom asked if there was an opportunity for WDARM to comment on proposed trails to highlight sensitive species needs that are not being met; specifically to close some roads to protect sensitive species and/or habitat treatments. The Trails Committee meets

on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month. Those meetings are open to the public and comments are welcome. Richard will facilitate communication between WDARM and the trails committee. Ashley asked about enforcement. The County Plan calls for peer intervention and education. They don't feel that abuse can be stopped and that peer intervention, established trails, and signage will likely reduce negative impacts. Tom inquired about temporary/seasonal closures and how those are being enforced (with a focus on disturbance in winter range). The County is open to management of the trails, dependent on recommendations from the wildlife management agencies, for what is needed and required. Kim asked about resources available for rehabilitation of damage from people venturing off the system. The County does not have those resources but other funds might be available for private or state/federal land management agencies to do that kind of work. Tom expressed concern that the County will become a tourist attraction for OHV users in SLC. Richard replied that their presence is inevitable and this system will help minimize their impacts, once they are here. There is an interest in developing a "trails center" associated with the Deseret Peak Complex where land management agencies/the county can provide information about good stewardship, safe vehicle use, etc. The OHV complex was proposed by State Parks, the Tooele Valley Trails was proposed by the Planning department's trails committee to the County Commissioners. Richard Clark's contact information is:

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Jason presented an update about lek counts, searches, and trapping. Vernon: 15 new collars went out and the new sample size to date is 39 (9 males, 30 females). McIntyre=12 birds, Benmore/Little Valley=11

The Benmore lek was confirmed this year. High of 16. The "Phantom Lek" still has not been confirmed. Leks are typically found near sagebrush in areas dominated by crested. Little Valley high of 34; McIntyre high of 67. Found 2 new leks in Vernon; historic lek site had 2 strutting males on it and should continue to be monitored. Cecil Douglas's (old) property has a lek on it (right where you get to Lookout Pass). Another new lek was discovered at the base of Simpson Mtn. with a high of 37 males. Discovery of this new lek opens up the possibility for birds in that whole valley. Again, the lek was found in an open area adjacent to sagebrush. 2 males and 2 females were collared on that lek. Overall, lek counts keep going up—the more they look, the more they find. Jason has been very appreciative of volunteer help from WDARM members and dedicated hunters. Jason has heard that there are leks on private land in agriculture and worries that private landowners are hesitant to disclose that information.

Ibapah: NV biologist sent lek site information and those have been confirmed. 6 active leks are

known in the area. A high of 40 in middle pasture. Only 2 in the treated one. A few stragglers on the east side in the new treatments are suspected. The lek to the north in middle pasture has a high of ~12-15. There are more leks on the Goshute lands that haven't been found. There are birds there; continued searching will likely turn up leks. 3 males and 9 females are collared there.

Few counts left. Jason will be out this next week if anyone wants to go. Volunteers are especially needed for counting so that Jason is freed up for searching. Trapping is over—thanks to all volunteers! Counting will be done this week every day in both Vernon (Tu-F) and Ibapah (Mon). Send Jason an email if you are interested.

Kim reported that no birds were found on the Copolous lek this year. The biologist suspected that he was maybe late this year. 7 males were flushed in Mona and there is a good chance that there is a lek. Tom is also going to look in Furner Valley at a historic lek site. As new lek sites are discovered the potential for interaction with other subpopulations/populations increases. Most new lek sites are also associated with new brood and nesting areas.

Jeremy asked if lek habitat was limiting. Jason has concluded that sagebrush is an important component to lek habitat. He feels that if there are enough males, they will have leks. He feels that nesting and brood rearing habitat are the most limiting thing. Mesic sites seem to be important in sustaining forbs later into the season. Insects may also be more abundant in mesic sites.

### **Actions Taken**

Meeting minutes from March were approved.

Ranking of stresses and threats was postponed until the next meeting.

### **Follow-up Needed**

Sarah to get electronic versions of handouts and powerpoint presentations from this meeting from Randy Larsen, Brook Chadwick, and Jason Robinson.

Sarah to coordinate with Richard Clark to have Trails Committee minutes and agendas distributed to WDARM members. They will also coordinate to provide GIS information to Sarah for the Plan.

Sarah to send out stresses and threats ranking guidelines to group with meeting minutes.

Schedule field tour for summer, 2006 to look at all of the treatments presented at this meeting; coordinate with Jeremy.

**NEXT MEETING: Monday, June 12<sup>th</sup> 2006, 5-7 PM USU Extension Office, Tooele, UT**  
**DEEP CREEK FIELD TOUR: Meet at 9 AM at the airstrip at Tribal Headquarters in**  
**Ibapah.**