

**WDARM
LOCAL WORKING
GROUP**

Date: Wednesday, January 18, 2006

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Tooele County Extension Office, Tooele, UT

Members Present:

Planning/scoping
meeting

Sarah Lupis (USU Ext.)
Boyd White (Chair)
Jason Robinson (USU)
Ashley Green (UDWR)
Renaë Bragonje (USFS)
Karen Hartman (USFS)
Darrell Johnson (Shambip SCD, Landowner)
John Stookey (Landowner)
Jay Sagers (Shambip SCD)
Burke Davenport (NRCS)
Allan Mitchell (Co-Chair, landowner)
Lans Stavast (USFS)
Carlos Garcia (UACD)
Kim Asmus (UDWR)
Tom Becker (UDWR)

Information Presented/Discussion Highlights

Tom Becker suggested that WDARM invite Richard Clark to the next meeting to give a short presentation about the proposals that the trails committee is considering for the area. Tom indicated that although none of the proposed trails will impact sage-grouse habitat, future plans might. Sarah said she will also try to meet with the Tooele County Commission and update them on the activities of WDARM.

Sarah Lupis gave a short review of the Conservation Action Planning process that was started at the December meeting. The group reviewed the Viability Table that they started working on at the last meeting dealing with population size. The group elected to split the indicator ratings for population size and distribution into each subunit because the two areas are separate populations and to consider them together seemed inappropriate. When working on the population distribution section, the group elected to use a narrative description of the geographic areas they would like to see have a greater number of active leks (rather than # leks/unit area, or some other measure). The new draft Viability Table is attached.

Jason gave an update on sage-grouse research. He said that an annual report is being prepared

and will be sent to WDARM members soon. He is working on setting up a flight for the area to locate birds and find out if any have died. In March he anticipates a lot of lek searching efforts and some additional capture work. About 4 birds have died of unknown causes this fall/winter.

The USFS gave an update on the Benyon Ranch project. Renae said that the archeological clearance and soils work has been completed but that they are still in need of more input on potential impacts to threatened and endangered species. Once this has been completed, a BA/BE will be prepared. There is some discussion about the tools that will be used to do the treatment (Lawson aerator vs. chain) that also still needs to be decided. The end result will be the issuance of a Categorical Exclusion (CE) for the project. They hope to have it implemented this year.

The UDWR also gave an update about the status of the Benyon Ranch project. The NRCS chained 100 acres and there are plans to do more this year. Sarah suggested that the UDWR and the Mitchell's look into getting SGRP monies to help fund monitoring efforts.

Actions Taken

Meeting minutes from December approved.

Follow-up Needed

Boyd to invite Richard Clark to the next meeting for a short presentation about the trails proposals.

Sarah to coordinate with Linden to set up a meeting with the Tooele County Commission.

Sarah to continue to work on Conservation Plan.

Tom and Jason to bring maps to February meeting of areas where lek searching needs to take place.

Group to work on Viability Table for Habitat Condition

Boyd and Allan to draft a letter of support for the Benyon Ranch project for the USFS.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, February 15th, 2-4 pm

**Conservation Action Planning: Greater Sage-grouse Viability Table for the West Desert—
Population Size and Distribution**

Category	Key Ecological Factor	Indicator	Indicator Rating				Basis for Indicator Rating	Comments
			Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good		
Size	Population Size	Maximum no. of males counted on all active leks in each subunit	Vernon: <200 Ibapah: <50	Vernon : 200-350 Ibapah: 50-100	Vernon: 350-500 Ibapah : 100-200	Vernon : 500+ Ibapah: 200+	UDWR lek count data; Historical counts and personal observations. 2005 counts: Vernon = 96 Ibapah = 42	Important to separate by subunit because they are separate populations. Lek counts are inconsistent, especially in Ibapah. New leks were found in 2005 which will be considered active in 2007 if males continue to be counted there.
Size	Population Size	Number of active leks in the entire Resource Area	Vernon: <4 Ibapah: <2	Vernon : 4-8 Ibapah : 2-4	Vernon: 8-16 Ibapah : 5-7	Vernon : 16+ Ibapah: 7+	UDWR lek count data; number of active leks, and number of historic, now inactive, leks. Also the potential to find new leks in the future with additional effort. Number of leks in Vernon = 4, Ibapah = 2.	Several new leks were found last year which will be considered “active” if counted again this year and next year. “Active” defined according to Connelly’s assessment and the UDWR protocol.

Minutes

Category	Key Ecological Factor	Indicator	Indicator Rating				Basis for Indicator Rating	Comments
			Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good		
Size	Population Distribution	Lek Distribution as measured by geographic areas of potential habitat.	Vernon: anything less than current distribution Ibapah: current distribution	Vernon : current distribution Ibapah: current distribution plus additional leks west of the highway.	Vernon: Current distribution plus more in Rush Valley Ibapah : "Fair" plus bench areas	Vernon : "Good" distribution plus additional leks in areas of potential habitat. Ibapah: "Good" plus all of Ibapah Valley.	Vernon: Potential habitat includes Stansburys, Simpsons, Sheep Rocks, Rush Valley, and along Hwy 6. Ibapah: although there are 2 established and 2-3 potential leks they are all very close together.	