

**WEST DESERT
(WDARM)
LOCAL WORKING
GROUP**

Date: November 16, 2020
Place: Virtual meeting via Zoom
Individuals Present: Brad Jessop (BLM), Cjay Butters (USDA Wildlife Services), Terri Pope (UDWR), Cassie Mellon (BLM), Heather Talley (UDWR), Jared Reese (BLM state office), Jerry Bullock (BLM), Dylan Tucker (BLM), Alan Clark (private citizen), Jordan Davis (BLM), Lorien Belton (USU Extension)

Information Presented/Discussion Highlights

Wet meadow restoration projects

Cassie Mellon presented a possible wet meadow restoration project to the group; slightly outside sage-grouse habitat, in the Nephi Meadows area. Is it s grazed pasture with a degraded wet meadow in it that fits the kind of project with potential for low-tech, low-cost restoration work. Although not ready for WRI this year, Cassie is interested in finding project partners who would be interested in working on it together. Anyone interested can contact Cassie directly.

Lorien briefly showed several slides from an NRCS presentation/webinar on low-tech restoration techniques so the group could envision the kinds of projects that might be applicable.

Lek trends statewide

The group viewed the slides from the October Plan Implementation Council meeting that showed lek trends across Utah. Most of the state is still in the trough of a ten-year population cycle. The Sheeprocks population is looking up since last year, in part due to the translocations project.

Project updates

Brad Jessop reported that the lop and scatters at Maple Springs and McIntyre were completed last month. Erickson Knoll is coming up soon. The PJ treatments planed for about 4000 acres in the Tintic Valley this fall are still waiting for cultural clearance to be finished, and are likely going to have to be postponed until next fall. Those are the Mud Springs and Chambers Wash projects. That is a small complication with the hydrology project which was planning for the treatments to be completed this year, but they will now have another year of pre-data. The BLM has also done a cheatgrass treatment using Open-Range G. Right now, there are no additional large projects coming up soon.

BLM updates

Jared Reese provided BLM updates:

- The SEIS being done in response to the court injunction from last fall is expected to be completed in the coming weeks. It will then go back to the judge for review to say whether BLM can go back to implementing the 2019 sage-grouse amendments.
- The seasonal habitat maps are in the final stages, and will hopefully be available in December or perhaps January. The new maps will be presented at LWGs once they are finalized.
- HAF assessments in the Sheeprocks are in progress. The 3rd order will be done in a few months, and the Salt Lake Field Office is working on the 4th order (finest scale). The SLFO is also working on the mid-scale (3rd order) for Ibapah.
- Melissa Wood's position has been filled by Christine Fletcher.

Other updates and discussions

- CJay explained that they are close to maxing out the allowed raven take for the year, and will be asking for a larger number the year.
- The Goshute tribe is interested in working on understanding their local lek trends better. Ibapah lek numbers are down slightly in 2020 but overall steady. The population is strongly linked to others across the border in Nevada.

Follow-up Needed

- Lorien will work on scheduling a soil crusts presentation for a future meeting.
- Lorien will work to connect the tribe with Heather Talley and Jason Robinson.

Next Meeting

The next meeting date was not set, but will likely be in January or February, TDB by a doodle poll.