

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

**Date: March 15, 2017**  
**Place: Tooele County Building**  
**Members Present:** Janet Larsen (Shambip CD), Rachel Brown (RMP), Allison Jones (Wild Utah Project), Kris Hulvey (USU), Adam Fund (USU), Genevieve Fields (Goshute Tribe), Whitney May (Logan Simpson), Boyd White (UDWR), Jerry Caldwell (Tooele County Weeds), Erik Valdez (BLM), Brad Jessop (BLM-WDD), Terri Pope (UDWR), Jessica Delph (NRCS), Jim Priest (BLM), Matt Howard (UDWR), Alan Clark (former DNR), and Lorien Belton (USU Extension facilitator).

### Information Presented/Discussion Highlights

#### *Beaver Dam Analog project proposed for Vernon Creek*

Allison Jones, with Wild Utah project, explained how beaver-dam analogs work to restore washed out streams by catching sediment and raising the water table. She showed pictures of some successful examples elsewhere in Utah. This year, a project with multiple BDAs was proposed through the WRI process to improve some badly washed out areas of Vernon Creek above the reservoir. The project ranked relatively high in the area so will likely receive funding. Allison explained that using BDAs can be much more cost effective than other forms of riparian restoration. Her organization will be managing a team of volunteers who will install a series of BDAs along a stretch of the creek. In addition, the volunteers will provide monitoring pre and post-project to evaluate the effectiveness of the structures that will be installed. Anyone interested in participating in the work or learning the monitoring technique should contact Allison directly.

Elizabeth noted that there may be concerns with some associated projects in the area, such as a Forest Service proposal to move the road so it does not get flooded, and an associated pipeline being installed along the road route by the irrigation company. Justin Robinson (with the Forest Service) is the point of contact for the road proposal.

The group was interested in the potential improvements that could be achieved through BDA installation. The area may be a good field tour destination this summer, either before or after the BDAs are installed.

#### *Seeding success and soil moisture research presentation*

Dr. Kris Hulvey, an assistant professor at USU, and USU graduate student Adam Fund presented about their research on forb seedling success. Kris presented the idea of using restoration islands (rather than landscape-level treatments) to help establish forbs in areas where doing larger

treatments might be prohibitively expensive and/or unlikely to succeed. The islands concept could be used, for example, to choose specific areas where establishment of forbs is particularly likely due to various factors such as moisture, exposure, slope, etc. Then those areas could either serve as seed sources for wider areas, or just key areas for pollinators or other wildlife who use forbs. The concept does not work in all situations, but may be worth considering for projects where seeding success, funding, etc. may be limited.

Adam explained the research they are doing to determine whether they can increase the likelihood of native forb seedling establishment in old agricultural fields. They are using fabric coverings, snow fences, and seed coating to try to influence seedling success. Their project is just in the first year, so most of the results are not in yet. However, it does appear that seed coatings may be very useful. Other treatment effects seem to be site specific, at least so far. The group asked Kris to come back to the group when the study has more final results to see if there are lessons that could be applied to habitat projects locally.

A topic of significant discussion after the conversation was about using coated seeds to increase the likelihood of seedling survival. Seed coating has been used by the agricultural industry for a long time, but is less common in restoration. It gives the seeds a protective coating, which allows them to better survive adverse conditions, as well as deferring germination or increasing germination, depending on the types of coatings applied. They can also be used in a drill seeder if they are coated, rather than having to be flown on a seeder.

### *Baseline Recreation Survey results from 2012*

Lorien presented some of the data from a 2012 baseline survey of ATV recreationists in Utah. The survey was commissioned by an interagency team working on public stay-on-the-trail messaging, with their "Ride On Utah" campaign. The group wanted to have baseline data to be able to compare to a survey that will be done in late 2017, which will help them assess the impacts and visibility of their outreach efforts. Tread Lightly! is the organization that coordinated the research. The survey was conducted by a company in Virginia that specializes in research on the intersection of social and natural resource issues.

Two studies were done, one of registered ATV users and one of land managers involved in recreation issues. Lorien only presented information to the WDARM group from the ATV owners portion of the research. The full reports, from which the data was taken for the presentation, is available online; ask Lorien if you would like the link.

Most of the data is broken down by Utah State Parks Board Districts, so the results can be assessed based on what district the recreationists live in. The district most relevant to WDARM covers Tooele, Salt Lake, and Summit counties. Respondents were also asked where they drive their ATVs, by county. Tooele county recreationists came largely from the northern four Board Districts in Utah.

Generally, the findings suggested that many ATV owners care about the environment, on issues like wildlife and clean water. Many drive their ATVs as part of other activities, such as hunting or fishing. Not many were familiar with existing public information campaigns that encouraged people to stay on trails, ride responsibly, etc. There was also data suggesting that ATV safety courses are not the best way to get information out as many have not and do not plan to take them. Many people got their information from TV. Most are not members of any ATV-related organizations.

Someone observed that providing information via those annoying and inescapable announcements at gas pumps might be a very effective way to reach a wide audience as there are only a limited number of places in the area where one can get gas, and everyone needs it.

### *Other updates*

Erik Valdez noted that the BLM now has funding for several information kiosks, and would like to work with appropriate partners to coordinate content. They will likely be placed near Cherry Creek and Little Valley North (near Pet Cemetery on Lookout Pass Road), and also possibly Lone Tree. Matt Howard noted that DWR has some consistent signage for sage-grouse that the BLM can use. Erik will also coordinate with the county.

This season of sage-grouse trapping and translocation will start with evenings planned on March 30 and 31. Anyone interested in helping can talk with Melissa Chelak or contact her via Lorien.

At a future meeting, Lorie hopes to bring in someone who can speak about desert springs. This is based on a report released by the Great Basin Institute that provides information about the status of springs throughout the Great Basin, including many in the western half of Utah.

Alan Clark noted that the mitigation rule should be released very soon for public comment. When it is available, Alan will send it to Lorien so all the LWGs can be notified.

### **Follow-up Needed**

- Lorien will provide Hugh Hurlow's contact information to Genevieve
- Anyone interested in helping Melissa with trapping can contact Lorien or Melissa
- Anyone interested in the springs report or the presentation Lorien gave, ask Lorien
- Lorien will make sure that Erik has contact information for anyone who wanted to coordinate on the BLM kiosk planning
- Lorien will work on the field tour to Vernon Creek and possible other areas having something to do with riparian or wet meadows.

### **Next Meeting**

Likely the next meeting will be a tour. If May meeting is needed, we will schedule with Doodle.