

Bi-State Sage-grouse Executive Meeting
June 15, 2012
Approved

Introductions

Reno: Steve Abele – FWS
Steve Siegel – NDOW
Randy Sharp – Contractor for USFS
Bruce Petersen – NRCS
Selena Werdon – FWS
Ted Koch – USFWS
Todd Hopkins – GBLCC
Jeanne Higgins – USFS
Ken Mayer – NDOW
Lee Turner – NDOW
Raul Morales – BLM NV
Joe Tague – BLM
Stephanie Phillips – Humboldt-Toiyabe NF
Bernadette Lovato – Bishop BLM
Steve Nelson – Bishop BLM

Phone: Steve Schwartzbach – USGS

1. Introduction and Agenda Review – Randy Sharp

2. Approval of last meeting minutes – Steve Siegel

- April Minutes
 - Move to approve April minutes – Ted Koch
 - Second by Raul Morales
 - Motion passed
- May Minutes
 - Move to approve the May minutes – Ted Koch
 - Second by Raul Morales
 - Motion passed
- Minutes to be posted on NDOW website

3. Prioritization and funding of Projects for FY 12/13 – Steve Siegel

- Discussion of highest priority for funding – not a discussion on where the money is coming from – consensus on what is important for funding and agree to work on getting money to fund those efforts
- Set stage – important to hear from FWS to get their input on what would make the greatest impact

- On the ground priorities – should be actions prioritized in the Action Plan
 - Master list of numbered priorities – complete, in progress, scheduled, or waiting for a critical component like NEPA, etc.
 - Update of project status
 - If projects are not getting done say why and what the issues is for them getting done – if there is regulatory impediment, expensive, NEPA to be completed, etc.
 - Planning/reporting - survey and intentions for future years – relevant to FWS decision to some degree
- The joint Technical and Strategy teams came up with the list and this is where we should be putting our money first and the remainder of the list later.
- Priority of the EOC to default to list produced by the Technical and Strategy teams.
- Prioritization of the Categories by the USFWS
 - **Pinyon Juniper Removal**
 - **Conservation Easements**
 - If there is no opportunity to effectively support conservation easements by pooling money then next would be the data analysis under Science Advisor.
 - **Science Advisor**
 - Telemetry data that has already been collected needs to be analyzed.
 - Conservation planning tool – will produce a map to be done by July 1, 2012 – improvements in the map and additional work with high resolution imagery is going to allow us to add base vegetation layers. The model will then be much more predictive at local management scales so that habitat values can be obtained from rather small areas compared with other areas for making decisions with greater confidence.
 - Need High Resolution Imagery to take this to where it is really effective in making decisions with high confidence at the local scale.
 - If there is extra money put the majority towards PJ then the remainder towards Science Advisor.
- **Proposed Project prioritization as of 6/15/12 by Ted Koch**
 - **PJ Removal – Sweetwater**
 - **PJ Removal - Long Doctor**
 - **Science Advisor – USGS received \$100,000 grant to do work for the Bi-State for FY12**
 - **PJ Removal – China Camp**
- **Second by Raul Morales**
- **Passed unanimously**

- Pete Coates (Steve Schwartzbach-USGS)– presented to Technical Team to discuss mapping process/progress – looked at options for final analysis and came to an agreement – committee is pleased with map and in process of making a few minor refinements in model – compared side by side models with NDOW Habitat Categorization map and the two mapping sources were consistent – plan to meet again the last week of June and agreed that the final habitat map for the Bi-State will be submitted by July 1. Testing the model with GPS transmitter data on 10 marked birds in the Pine Nuts. Pete mentions that we need imagery to improve the model. Technical Committee felt that buffers should be included around the leks because the rationale was that the sage-grouse populations are susceptible to disturbances in nearby areas that actually may not be in the suitable habitat map, ex: roads, powerlines or housing. Have done an analysis to determine the optimal buffer size around leks – this will be included in the final map. The optimal buffer distance of 3.17 miles for leks.
- For each of the priority projects the lead agency should know how much money they have to fund it and coordinate with Lee Turner and the NPCD Partners if more money or effort is needed
- Steve Siegel to coordinate identification of the items anticipated to be used in the data call.
- Short term package for listing process – by end of August
 - Action Plan – done
 - Priority list within the Action Plan – completed
 - Strategy of completing things within the Action Plan
 - Interim IM's completed
 - Proposed Land Use Plan schedule to address sage-grouse Bi-State in Land Use Plans
 - List of projects completed.
 - Status of conservation easements and identification of completed easements
- Timing
 - January 2013 Ted Koch sends a document to regional office
 - Team effort to complete this document including staff in the Regional office. The person who will sign the rule making is the Director, Dan Ashe.
 - FWS is having conference calls every 2 weeks on this process.

4. Public Outreach

- How to include other stakeholders/connection with the EOC
 - Posting of meeting minutes on NDOW website
 - All information posted on NDOW website needs to link to the Governor's website
 - Attend local working group meetings – July 13, 2012

- EOC was established to provide support to fund the work that the working groups were doing and continue to do
 - Ted Koch will try to attend – maybe a conflict with the Governor’s Sage-grouse meeting
- Communication
- Fact sheet to hand out to Working Group or anybody else who is interested
 - Create a document “Accomplishments in the Bi-State”
 - Bernadette Lovato volunteered one of their staff members to create
- Invite Steve Lewis to the next EOC meeting

5. Wrap-up – Assignments – Next Meeting

- Agenda topics
 - Invite working groups to the EOC meeting – give update of what has been done, where we are at and where we think we need to go.
- Discussion of what goes in the “box” for FWS
 - Answer the question: if we get the spreadsheet, habitat categorization maps, the lek location maps and data and the data from Pete Coates analysis who receives all of this information?
 - Each agency can write up own assessment and provide to the Service as the data call.
- Project spreadsheet to track our accomplishments.
 - Updated at least twice a year or quarterly.
 - As projects are accomplished they will be removed from the project list and moved to the master list of completed projects and new projects will be added in their place.
- Agency Updates
 - IM – Raul Morales
 - Amy Lueders is reviewing Nevada Draft Interim Policy for the Bi-state.
 - Modeled similar to the Greater Sage-grouse
 - Should be signed sometime today
 - Forest Service – Humboldt Toiyabe
 - Pursuing funding to do a Forest Plan Amendment for the Bi-state sage-grouse
 - Would like to talk to BLM of Nevada about Carson and see what the interest of doing a plan amendment in the short term, until the revision is done.
 - Bishop BLM has a clear direction and track record of grouse doing well
 - If the HT or BLM Districts have some track record they can point to it would be helpful – we would like to be in a position to say: 85% of the time grouse have fared well

and we have this new IM that is going to help fill the gap of the portion of the remaining 15%.

- FWS
 - Office of the Science Advisor in the FWS held back some science funding money. There was a multi LCC proposal for Greater sage-grouse for four LCC's – Great Northern, Great Basin, Priority Plains and Potholes and the Southern Rockies are going to receive \$1.2 million for Greater sage-grouse coordination that will work with other folks on disturbance tracking and data gathering – Big landscape scale.
 - LCC Staff Position created in Denver based on the grant for coordination.
 - There is about another \$1.2 million hitting the street any day now in grants.gov and it is for multi LCC proposals and they are hoping to get more sage-grouse oriented stuff.
- Next Meeting
 - July 9, 2012 – 1:30 – BLM office
 - Invite local working group