

NNSG Sage Grouse Pod

Meeting Minutes for February 17, 2009 – 4:00 – 5:30 BLM Field Office

Attending: Leta Collord, NNSG; Wendy Fuell, BLM biologist; Derrick Holdstock, BLM biologist; Larry Hyslop, NNSG; Chris Jasmine, FWS; Caleb McAdoo, Nevada Bighorn Sheep; Kent McAdoo, Cooperative Extension; Ryan Shane, Nevada Division of Forestry; Terri Tharp, Tetra Tech; and Russell Woolstenhulme, Nevada Department of Wildlife

Sage Grouse Pod interim chair, Leta Collord explained NNSG's program structure, or pods. NNSG formulates their programming based on their pod system: the Sage Grouse Pod, Heritage Pod, Recreation Pod, Science Pod, Mining and the Community, and a standing committee Soil and Water Enhancement Action Team Collaboration (SWEATCo). Collord announced the Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group 10th Anniversary Celebration and Tuscarora Assessment Workshop being held Tuesday, April 14 dinner, elections, and presentations - Wednesday, April 15 Tuscarora Assessment Workshop.

Chris Jasmine, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Elko region representative made a presentation on FWS's *Partners in Wildlife* program which addresses projects and technical advise on privately held lands with concerns and needs to conserve trust species, T&E candidate plants and animals, State species. Chris has eight years experience with Natural Resource Conservation Service within Nevada, until filling the new position FWS was establishing in Elko. Chris presented several project examples implemented on NV private lands which varied from protection of *Sulphur Springs Buckwheat*, a 16 acre fenced study plot; improvement of Spring Dace habitat through cleaning channels, and adjusting diversion ditches; Duckwater Shoshone Indian Big Warm Spring Restoration which shored up spring banks, redirected flows into historic channels, and cleaned diversion ditches. Related to sage grouse conservation, Jasmine explained that projects to expand, create, or restore sage grouse habitat on private lands is within their interests, and FWS is seeking interested land owners. Chris has been networking to become acquainted with landowners within our region, and settling into learning the specifics of the FWS. Questions: Match can be in-kind, and the general range of funding by FWS is \$25,000. There is no funding schedule; project submittals are received throughout the year. Use of native species is preferred, but recognition of the difficulty of establishment factors is being discussed.

Derrick Holdstock followed with a presentation of the *Assessment of Pre and Post-Wind Energy Development on Avian and Lesser Prairie Chicken Populations*, by Warren Ballard, Philip Gipson, Matthew Butler, Jon McRoberts, and Heather Whitlaw from Department of Natural Resources Management, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Derrick is a BLM wildlife biologist, Wells, NV, and came to Elko in May of 2008 from Texas.

Holdstock began by speaking to the level of threat to the Lesser Prairie Chicken, which is high, and the need and interest of Texas wind energy development companies to secure accurate information regarding the impacts to populations by wind system installations. Holdstock worked with the authors on research projects while getting his masters, and speaks highly of their ability to establish and implement thorough scientific investigations. Nevada's sage grouse have similarities to prairie chickens, however, attendees pointed to the need to tailor any grant proposal to fit Nevada's ecosystem and species. Derrick directed the members to the section of the grant that covers the 12 Objectives and Hypotheses of the proposed research for the pods review and discussion. The pod concluded that there was interest in hosting a meeting where we could hear from a representative of the granting authors, and a representative from the wind energy company, Renewable Energy System (RES), proposing the China Mountain project. A discussion followed brainstorming potential funding partners, and other necessary participants that we would want to invite to the meeting, which was tentatively set for the 3 or 4 week in March.

Derrick will contact the authors in Texas, and the representative from RES for their interest and availability.

Submitted: Leta Collord