

Sage Grouse Pod, April 11, 2007, 5:30 – 7:00 pm., at the BLM Field Office

In attendance: Doug Clarke, F.S., Wendy Fuell, BLM, Ken Wilkinson, BLM, Carole Evans, BLM; Leta Collord, Chair

Carole Evans, BLM biologist and riparian specialist spoke to monitoring techniques, both Very Large Scale Aerial photographic imagery, (VLSA) and infrared (IRS) which the pod might consider for vegetation monitoring in the watershed assessment process. Carole suggested further discussions on VLSA could be pursued with Gregg Simonds regarding his work in Rock Creek/Squaw Valley region. Carole commented that several techniques were being used successfully in monitoring riparian zones: PFC – proper functioning condition; long term BLM trend sites; VLSA; and IRS. Carole referenced a grant obtained by Simonds in the amount of \$50,000 for I.C.T. on Maggie Creek and upper Squaw Valley areas.

Minutes from the March meeting were read and approved.

Doug inquired about the Governor's Team meeting date, and suggested a member of the pod might attend. Leta will distribute the information and solicit a participant.

Wendy Fuell, BLM biologist reported on the BLM Connectivity study being conducted across the Sage grouse habitat regions. The study solicited information on aspects of fragmentation from the BLM field officers, and state wildlife officers. Maps indicating various landscape aspects and their associated importance to sage grouse habitat were brought for clarification from the field staff. Wendy stated that Elko and Nevada area staff corrected some factors. The study is to be completed by June.

Leta brought current information related to the Nevada State Lands, Question 1 grant NNSG is finalizing. The Request for Proposal was closed, submittals will be reviewed by the Search Committee, and a contractor will be selected within the next two – three weeks. The proposals each spoke to the changes in the Tuscarora PMU region due to the extreme fires of 2006, and before. This fact might require additional discussions as to the extent of the products produced during the granted period, and the specific geographic areas identified for scrutiny, and the level of scrutiny administered. The members present suggested three approaches:

1. Focus the watershed assessment on 2 watersheds within the PMU – Willow Creek and Rock Creek. Provide evaluation of greater sage grouse values over the entire extent of the PMU.
2. Provide a broad scale – all inclusive – 6 Step process over the entire extent of the Tuscarora PMU, 1,486,441 acres.
3. Utilize the 6 Step methodologies over the PMU. Provide focused evaluation of sage grouse habitat values on areas that require it.

Doug Clarke furthered the conversation on the importance of the “start-up” period of the grant process, and suggested a preparation planning period meeting be held.

- Set a firm time-line – require reporting time in Feb. of 2008 adequate feedback.
- Prepare for Q-1 submittal for August
- The Pod needs to appoint a technical head to interact with the contractor

Submitted, Leta Collord