

## Minutes from the 4/1/10 Northeastern Nevada Sage-grouse Pod meeting

Attendees: Kyra Walton (USFS), Kari Huebner (NDOW), Larry Hyslop (NNSG), Leta Collord (NNSG), Gar Abbas (USFS), Derrick Holdstock (BLM), Caleb Mcadoo (NDOW), Ken Gray (NDOW), Chris Jasmine (USFWS)

### **Introductions:**

The meeting opened with a brief introduction of all the members in attendance.

### **Public comments:**

The public comment period included a discussion about the Cattleman's Association/Harry Reid's meeting regarding the NRCS Sage-grouse initiative. This meeting was held the night before and was well attended. There was an interesting presentation given by Tim Griffiths (NRCS Montana) about the approach that Montana had taken with Sage-grouse conservation. The meeting then turned towards the issues of predator control and remained on that issue for most of the meeting.

An announcement was then made about the upcoming Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group annual dinner that will be held at 6:30 on April 14<sup>th</sup> @ the Trails Center.

### **Discussion of what the sage-grouse listing decision means for Northern Nevada:**

The next item that was discussed was the recent listing decision and what that meant for Northern Nevada. Since the listing decision has been out for awhile now, all the attendees felt that they already know what the decision means. Discussion then moved towards what new opportunities may be available now that the sage-grouse is a candidate species. Chris Jasmine brought up the possible use and benefit of using Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA). Leta Collord explained that she had emailed out an example of Idaho's CCAA for sage-grouse and the question was brought up if there had been any individuals sign up to that agreement yet. The group did not know. Discussion then followed about the difference of programmatic CCAA's and individual CCAA's. The question arose if there are any good examples of CCAA's that have worked well. Chris Jasmine agreed that he would look into some examples and bring them to the next meeting.

### **Discussion about the Elko County Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Strategy:**

A discussion was led by Leta Collord regarding the Elko County Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Strategy which was completed in 2004 by the Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group. Leta pointed out that many of the partner agencies and citizens had not been involved in the development of the Strategy, and reviewing the document could be useful to the pod. Collord will meet with those who indicated that more information would be helpful. The question was also presented regarding how useful the agencies found the

Strategy to be; It is referenced by the partners when relevant to their work. Ken Gray recommended that the PMU/watershed assessments could identify more concrete issues and opportunities, therefore making those documents more useful to NDOW.

### **PMU/Watershed Assessment Progress**

Gary Back with Great Basin Ecology was unable to attend the meeting to give a report on the progress of the North Fork Watershed assessment. Gary therefore forwarded information to Chris to present on his behalf. Basically the NF assessment is moving forward after a slightly delayed start last fall. There were letters sent to landowners last fall to ask permission for access of private lands. To date GBE has only received 15 responses. GBE and NNSG held two informational meetings last fall to inform landowners and the public about the inventory process. Unfortunately these meetings were not well attended due to weather. Over the winter GBE completed a lot of the background work for the inventory and at this point they are ready to move forward and start the on the ground inventory once the snow melts and roads dry out. GBE is currently collecting data from BLM, USFS, and NRCS regarding PFC work, wildfires, etc. Caleb Mc Adoo asked what the criteria was for determining if the BLM PFC data was current or out of date. Chris Jasmine said he would follow up with Gary Back regarding this question.

### **Direction of the Pod for 2010 and beyond:**

Discussion about where participants wanted to see the sage-grouse pod head was hashed out by all individuals. This discussion included five main goals that the group mainly agreed on wanting to see. The goals are as follows.

1. Ken Gray brought up the observation that he wanted to see more on the ground work completed for sage-grouse. Discussion followed about how it was possible that the Pod could act as the catalyst to get on the ground project moving forward.
2. Kari Huebner brought up the thought that it would be encouraging to see more participation in the pod. In the past some local working groups had large participation. It was agreed upon that we could try sending the announcement to a larger audience and see if the meetings become better attended.
3. Larry Hyslop thought that we needed to start thinking about producing a final document for the Stewardship Groups demonstration plots. It was agreed by all that wrapping up that study and looking for other opportunities to expand these types of projects was a good idea. The SG Pod will work with the other Pods within the stewardship group to accomplish this.
4. It was brought up that the Pod could possibly assist in the development of some educational outreach regarding sage-grouse. The idea of a Lek camera, similar to a nest camera, might be interesting and educational. It is something that the Pod can look into at a later date.

5. The group agreed in a new approach of developing a local, multi agency database that we can track the progress of sage-grouse related projects. This data base could include planned, and installed habitat projects, as well as projects that relate to monitoring and research efforts. Chris Jasmine volunteered to head this up.

**Database of sage-grouse projects in Elko County:**

Chris Jasmine discussed his ideas for the database and all participants added their ideas. The database could be a local place for information pertaining to all the sage-grouse related projects in Elko County. This database could be a one stop shop to collaborate project ideas, look for funding, document success, etc. One concern was making too much duplicate work for agency people, so using existing databases wherever possible may help keep the workload down. The group came up with many other good ideas and Chris will have a draft example of this database available at the next pod meeting. At that time the pod can give more input as to how to make it more useful.

**Possible future agenda items:**

Gar Abbas will present and discuss some of the current projects that are being completed on USFS land for sage-grouse. This discussion will help get the ball rolling for the projects database.

Chris Jasmine will present some examples of Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA) and how they have worked or not worked in other areas.

We will discuss more information regarding the Stewardship Groups demonstration plots and possible ideas for a final report.

Chris Jasmine will have a draft example of the sage-grouse project database available at the meeting for discussion and input from meeting attendees.

Other items will be added as they arise.

**Set next meeting date:**

Chris Jasmine will send a doodle poll out to the Pod mailing list with potential meeting dates in the first week or so of June.

**Adjourn:**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM