**Executive Oversight Committee**

**Bi-State Sage-Grouse**

**April 26, 2018**

**Notes**

**Location: Mono County Offices, Twin Lakes Annex Conference Room, 199 Twin Lakes Rd Bridgeport**

**Time: 10:30-14:30**

**Conference Call-in: 1-888-844-9904**

**Access Code: 8493511**

**In Attendance:** Shawn Espinosa, Katherine Miller, Bill Dunkelberger, Carolyn Swed, Floyd Rathburn, Gary Roeder, Heather Stone, Jake Suppa, John Severson, Max Symonds, Scott Gardner, Steve Abele, Steve Nelson, Thad Heather, Monique Nelson (notes), Nate Reid (Mono County), Bryant Smith, Kary Schlick

**Approval of January 25 Meeting Notes**

**North American Bi-State Panel and Eastern Sierra Land Trust Award**

* NDOW led panel event at the North American Wildlife Conference in Virginia March 27th 2018.
  + Noreen Walsh, Tony Wasley, Ali Duvall led a panel on the success of the BSSG effort.
  + Ali provided questions about the catalyst for action, what keeps momentum, partnerships, relationships, conflicts, etc. Panel was well attended and very rewarding.
  + Shawn recommends Franine Madded from the Center for Conservation and Peace Making for conflict resolution.
* ESLT received the Conservation Leadership Partner of the Year award, nominated by FS and BLM.
  + Steve Nelson will follow up with ESLT on press release; ESLT can take the lead, with quotes from FS and BLM.

**Steve Lewis Retirement**

* Today is Steve’s Last Day – Steve Nelson recalls Steve Lewis as he quotes, “*be easy on the people and tough on the problem*”.
* LAWG planning celebration. More info to come.

**Litigation Update**

* No update, still waiting to hear back from the courts. Direction is to continue implementation of the BSSG Action Plan.

**Traditional Ecological Knowledge Summit & Tribal Natural Resources Committee Update**

* Sherry Rupert not present to provide an update. Coordination is just beginning and most recent planning committee meeting had to be cancelled.
* Still need agency planning committee members identified. Bill Campbell, HTNF tribal liaison passed away in April. Monique ask Sherry to provide a list of names and let us know what agencies have not provided contacts. Also confirm funding commitment from agencies.
* Tribal involvement is also needed, may reach out to NV Indian Commission to help recruit volunteers.
* Both the Tribal Natural Resources Committee and the TEK Planning Committee could use a facilitator. Bill D. will contact Grace Newell to see if she is interested. Cost is typically ~$1,000-$1,500 per meeting. Heather will work with Sherry to write evaluation factors so that the Indian Commission gets a facilitator that they are comfortable with.
* TEK Summit cost in 2017 was $35,000, fed agencies gave $5k each. TEK Summit 2019 will require at least $40,000 from agency contributions. Monique will get in touch with admin contacts from our BSSG EOC MOU to determine how to move funds. Bill suggests that we use FS good neighbor agreement with the state of NV to send money to the governor’s office, allowing Sherri to contract facilities, needs, etc.
* TEK Summit date not yet determined. No earlier than May 2019, perhaps fall 2019.

**2017 and 5-year Accomplishment Reports**

* 2014, 2015, 2016 reports are final and posted on website under reports.
* Draft 2017 report on track for end of May. Lee Turner working on veg monitoring section.
* Shawn is working on the livestock grazing section and will try to pull together a meeting of range staff before Tracey Wolfe retires next month. Range contacts include: Rixey Jenkins (HTNF), Casey Boyd, Lisa Simms (Inyo), Katrina Leavitt, Tracey Wolfe, Jim Gifford (NRCS)
* Suggestion that the 5-year report include a section for a public audience, telling story of what we’ve been up to, including before and after photos. Dan Hottle from FWS could help with story/videos/photos. Monique send out note to gather photos on Google Drive.
* Budget tables for 5-year report are in progress. Determined format and content for primary table and potential additional tables.

**Bi-State Sage-Grouse Coordinator Position**

* Position approved by Intermountain West joint Venture.
* Position description and qualifications drafted; ESIA will host the position and advertise the position with a target start date of June 1. Hiring panel TBD.
* Funding: HT sent $5K through FWS, FWS providing $2K for 3 years, NDOW (working on getting state funding) and BLM plan to provide funding through Pheasants Forever agreement, Inyo providing office space and computer.
* CDFW has grant available up to $5K. Sherri and Kary will apply for staff time next year.

**Bi-State Local Area Working Group**

* Next meeting will be scheduled for early July with TAC meeting same day.
* Meeting topics will include water and ravens in Long Valley, Walker River State Park.
* Will also plan celebration for Steve Lewis, perhaps at Anderson property or Smith Valley school.

**Water in Long Valley**

* Nate Reed Ag Commissioner for Inyo and Mono Co reports that 6400 acres would be affected by limits on irrigation in Long Valley. The county wants to make sure the EOC is aware and Cattlemen would like EOC support. Permittees have allotments that span BLM/FS/PVT without fences.
* Long Valley represents about 35% of the BSSG population and numbers have been low for the past 3 years. Could be a concern with the status of the listing.
* USFWS discussing this & ask USGS if they can provide a more robust understanding of the estimated impacts, including acres of meadow affected, effects on population, habitat selection, brood survival, vital rates, egg production. John will talk to Pete Coates about including information in a model. Steve Abele will try to get irrigated area information to John.
* EOC seeks information on what LADWP will do and when. Bill will invite Clarence Martin, District Engineer, to next EOC meeting.

**Ravens in Long Valley**

* Long Valley nest success is 30% (50% is average). USGS considering putting cameras on nests to see if ravens are the cause. USGS has 3 years of raven survey data and can calculate raven density after this year.
* CDFW doesn’t hold a permit for raven control (CEQA issue). Counties in CA often hold a take permit but CEQA compliance is a challenge. Not desirable for state to seek the permit, but CDFW would support raven control.
* NDOW can take up to 2500 ravens a year through Wildlife Services, plus another 2500 for livestock protection in NV. Need raven density surveys, if they are over the threshold, then the approach is (1) a non-lethal approach to improve habitat, (2) reduce anthropogenic subsidies, (3) lethal approach. In Nevada there is an average 0.39/km2 raven density. Research shows there are negative consequences on nest success at 0.4 ravens/km2.
* Steve Abele and Scott Gardner will follow up on this issue together and will contact the MBTA permitting office in Sacramento.
* Falconers are permitted to take under the MTBA, perhaps an option for management?

**Nevada Copper/Pumpkin Hollow copper mine**

* Mine located east of Yerington. 10,000 acres of BLM land transferred to private in legislation 3-4 years ago with establishment of Wovoka Wilderness. Intended to revitalize community, and included a conservation easement on Desert Creek Ranch.
* Nevada Copper is backing out of easement deal, with potential lawsuit.
* Need to wait for the results of the lawsuit, then work with ESLT/NRCS or other organization to explore options for easements.
* Irrigation removed from brood-rearing meadow at time of land transfer. Lek attendance at Desert Creek #2 lek on FS land is decreasing. Bill will talk to NFWF about water issues.

**Sub-committee Updates**

* Technical Advisory Committee: Meeting to be held in early July. USGS will re-run the CPT with new bird and conifer data. Need to make sure we have a comprehensive database of proposed projects.
* Vegetation Treatment/Monitoring: no update
* Pinyon/Juniper Assessment:New data available in raster dataset, developed and summarized by USGS. Meg ran estimates of area to be treated with old dataset, can re-run numbers with new information.

**EOC Members Update/Round Robin**

Bill Dunkelberger HTNF: Jack Isaacs, Deputy Forest Supervisor, has taken job as forest Supervisor on the Nebraska National Forest. Vacancy announcement out today. Selection of two new rangers in Bridgeport and Elko will be made next week. (Update 5/15: Josh Nicholes selected as ranger for Mountain City/Ruby mountains/Jarbidge RD; Jan Cutts selected for Bridgeport RD.)

Carolyn Swed FWS: Rachel Williams (FWS based in Bishop) is moving to Flagstaff. FWS will be filling the position in Winnemucca or Elko instead of Bishop. Announcement is out now for GS 9/11.

Thad/Gary NRCS: RCPP sign up period ends tomorrow. Will probably be another this spring or fall.

Floyd Rathburn: Interested in learning more about the effects of habitat work on SG populations. Ranch is changing from sheep to cattle.

Steve Nelson BLM: Interagency vegetation planner position vacancy is open now. Received 2018 budget with good funding for BiState. Tentative agreement with Wildlife Conservation Board to acquire hilton property.

Katherine Miller CDFW: Translocated 7 male and 5 female birds; will move broods when hatching occurs. Crew lead says lek count before translocation was 12, after was 18. Females still around with zero mortalities.

Bryant Smith: Pine Nuts: Round 2 on vegetation treatments, doing maintenance this fall. Completed 10 year wild horse management plan to remove 500-600 horses this winter. Seeing 90% utilization on forage where there is no livestock present. 11,000 acre Bently acquisition through SNPLMA.

Kary Schlick Inyo NF: White Mountains monitoring has started.Tamara Randall-Parker is the new Forest Supervisor.

Lee Turner NDOW: Monitoring update:

* 500 plots established in BSSG habitat, including Long Valley, Bodie Hills, Nine Mile, Rough Creek, East Walker, Spring Peak.
* One crew will be working for 6 weeks at Walker River State Park in 2018. 90 plots will be monitored yearly for a few years, then every 3-4 years.
* Bison Fire: started monitoring immediately after fire in 2014. After 2017 (big precipitation year), seeding has responded very well.
* Worked with Bishop BLM on reporting format and how to show differences in vegetation following treatments.

John Severson USGS:

* Telemetry sites up and running at Mount Grant, Bodie Hills, Long Valley, White Mountains, Desert Creek. Parker translocation from Bodie Hills looks good so far. May move broods in to Parker from other areas.
* Lek detection rates (did we count all the birds?) and attendance rates (are birds attending leks?): USGS trying to figure out detection rates and habitat covariates to improve models.