

Agenda
Executive Oversight Committee
Bi-State Sage-Grouse
August 3, 2018

Location: Mono County Offices, Twin Lakes Annex Conference Room,
199 Twin Lakes Rd, Bridgeport CA (see map on last page)

Time: 10:00-15:00

Present: Ray Dotson, Bill Dunkelberger, Deb Koziol, John Severson, Jon, Anne Orlando, Carolyn Swed, Steve Abele, Scott Gardner, Leeann Murphy, Tammy Randall-Parker, Floyd Rathbun, Wendy Sugimura, Carrie Hanaker, Pete Coates (USGS agenda item), Katherine Miller, Tony Wasley, Steve Nelson, Shawn Espinosa, Sherry Rupert (TEK agenda item), Monique Nelson (notes)

1. June 7 Meeting notes approved.
2. Status of Listing Decision
 - a. Court found FWS arbitrary and capricious in application in “Significant portion of the range” and conservation effectiveness (PECE) policies.
 - b. FWS has not received final order but is expecting full remand.
 - c. FWS expects October 1 as start date to begin process. Will reopen public comment period.
 - d. Status will default back to “proposed threatened.”
 - e. FWS requested full 12-month period for review, with possibility of 6 month extension.
 - f. All work at field level would stop by May 2019, so local level work will be in earnest between now (Oct 1 officially) and January.
3. Review of NDOW Package for “EOC Materials in Support of Implementation and Effectiveness for the Bi-State Action Plan”
 - a. Content posted at http://www.ndow.org/Nevada_Wildlife/Sage_Grouse/Bi-State_FWS/
 - b. FWS, CDFW, NDOW met July 17, 2018 to review package.
 - c. Implementation Section
 - i. Take a look at your agency’s letter, provide as detailed an update as possible, contact Steve and Carolyn directly with specific questions
 1. Tony, Carolyn, and Bill will get together to provide guidelines for letter writers.
 2. General updates will be: What did we say we’d do in 2015, what have we actually done, why is it different, what can we commit to in the future?
 3. Take advantage of knowing what court viewed as weaknesses to bolster letters.
 4. EOC members start to figure out what highest level in agency will be for signatory
 5. Start letter drafts now—need draft letters in October for Bill, Tony, and Carolyn to review; final package by December 31 2018 at the latest.
 - ii. Departures from 2015 letters will be okay, as long as letters collectively demonstrate that we’re on the right path.
 - iii. Need to update and extend the Service First Agreement. Monique will lead.
 - d. Effectiveness
 - i. FWS can be involved as agencies work together to document why they expect implementation actions to be effective. Agencies should not be asking the question of the FWS, “is this enough?” But we should be discussing what we’re doing and why it’s good.

- ii. Steve A will convene a group to go over specific analyses, timelines, and roles. Will make contact on Monday.
 - e. Regulatory Certainty
 - i. Take a look at your agency's letter, provide as detailed an update as possible
 - ii. Inyo has Species of Conservation Concern viability analysis for BSSG that can be included and shared with group.
 - iii. Record completion/progress on management plan amendments/revisions. Discuss how plans have influenced decisions.
- 4. Science Needs
 - a. Long Valley water withdrawals effect on population
 - b. Bird response to treatments
 - i. Analysis likely to be limited to conifer removal projects and easements. Could also do qualitative cumulative effects.
 - c. Population performance following conservation actions.
 - d. Hierarchical modeling of population/decoupling analysis for subpopulations
 - e. NDOW will prepare analysis of vegetation response to treatments. Lee Turner to provide by October.
 - i. There is money with NDOW from Bishop BLM that can be used to support Lee's data analysis.
- 5. Funding Needs to Support Population Monitoring and New Analyses
 - a. General monitoring plan is to do 3 years on/3 years off for each subpopulation.
 - b. Parker Meadows translocations required additional funding and monitoring.
 - c. Pete preparing updated plan to show recommendations for next 2 years and minimum viable monitoring work for next 2 years.
 - d. To date, USGS has been short \$100-200,000 per year. Completed all proposed field work for past 3 years, but not as much analysis.
 - e. Coates lab plans to complete all 4 identified science analysis needs in the next six months. Will wrap into 2018 OFR for Bi-State Annual Report so that the 4 items can be published.
 - f. Coates lab in process of publishing the 2017 report. Pulling together all data for treatments and telemetry to do simple analysis with summary stats in the 2017 report expected out in September.
 - g. To complete the 4 science analysis, need to hire one more person at a cost of \$100,000. To continue analyses and fund for 2 years and address long term needs such as relative risk maps and updated CPT, will need another 100K.
 - i. FWS has secured \$50,000
 - ii. NDOW is hoping to be able to provide \$15K with upland game stamp funding.
 - iii. Bill will try to secure the remaining \$35K with end of year funds.
 - h. EOC members agree that can view monitoring and science needs as one big pot of money, if that is helpful.
 - i. Ideally, would start trying to fund the monitoring crews out 1 year in advance so that USGS knows how many crews they should hire.
 - j. USGS will advertise a contract position for additional analyses now and expects candidate applications in the next few weeks.
 - k. Pete and Tammy will discuss if there are FS researchers available to help.
 - l. Bill will ask about Jeanne Chamber's availability to assist at meeting next Tuesday.
- 6. Accomplishment Reports
 - a. Shawn has prepared final draft of 2017 report and sent to Wendy for review/edit by 8/24.
 - b. EOC review requested—send comments to Shawn by 8/24/18

- c. USGS provide comments and add any necessary disclaimers.
 - d. Expect web posting early September.
 - e. 5-year report expected complete at end of December.
 - f. New coordinator will help, but will also need TAC involvement.
 - g. There will be considerable value in having the 5-year report to cite, but communicating content with FWS between now and completion will be adequate.
7. TEK/Tribal Natural Resources Committee Update
- a. First Traditional Ecological Knowledge Summit held in 2016. Bi-State Tribal Natural Resources Committee created afterward.
 - b. 2nd TEK will be in October 2019.
 - c. Last meeting of TNRC held in April, next meeting is August 23 at the NIC office in Carson City. Will discuss TEK and set schedule for planning committee.
 - d. Cost for 2016 TEK was \$35,000.
 - i. Agencies provide a minimum of \$6,000 for 2019
 - ii. Best vehicle is to send money to NDOW, NDOW can transfer funds to Nevada Indian Commission through the gift fund.
 - iii. The full amount is already with NDOW from BLM agreements. Lee Turner working to move the money into a different account. This will cover BLM and FWS, at a minimum. FS will send money separately through Good Neighbor Authority. Need to figure out how NRCS will contribute. NDOW and CDFW also contribute?
 - e. Humboldt-Toiyabe has new Tribal Liaison Melissa Navis starting in mid-September. She can support the TEK as a planning committee representative, take notes, facilitate group.
8. LADWP Water Withdrawal in Long Valley
- a. LADWP has pending habitat conservation plan; have reached out to FWS on status of their application, but FWS determined that need to resolve uncertainty of BSSG situation before moving forward.
 - b. Need to know what LADWP is really proposing and what it means for BSSG.
 - c. FWS is in early phases of understanding LADWP plan, not yet framed a process for what EOC agencies should do.
 - d. Mono County met with LADWP in 2015, agreed that a longer term water management plan is needed. Many environmental groups are also interested.
 - e. Audubon and Eastern Sierra Land Trust convened a group w/FWS, Inyo NF, Bishop BLM, NRCS, Mono County and others. Took field trip to Long Valley on 8/2/18.
 - f. There may be opportunity for negotiation with LADWP, but collaboration is unlikely.
 - i. LADWP allowed 500 acre feet for sage grouse at leks 2 and 3 in 2018.
 - ii. Plan was to turn off water today (8/3 at just over 500 ac ft released), but decided to extend for one more week after yesterday's field trip.
 - iii. There is a worry that by the time LADWP completes CEQA analysis, they can claim a new baseline for water release.
 - iv. Public view is that agencies have agreed to 500 ac ft since there is no clear counter argument. Need to be sure that LADWP doesn't consider there to be agreement.
 - v. FWS would like to have more understanding/certainty by end of 2018. They don't expect to have a resolution on water amount, but would like certainty on how the group will be working together with LADWP. Will likely provide in writing to LADWP that 500 ac ft causes concern given the departure from historic use.

- g. FWS preference is for Mono County or CDFW to take lead as convener, with support from FWS. Definite desire for all agencies to be at the table.
 - i. Wendy is willing to help convene and communicate, but needs to know what the group wants. She will talk to Audubon's Pete Humphrey about how to share responsibility for convening groups.
 - ii. Scott needs to give feedback to CDFW director to let him decide their role.
- h. Some local groups might be interested in helping fund the USGS analysis. Carolyn will think more about this but would probably be okay if it goes through Mono County or directly to USGS.
 - i. **Next Steps:**
 - i. Local staff field trip week of 8/6
 - ii. Meeting September 10 convened by Audubon
 - iii. Higher level meeting convened by agency directors (FWS Regional Director, CDFW Director, County)
 - iv. Tammy and Wendy will get together to figure out how ranchers have historically watered the meadow.
 - v. Tammy will brief Deputy Regional Forester.
 - j. **Objectives:**
 - i. Establish how to reduce uncertainty in how LADWP will collaborate with partners by end of 2018.
 - ii. Preliminary analysis of water withdrawal by February 2018 from Coates lab.

Written Updates

1. **Ravens in Long Valley:** Discussed at TAC and LAWG meetings 7/18/18. USGS estimate of raven population in Bodie is .25/km² and in Long Valley is 0.35 ravens/km². As stated in EOC notes from 4/26, 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. Scott Gardner will follow up with USGS and others to determine further information needs and next steps to pursue control if threshold is reached.
2. **Nevada Copper/Pumpkin Hollow Copper Mine:** Park Cattle still owns the private property that the EOC has been discussing. Dave Park is still interested in an easement, and Steve Abele presented the idea to Susanna Danner of the Eastern Sierra Land Trust at the Bi-State LAWG meeting in July. Sus is doing some background work before approaching the Parks. The Parks still have the water rights and say that they have been irrigating the meadow consistent with how they have in the past.
3. **LAWG:** The LAWG met on July 18. Agenda items included: Changing Roles, BSSG Coordinator Position, Project Updates, Nevada State Parks update, RCPP Opportunities, Lek Count updates, USGS Research Program including Integrated Population Model, Parker Translocation, Behavior Studies in Bodie Hills, Water in Long Valley, District court Decision on USFWS Finding.

4. Bi-State Communications and Data Coordinator

Who: Amy Sturgill has accepted the position!

Office Location: Based out of the Inyo National Forest and Bishop BLM office in Bishop

Employed by: Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association (ESIA).

Length of Position: The position is funded for 3 years.

Start date: August 13th, 2018

Funding Status:

Partner	Commitment	Status
Humboldt-Toiyabe	\$5000/year, office space if helpful	2018 Funded \$5000 to FWS, then FWS sent to IWJV

NDOW	\$5000/year	Awaiting status of grant, then adding to Pheasants Forever Grant
Inyo National Forest	Office space, Computer, Vehicle	Office space set up
CA/NV BLM	\$2000/\$5000/year, Vehicle use, training	\$7000 (FWS to IWJV in place of TEK funding from BLM), \$18,000 from existing NDOW agreement pending Pheasants Forever Grant process
FWS	\$2000/year	\$20,000 to IWJV (with the \$7000 above for the BLM in lieu of TEK funding)
<i>Remaining tasks:</i> Lee will need to move \$18,000 to Pheasants Forever from BSSG BLM funding and \$5000 for NDOW funding.		

- Duties:** The Bi-State coordinator has two primary duties-Data Management and Communication. Data management will involve coordinating with the LAWG members review and report what has been accomplished in the Action Plan. This will also include creating a 5 year summary that shows the progress that has been made in the Action plan and updating the Plan with any new actions. The second part of the position is to improve communication both internally and externally by updating the Bi-State website, leading field trips and volunteer events, facilitating LAWG, TAC and EOC meetings and coordinating among partners about current projects.
- About Amy:** Amy Sturgill is dedicated to the conservation of wild places and the species that depend on them. She has an extensive background in wildlife conservation and management, scientific research, and environmental education and outreach. She has been employed as a wildlife biologist, a botanist, and a community and volunteer organizer. Her work experience with organizations such as the Great Basin Institute and the California Department of Fish & Wildlife have given her the opportunity to develop relationships with city, county, state and federal government agencies, as well as non-profit organizations, private landowners and a Native American tribal group. These jobs also provided her with experience in researching threatened and endangered species, and managing and analyzing data.
- Amy has a strong interest in collaborative conservation--an approach that grows diverse partnerships, works across landscape, cultural and administrative boundaries and combines local knowledge, community participation and science to develop sustainable solutions to current conservation issues. "I am extremely inspired by the story of the Bi-State sage grouse—a species that has brought a multitude of diverse stakeholders together to protect and sustain the sagebrush steppe ecosystem. As the new Bi-State Sage Grouse Communications and Data Coordinator she hopes to utilize her skill set to coordinate stakeholders, engage the public and share the incredible story of the Bi-State sage grouse!"