

**BI-STATE LOCAL AREA WORKING GROUP**

***DRAFT MEETING AGENDA***

**Date: June 5, 2019**

**Time: 12:00 PM –3:00 PM**

**Location: Antelope Valley Community Center, Walker, CA**

**12:00-12:15 Welcome & Introductions (All)**

* **Changes/additions to the agenda**
* **Changes in staff**

Hard on the problem and kind on the people. People are presenting daft data. If you would like to use data check with the person providing that data.

Add changes to staff document.

**12:15-12:45 USFWS Listing Decision Update (Steve Abele)**

**Proposed publishing date for Oct 1. 2019**

-Leaving Steve’s hands and off to his supervisor now

-Will make a decision in a couple weeks

-Will go off to Washington to be released October 1.

-Documents prepared include a Species Status Report=new threats plus changes since 2015, efforts of group to ameliorate threats.

-State’s participated in briefing

-Went out for review to federal agencies-all contributed

-Birds are doing how they are doing, threats are what they are, work on the ground is incredible

-incorporates data from 2018

**12:45-1:00 EOC Update (Steve Nelson)**

* **Updated Agency Commitment Letters**

**-**EOC has been meeting very regularly

**-**Pulling information together for status review

-Updating commitment letters to extend another 5 years. Missing CDFW and USGS but those are forth-coming. Working diligently to incorporate LADWP into EOC and obtaining a commitment letter from LADWP

-Easier and quicker than we imagined considering current administration! Positive things!

-Bill Dean-forthcoming commitment letter from LADWP

-It’s clear that we have met and exceeded out commitments at this time

-These letters state that we are in this regardless of listing decision

-Comprehensive in terms of what has been spent, what has been completed and what will happen moving forward.

-Focused on conservation and not the listing decision.

-Collaboration is long and strong and want that to percolate through changes in staff.

-Established a track record within an agency.

* **LADWPs involvement in the Bi-State Partnership**

**1:00-1:20 2012-2018 Accomplishment Report (Amy Sturgill) Add PDF of report slides**

What research exists to support the effectiveness of conifer removal and horse-gathers.

USGS research- disturbance on lek from horses, cattle and native ungulates

Conifer treatment effectiveness literature

How does that habitat respond?—this is quicker to present itself. Seeing good response from preliminary results

How does the population respond? Ten-20 years out.

Discussion of projects removed —

Steve reiterated that this is not a one and done effort –it’s a life-long commitment for anyone interested.

**1:20-1:30 BREAK**

**1:30-1:40 West Wide Energy Corridor Project**

**(Jora Fogg/Apil Sall/Laura Cunningham)**

-Meeting held June 4th: landscape level forest service and blm project to plan energy corridors across the west. This will inform land use management plans for the agencies. Bringing this to the LAWG’s attention because the proposed path is located in the Bi-State specifically the Bodie Hills. The mapping tool is available online. Originally proposed in 2009-lawsuit challenge in 2012. has gone through many iterations—this is chance to change the location of these corridors. the final proposed plan and final comments are being accepted. FOI is trying to move this corridor out of Bi-State habitat. A lot of comments were received regarding this specific corridor. Give comments if you want. Land management should be ready to weigh in. Meetings will occur at the local level to discuss how these corridors will be incorporated into RMP and LMPs.

Jora would like the TAC to step up. Science exists that documents effects of powerlines (up to 12.5 k away from line). Depends on raven abundance. How will WRSRA affect raven population with the increase of people.

Walker River State Recreation Area not on GIS layer in modeling tool

If you would like to comment—note mileposts

Next steps—through the process of these public meeting and the comments. Will organize local meetings.

Get written update from Jora/April

Steve Nelson is willing to help folks provide useful comments.

Jora asks that we overlay completed work polygon over corridor plan polygon.

Recommendations will be released in October

Public comment period on draft report in September

Programmatic NEPA has been done.

Write a letter and whoever can sign. Individual comments should be made. Talk about data and the threats and tie it to the Action Plan. Don’t take a stand or position. This is a summary of statistics of what is there or not there.

Make map, with buffer around leks—from MEG. That shows where the cooridor bisects the bi-state. Basic data stuff on map.

**1:40-2:30 2019 Fieldwork Update**

* **2019 Captures & monitoring (USGS-10 min)**

Get slides from Becca.

White mtn. started intensely monitoring in 2017. No data yet from the CA side due to snow. NV site work has started. Birds have started moving up into the mountains. 2 males and 18 females being tracked.

Long valley-22 nests. Since June we’re at over 30. 7 broods have been hatched.

Bodie hills field site-43 nest and increasing. May 31st 1 has hatched. 60 birds on air. 5 were translocated to parker meadows.

Parker meadows-high count of 8 for lek count

Translocations are underway. 5 pre-nesting birds. 5 males. 10 nests. 3 broods. 22 birds on air there.

* **Parker translocation (USGS-10min)**

Goal is to augment pop and increase genetic diversity. Third year of translocation.

Translocation of broods has been way more successful

Brood translocations initiated this week. Goal of ten females with chicks.

Females: 1 went to bodie hills, 2 missing, 2 staying and initiated nests

Males: 4 stayed 1 died

Soft release enclosure method, release into an enclosure from transport box. Mom gets used to surrounding, a few hrs later all released together

Monitoring-9 nests from resident birds. 5 hatched-monitored for brood success. 2 failed. 2 still actives nests

Two females that originally left for sagehen returned to nest in parker

Great initial results. Need more years of translocations to impact overall translocation success

* **Sage-grouse behavioral study (UC Davis-10min)** include eric’s slides
* **Egg oiling in Long Valley**

First year of raven egg oiling in long valley.

Ravens are known predators

Anthropomorphic increases lead to increased ravens which leads to nest predation

Without rearing chicks it decreases caloric demand so predation decreases.

Better than removing eggs because ravens will just re-nest.

When you oil eggs they continue to incubate those eggs through the nesting season decreasing predation

Decreases recruitment into raven population

1 control site in bi-state

Use drones and extension poles to oil eggs.

7 nests in long valley. 4 oiled. 1 failed prior to oiling.

Nest survival=ongoing now (ten active nests being monitored. Apparent survival=increased 12% from last year.

Deployed 7 sage-grouse nest cameras. 2 are still on active nests—no fate yet. 2 coyote depredations. Three caught hatches

Ravens—all eggs oiled failed to hatch. Incubation times have increased.

Nests on windmills, trees and cliff faces

Can’t just kill birds due to permitting—migratory bird act

When birds stay on nest they chase out additional ravens from their established territory. When you remove them you increase raven nest density as birds come in and share a territory.

May learn not to nest in those sites after nest failure.

* **NV lek counts (NDOW/BLM-10 min)**

-Preliminary—26 lek, total of 75 visits to leks (17 by air). Aerial survey of known leks. Total peak males 192. Average male per active lek=\_\_\_. 23% below long-term average of 16.6 mpl. Down 3-5%. Have been below average for 7 years.

Areas of interest—Aurora lek-both aerial and ground survey 0 males on leks. Significant amounts of snow.

Rough creek lek—31 males from aerial obs. Ground obs=17. Vast difference. No data since April 15.

Sweetwater 2—25 males, which hasn’t had activity in several years. Might be occupied because other leks were inaccessible

Pine Grove 1-just discovered three years ago. 36 birds.

Desert creek pasture lek have been at high numbers compared to historic levels

Maybe vacating desert creek lek 2 because of high disturbance rate there. You can drive fairly close to birds and we’ve noticed birds moving away from center of the lek. New two-track formed from new bird watchers.

Aerial infrared survey detected 12 birds around the south pine nuts. Looks like they were all females.

No males on buckskin 1 or 2. But saw 2 males strutting nearby—probably not a new lek.

See handouts

* **CA lek counts**

Similar count time frame to 2017 (another high snow year). Initiation of surveys based on aerial telemetry data. Started April 3. Peaked in LV April 17. April 25 start in bodie-peak on May 9. Peak was two weeks earlier last year. Counts finished up last week. LV down 147 last year to 105 this year.

Fales data from Katherine’s slides. Usually can’t complete a saturation count. Two leks have been inactive for a while. 5 leks counted. 5 males total. Fire burned last year. Access is difficult—so may not have observed peak occurrence. Include plans for monitoring from TAC meeting.

Fales-Jackass-no males detected from an aerial flight.

White Mts-no surveys until a week ago- no lek counts. NV WM- 2 leks counted. One lek had 2 one had 0. Parker Meadow

**Mark Ricca Report:**

**IPM-**estimates population trends. Reads trend through population cycles. Ran this model for three time periods. 1995-2018, 2001-2018, 2008-2018. Lambda is near 1. More stable compared to BSSG. Could be evidence that conservation efforts are having a positive impact—speculative.

Bodie is stable. Parker and sagehen are declining. Other pops are declining. Long Valley is dropping since the drought. Similar to previous model runs. Long Valley has perhaps decoupled from the pop as a whole.

Total abundance estimate for 2018=3280 (lower 2244-upper 4697). Bodie hills 1500, long valley, mt grant.

Signal analysis for lek performance relative to bi-state overall. Are lek trends tracking the overall pop trend? Whether that’s increasing or declining. When bi-state looks stable but a lek or sub-pop is declining it will issue a warning. If you get multiple warnings you get a trigger. Thresholds are established. Aurora peak, mt grant, virginia low sage, long valley lek 3a

RSF was created in 2012. Hasn’t been updated since then. Usgs updated to create seasonal habitat maps! For overall pops and during life cycle periods. During wet and dry years. Looks at long valley irrigated pastures. In the early season they hang about 1k from pasture edge. As the season goes on during brood season distance decreases and birds use green pastures. During early brood rearing season selecting for further areas. Late summer they move into the interior of the pasture.

Can use telemetry data to inform watering measures in long valley.

Looked at how much release needed to increase NDVI 2200 acre feet—don’t report.

Can help partners identify how much water is needed to support sage-grouse populations.

**2:30-2:45 Project updates (All)**

**-NRCS RCPP bi-state EQUIP deadline is June 21 for project work in the Bi-State area**

**-Carson BLM-gathers 340 out of 575 horses in the pine nuts. Weather shut down further captures. Plan to return in July or august to gather the rest of the horses. Small group that was hanging out on big meadow are gone.**

**Laine and Wendel Gbi folks working specifically on bi-state projects**

**40,000 sageberush from prisons to be planted in lion’s fire.**

**NEPA for baldwin canyon conifer removal project**

**2:45 Next Meeting—October after listing decision!**