



MEMORANDUM

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Hines District Office

DATE: July 25, 2012

TO: Lakeview Sage-Grouse Local Implementation Team

FROM: Autumn Larkins

SUBJ: **Minutes Lakeview Sage-Grouse LIT Meeting July 25, 2012**

Participants: Autumn Larkins (ODFW), Amy Markus (USFS), John O’Keeffe (Rancher), Craig Foster (ODFW), Gail Collins (USFWS/Hart Mtn), Randy Wiest (DSL), Todd Forbes (BLM), Larry Maxwell (Rancher), Trenton Manns (OSU intern at O’Keeffe Ranch), John Kasbohm (USFWS/Hart Mtn), Angela Sitz (USFWS), Devon Comstock (ONDA), Ken Kestner (Lake County), Keith Barnhart (Rancher), Darwin Johnson (Lake County Planning Dept.), Max Corning (NRCS), Justin Ferrell (SWCD)

General Discussion:

We reviewed the Vale/Jordan Valley Meeting topics revolving around the Long Draw Fire (prevention, suppression and restoration ideas). We talked about prioritization issues for future habitat improvement projects. Specifically, we discussed the importance of treating large blocks of lands to make a landscape scale difference, the need to address all the threats, and the LIT’s role in promoting projects with multiple landowners (BLM, DSL, private) that tie into each other. We also discussed our scorecard for USFWS to utilize during the listing decision process.

The LIT also added raven predation to the list of threats for the North Wagontire Action Area. We had a brief discussion about the changes in raven population numbers compared to historic levels. We talked about changes in land management, alternative food sources, nesting structures and the obstacles revolving around raven control. Bottom line predator control is a short term fix and additional habitat improvement projects such as juniper removal, and better sage-grouse nesting cover need to be addressed to help create a long term solution.

Project Discussion:

We reviewed the map of “Action Areas” identified during the last meeting. Text in italics is the justification of why the area was chosen and the issues and threats identified during last round of meetings. Agencies provided sage-grouse specific habitat improvement projects that were added to the Action Area maps. We discussed projects not mapped and identified areas that still need work. Also listed in red is if an Action Area was affected by a summer 2012 fire. The teams developed a list of prioritization guidelines to help streamline grant applications and project proposals as they may arise.

LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM’S PRIORITIZATION GUIDELINES:

- 1) Is the project within an Action Area?**

- 2) Does the project address an identified threat in that Action Area?
- 3) Is the project adjacent to a completed or planned project that benefits sage-grouse?
- 4) What is the level of positive impacts to sage-grouse related to all threats?

BEATY

- *Within Core and Low Density and Conservation Opportunity Area (COA); Northern Basin and Range Ecoregion (NBR-05: Hart Mountain Area)*
- *Issues are juniper (west side), cheat grass, fire, human impacts (southeast side), sagebrush canopy closure (guano valley)*

Project ideas or issues supported by the LIT for this Action Area:

- Continuation of efforts by USFWS (11,000 acres of juniper removal on Hart Mtn)
- Continuation of juniper removal on private lands NRCS-SGI (641 acres)
- Fire prevention/suppression recommendations (TBD)
- Promote mosaic brush mowing (tall) where canopy closure is dense (>20%) and has an existing good native understory

CABIN LAKE

- *Within Low Density*
- *Issues are pine encroachment, limited veg component, soil quality (sandy), Mule Deer winter range, recreation issues (ATV use)*

Project ideas or issues supported by the LIT for this Action Area:

- Fire prevention/suppression recommendations (TBD)
- Continuation of juniper removal on private lands NRCS-SGI (861 acres)

COGLAN BUTTES

- *Within Low Density*
- *Issues are annual grasses, restoration of sagebrush, and other noxious weeds*

Project ideas or issues supported by the LIT for this Action Area:

- Support implementation of sagebrush seedlings planting efforts

DRY VALLEY/JACK MOUNTAIN

- *Within Core and Low Density and Conservation Opportunity Area (COA); Northern Basin and Range Ecoregion (NBR-05: Hart Mountain Area)*
- *Issues are noxious weeds, fire threats, and sagebrush canopy closure*
- **Within the Miller Homestead Fire boundary**

Project ideas or issues supported by the LIT for this Action Area:

- Fire prevention/suppression and restoration recommendations (TBD)
- Potential telemetry project to study the fire effects on sage-grouse
 - Bird response to fire and response to different restoration techniques
 - BLM can potentially help with funding and capture efforts

NORTH WAGONTIRE

- *Within Core and Low Density and Conservation Opportunity Area (COA); Northern Basin and Range Ecoregion (NBR-01: Squaw Ridge area playas and sagebrush)*
- *Issues are juniper invasion, sagebrush canopy closure (>17%), recreation issues (ATV)*
- **Added during Round Two Lakeview Meeting: Raven Predation**

Project ideas or issues supported by the LIT for this Action Area:

- Promote mosaic brush mowing (tall) where canopy closure is dense (>20%) and has an existing good native understory
- Continued juniper removal projects on public land
- Address OHV issues in Prineville District portion of this Action Area
- Raven population control
 - Create salvage operation to clean up road kill carcasses
 - Clean up recreation sites that act as artificial food sources
 - Utilize Wildlife Services to assist with population control (short term fix)
 - Support projects such as juniper removal, and improvements of sage-grouse nesting cover to address long term solutions

PICTURE ROCK

- *Within Core and Low Density*
- *Issues are connectivity between east and west for the grouse, juniper invasion (more on the west side), medusahead, and other noxious weeds*

Project ideas or issues supported by the LIT for this Action Area:

- Need to control medusahead east of HWY 31
- Allowing BLM to utilize the appropriate chemicals to treat invasive weeds (injunction)
 - Provide letter of support

TUCKER HILL

- *Within Core and Low Density*
- *Issues are medusahead and juniper invasion*

Project ideas or issues supported by the LIT for this Action Area:

- Continuation of juniper removal on private lands NRCS-SGI (3,762 acres)
- Continuation of medusahead spraying (SWCD)
- Potential dovetail with NRCS for more invasive weed control
- Potential ARS precision restoration test site

WARNERS

- *Within Core and Low Density and Conservation Opportunity Area (COA); Northern Basin and Range Ecoregion (NBR-03: Lake Abert-Honey Creek Area)*
- *Issues are wind energy, juniper encroachment, noxious weeds, human impacts (recreation, ATVs)*

Project ideas or issues supported by the LIT for this Action Area:

- 24,000 acres of juniper removal by BLM (17-18,000 acres by 2014)
- Continuation of juniper removal on private lands NRCS-SGI (3,518 acres)
- BLM needs authorization to utilize appropriate chemicals for weed treatments
 - Provide letter of support
- Landowners with medusahead issues work with NRCS-SGI
- Wind Energy: recommendation to avoid all impacts within Core Area
- Recreation: need regulatory aspect of OHV use (S of Picture Rock Pass is legal except during fire season)
 - Provide letter requesting better enforcement

Future meetings and final thoughts:

- Will only meet when action needed
- Very good landowner and agency participation
- This team has wonderful partnerships and excellent communication among participants
- Need more shapefiles or acreages of habitat improvement projects from agencies (sage-grouse specific and others) to help create the most accurate scorecard table for USFWS