



STATE OF NEVADA
SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL
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DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, June 17th, 2020
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Place: Teleconference Access:
Teleconference Number – 1.312.584.2401
Participant Code – 3983136#

A full audio recording of this meeting is accessible through the following website
[http://sagebrusheco.nv.gov/Meetings/Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Meeting/](http://sagebrusheco.nv.gov/Meetings/Sagebrush_Ecosystem_Council_Meeting/)

Council Members Present: JJ Goicoechea, Chris MacKenzie, Allen Biaggi, Steven Boies, Bevan Lister, Starla Lacey, William Molini, Bill Dunkelberger, Justin Barrett, Jon Raby, Ray Dotson, Jennifer Ott, Jim Lawrence for Bradley Crowell.

Council Members Absent: Sherm Swanson, Gerry Emm, Tony Wasley

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Goicoechea called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Member Biaggi moved to approve the agenda, Member Lister seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. ***ACTION**

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Member Biaggi moved to approve the minutes. Member Boies seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. ***ACTION**

5. COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence.

6. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ADDRESSING THE STATUS OF INVASIVE ANNUAL GRASSES (PRIMARILY MEDUSAHEAD), MAPPING, TREATMENT, AND CONTINUED COORDINATION – *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Mr. Ethan Mower gave a presentation on the status of medusahead in the state. The presentation can be found on the program website. Member Biaggi asked where medusahead originated. Mr. Mower responded that it is native to the Mediterranean region. Member Boies asked if molasses supplementation has been tried to neutralize the effect of the

high silica levels. Mr. Mower responded that molasses has been tried although limited success has been seen. Other supplements are able to offset weight loss, but they do not increase consumption, primarily due to the inability of rumen to digest. Member Lister asked about the presence of medusahead on private vs. public land. Mr. Jon Raby commented that the largest concentration is in Paradise Valley and asked for any comments specifically on the success of treatments in that area. Mr. Mower responded that he did not have information on specific successes, but that he applauded the efforts.

Dr. Peter Weisberg and Ms. Alice Ready presented on research using remote sensing to map medusahead infestations. This presentation is available on the program website. Member Molini asked where the research plots in Paradise Valley were located. Dr. Weisberg answered that some were located at Cottonwood Creek, Hans Creek, and that they tried to find areas where medusahead was growing in different communities. Member Boies asked if there has been a case where a large fire has burned in medusahead and what the results were. Dr. Weisberg answered that the Martin Fire burned might have burned through some medusahead areas but that he was unsure of the response. Dr. Weisberg mentioned that in order for fire to be control medusahead it needs to be specifically targeted in order not to facilitate more annual grass invasion. Member Boies asked about the ability to look regionally at large areas. Dr. Weisberg answered that some research is currently ongoing using NAIP imagery, and that his research project had shown success training LandsAT images with reasonable accuracy. A more successful effort will require a much larger data gathering effort, but that there is a hope to use larger scale imagery to look at larger scales, and that is currently the goal. Member Boies expressed appreciation and the need for private individuals to report infestations. Dr. Weisberg commented that medusahead seems to be able to spread rapidly and a rapid response is needed. Mr. Barrett commented that he has seen large infestations in Idaho, and it is an important to scale management responses and understanding of treatments. Mr. Barrett asked about the future direction and funding of the research. Dr. Weisberg answered that funding has ceased and that he is looking for more funding. A second objective of scaling up spatial modeling is present, and collaboration is needed, both in terms of funding and manpower.

Ms. Quinn Young from the Bureau of Land Management gave a presentation which is present on the program website. Ms. Ashley Jeppson then shared a presentation which is also available online. Dr. Weisberg asked to what degree the NDA incorporates vector corridors in terms of prioritization treatment areas. Ms. Jeppson answered that there is a position funded by NDOT to address transportation corridors, and that data sharing is where prioritization often happens. Ms. Meghan Brown also commented that there is a strategic plan being developed currently that relates to vectors. Ms. Jeppson commented that staffing changes have enabled a discussion on priorities.

Ms. Meagan Carter gave a presentation that is available on the program website. Chairman Goicoechea commented that momentum is needed to address medusahead before it gets too infested. Member Lister asked about the protectionist philosophy and using native seed, and if these philosophies were going to be of benefit in the future. Mr. Barrett responded that yes, progress was being made and effectiveness is increasing with using native seeds and that sustainability is what is needed. Mr. Barrett asked about Esplanade's emergency label and whether that afforded the federal agencies any ability to use it. Ms. Carter answered that there is limited opportunity from the USFS to use it outside of research activities due to an internal risk assessment. Ms. Young answered that the BLM is currently in the same boat. Member Boies asked what happens to pictures sent to EDDMaps and if they are able to be viewed by the BLM. Ms. Meghan Brown responded that yes, the data is available to be viewed, but that viewability/shareability differs between private/public land. The Nevada Department of Agriculture is working on streamlining the process for data sharing. ***NO ACTION**

7. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM MITIGATION FOR GREATER SAGE-GROUSE AND UPDATES ON CREDIT AND DEBIT PROJECTS – *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Mr. McGowan gave a presentation on the status of projects in the CCS. This presentation is available on the program website. Member Boies asked what percentage of transferred credits include credits resulting from PJ removal. Mr. McGowan responded there was no PJ removal in that number. Member Boies asked for clarification that TJR had no PJ removal. Mr. McGowan responded no. ***NO ACTION**

8. REVIEW OF THE JUNE 2020 SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE – *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Mr. McGowan reviewed the semi-annual progress report available on the website. Mr. Biaggi commented that the report lacked some context and leans toward more technical language than may be appropriate for this type of document. ***NO ACTION**

9. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION ON THE DRAFT 2019 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT TO ADDRESS SAGE-GROUSE POPULATION AND HABITAT WARNINGS/TRIGGERS AND THE PROCESS MOVING FORWARD – *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Mr. Ethan Mower and Ms. Katie Andrle gave a presentation on the 2019 Adaptive Management process. Mr. Mower summarized the process, which is contained in the Adaptive Management Report, available on the program website. Mr. Mower summarized the efforts and challenges SETT experienced throughout the process, and the strategies that might be employed in the future. Ms. Andrle summarized the population trigger process and the challenges that the SETT experienced. Member Boies asked about population triggers that were not valid, and whether there was a process where local biologists can review the information and send it back up the line. Ms. Andrle responded that there were many triggers that had minor technical issues that resulted in triggers, but that it would be challenging to identify all technical issues before the information is presented to biologists with the knowledge to make judgements on trigger validity. Member Boies commented that these triggers are important, and that the information may have wide implications and stressed that local biologists need to have the ability to review the triggers. Ms. Andrle responded that the point was taken, but that the modeling accounted for a variety of things including birds moving from lek to lek and that personal feelings need to be removed from trigger decisions and things need to proceed cautiously. Member Boies agreed that caution is what is needed. Mr. Mower commented that the adaptive management plan gives flexibility for local groups to recommend that triggers are removed. Once the council approved that removal of triggers, those will not be revisited in the adaptive management plan and that the review process is in place and was used in the case referred to by Member Boies. ***NO ACTION**

10. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSED DURING THIS MEETING AND SCHEDULING NEXT SEC MEETING-*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Mr. McGowan suggested August 13th for the next council meeting. Mr. Jon Raby suggested a fire update be provided at the meeting. ***NO ACTION**

11. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

A. US Fish and Wildlife Service

The field supervisor position has been filled by Mark Jackson.

B. Bureau of Land Management

Final PEIS for fuel breaks in Great Basin signed, pilot project is pending for project in Nevada. Targeted Grazing EA is out for public review and close on July 9th and available for use in the fall. The 2019 RMPA SEIS will be published in August. The grazing regulations DEIS will come out in early fall. ESR projects continue, 4.4 million for year one treatments and 7.5 million for longer term treatments. Horse gathers continue on Jackson Herd Management Area, Shawave Mountain and Diamond Complex. One thousand two hundred horses are planned to be removed. Ten horses have been transferred to the border patrol, along with 5 horse and 1 burro to the USMC. June 9th oil and gas lease sale has been postponed.

C. US Forest Service

The Forest Plan is still in the objection process. The USFS is still operating under the 2015 plan. The Forest is preparing a prescribed fire exclusion which would authorize prescribed fire on 4 million acres on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (HTNF). Shared stewardship agreement has been signed and the Executive Committee has met and reviewed priority landscapes to be prioritized for projects. Covid-19 has forced teleworking but the HTNF is open for virtual business. Significant fire is expected, but the HTNF is well prepared. Two helicopters have been secured for the Minden airbase. Thank you to Meagan Carter for the presentation. The USFS has been directed to streamline NEPA, no details on how that will be accomplished.

D. USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service

E. Other

12. STATE AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

A. Office of the Governor

Jordon Hosmer-Henner expressed appreciation to Couer-Rochester and that phase 2 for Covid-19 has been extended.

B. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

C. Department of Wildlife

D. Department of Agriculture

Ms. Ott expressed thanks to the BLM for work together on long term funding for native seed growth for restoration projects.

E. Conservation Districts Program

F. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team

Mr. McGowan commented that a CCAA is being developed between NDOW and USFWS to dovetail the requirements for the CCAA with the CCS and the SETT is engaged in that process. Mr. McGowan commented that an uplift packet is being prepared to be provided to credit producers with guidance on different activities. Guidance on closing sales in the CCS is also being developed. Mr. Mower has been working on efforts that might involve state-level permit renewal team which can help permittees develop plans for permit renewal flexibility. Frequently Asked Question documents are also being developed.

G. Other

13. PUBLIC COMMENT

Member Lister commented that invasive species has been a topic of the meeting, and that preservation oriented (keeping people off land) efforts have not been shown to be a viable solution. Member Lister encouraged that whatever tools that are most resilient that are available should be used.

Member MacKenzie commended the SETT for keeping the program going during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Barrett commented that he didn't think that he and Member Lister were too far apart from each other in opinion.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Member Biaggi moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Lister seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 12:46 PM.