

Local

## South Fork Road paving delayed by sage grouse

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ELKO – The County’s plan to pave a key portion of South Fork Road has been delayed because of sage grouse.

The Bureau of Land Management is holding up the project, Assistant County Manager Randy Brown told commissioners Wednesday.

“Right now we’re under mitigation,” he said. “Three sage-grouse leks were found within three miles of a small portion of road that we have out there. Also, we’re being held up on a cultural assessment.”

Brown said the BLM won’t release information on where exactly the leks are located.

He said the original cultural assessment was done about 25 years ago – when the reservoir was put in — and the BLM is requiring it be done again. The assessment will cost the County an additional \$9,000 for the project.

The County budgeted a little more than \$1 million to pave the portion of the road beyond the park entrance that leads to homes and facilities on the west side of the reservoir.

“We were promised last year, in December or November actually, that we would have permits in hand by the middle of February or first of March,” Brown said. “I was told last week, ‘we’re not sure how long it’s going to take.’ We were supposed to be able to go out for bid the middle of March. We’re done with our design and ready to go and we still do not have those permits in hand.”

He said the State of Nevada won’t issue a permit for the portion that is in the State Park until the BLM issues its permit.

“This is basically on 2,000 feet of right-of-way,” Brown said.

“You’re telling me they didn’t know that last year when they said everything’s fine, last November when they said the permit is in hand?” Commissioner Glen Guttry asked.

Brown said part of the problem is that Rich Adams, the field manager for the Tuscarora District, just retired.

“I had a feeling this was going to come,” Brown said.



The black line along the reservoir is where South Fork Road will be paved by the County.