

Tentative Outline
on
Sage Grouse Management Plan

Elko County, Nevada

Developed from notes taken during

Elko County Commission

Special Session

by

Ralph R. Sacrison

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Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	4
2. Introduction	4
3. Listing Criteria Discussion / Challenge.....	4
3.1. ESA Philosophy	4
3.2. ESA Listing population.....	4
3.3. ESA Listing habitat	4
3.4. Management Philosophy	4
4. Elko County Baseline	4
4.1. Population.....	4
4.2. Area	5
4.2.1. General.....	5
4.2.2. Bruneau-Mary’s River	5
4.2.3. Jackpot	5
4.2.4. Wildlife refuges	5
4.2.5. Other	5
5. Population Enhancement	5
5.1. Incentives	5
5.1.1. Mine permit incentives	5
5.1.1.1. Funding.....	5
5.1.1.2. In-kind services	5
5.1.2. Mine activity mitigation.....	5
5.1.2.1. Funding.....	5
5.1.2.2. In-kind services	5
6. Wildfire Management.....	5
6.1. Historical data	5
6.2. Control measures.....	5
6.2.1. Historical.....	5

- 6.2.2. Current 5
- 6.2.3. Proposed..... 5
- 7. Pilot Project 5
 - 7.1. Grazing..... 5
 - 7.1.1. High density (12/sq. mi) 5
 - 7.1.2. Low density (3/ sq. mi)..... 5
 - 7.2. Invasive weed..... 5
 - 7.2.1. High density (12/sq. mi) 5
 - 7.2.2. Low density (3/ sq. mi)..... 5
 - 7.3. Predator control 5
 - 7.3.1. High density (12/sq. mi) 5
 - 7.3.2. Low density (3/ sq. mi)..... 6
 - 7.4. Other..... 6
 - 7.4.1. High density (12/sq. mi) 6
 - 7.4.2. Low density (3/ sq. mi)..... 6
- 8. Resolutions 6
 - 8.1. Raven permit – 50 CFR 21.41..... 6
 - 8.2. Western Governors Association – Migratory Bird Treaty..... 6
 - 8.3. Grazing utilization – 50% changed/eliminated 6
 - 8.4. Missed – check with J. Carpenter..... 6
 - 8.5. Tag fee increase to cover predator control..... 6
 - 8.6. Confirm county-applicable Ruby Mountain Pipeline fees are spent in Elko County 6
 - 8.7. BLM IM 2012-43 and -44 are punitive, Elko County needs a positive tenor in the plan 6
 - 8.8. Wildlife and wildfire all relate back to grazing practice 6
 - 8.9. Predation control is actively resisted by NDOW 6
 - 8.10. Elko County should file for Heritage Fund support 6
 - 8.11. Elko County should file for State funds also (C. Myers has contact info)..... 6
- 9. Wyoming variant 6
- 10. Conclusion 7

1. Executive Summary

Executive Summary

2. Introduction

Introductory Statement – perhaps include prelim discussion of latest twelve month findings (USFWS) and apparent bird status range-wide, in Nevada, and in Elko County.

3. Listing Criteria Discussion / Challenge

ESA discussion, including gross number, genetically survivable number, and the areas required to sustain those populations.

3.1. ESA Philosophy

Discussion on triggers, i.e. population & habitat. The bird's survivability does not appear to be near either trigger, and the findings do not support the listing conclusion stated by the USFWS. The guiding scientific discipline is not of the natural sciences, but is from the practice of political science. This needs to be stressed and presented as standing in direct opposition to the letter and spirit of the ESA.

3.2. ESA Listing population

The findings indicate 5,000 and the bird is good to go.

3.3. ESA Listing habitat

The findings indicate 421 square miles and the bird is good to go.

3.4. Management Philosophy

Refuge records indicate significant success of the 50s-60s era management philosophy which included substantial grazing and predation control (C. Gardner, M. Laughlin).

4. Elko County Baseline

Population and area discussion (C. Gardner, J. Carpenter, M. Laughlin)

4.1. Population

Discussion of population & population clusters

4.2. Area

- 4.2.1. General
- 4.2.2. Bruneau-Mary's River
- 4.2.3. Jackpot
- 4.2.4. Wildlife refuges
- 4.2.5. Other

5. Population Enhancement

5.1. Incentives

- 5.1.1. Mine permit incentives
 - 5.1.1.1. Funding
 - 5.1.1.2. In-kind services
- 5.1.2. Mine activity mitigation
 - 5.1.2.1. Funding
 - 5.1.2.2. In-kind services

6. Wildfire Management

6.1. Historical data

6.2. Control measures

- 6.2.1. Historical
- 6.2.2. Current
- 6.2.3. Proposed

7. Pilot Project

Township scale: each area nominal 36 sq. mi. or perhaps sufficient to support the high-density breeding quartiles. Separate pilots should be set for separate controls so that effects can be isolated to the extent possible with field studies. Making preliminary density groupings establishes observations across critical population characteristics.

7.1. Grazing

- 7.1.1. High density (12/sq. mi)
- 7.1.2. Low density (3/ sq. mi)

7.2. Invasive weed

- 7.2.1. High density (12/sq. mi)
- 7.2.2. Low density (3/ sq. mi)

7.3. Predator control

- 7.3.1. High density (12/sq. mi)

7.3.2. Low density (3/ sq. mi)

7.4. Other

7.4.1. High density (12/sq. mi)

7.4.2. Low density (3/ sq. mi)

8. Resolutions

I developed these notes mostly from J. Carpenter's presentation. Reference his document for completeness. Items 8.8 through 8.11 are from M. Laughlin's presentation.

8.1. Raven permit – 50 CFR 21.41

8.2. Western Governors Association – Migratory Bird Treaty

8.3. Grazing utilization – 50% changed/eliminated

8.4. Missed – check with J. Carpenter

8.5. Tag fee increase to cover predator control

8.6. Confirm county-applicable Ruby Mountain Pipeline fees are spent in Elko County

8.7. BLM IM 2012-43 and -44 are punitive, Elko County needs a positive tenor in the plan

8.8. Wildlife and wildfire all relate back to grazing practice

8.9. Predation control is actively resisted by NDOW

8.10. Elko County should file for Heritage Fund support

8.11. Elko County should file for State funds also (C. Myers has contact info)

9. Wyoming variant

The Wyoming plan has been accepted by the federal agencies. It can be a reasonable template with the above introductory and local baseline considerations. Bear in mind that the Wyoming plan makes strong statements to the effect that predator control is critical to the survival of the sage grouse. The resolutions in Section 8 above will provide evidence that Elko County is serious about effective predator control, synonymous with effective sage grouse protection.

A plan should be in place to avoid confrontation and diminish the threat of listing. Agency action to date indicates they fully intend to list. That will enhance their budget demands. As a minimum, they intend to virtually triple the land they control. That is not an editorial statement, it is a direct evaluation of their grouse population and areal extent tables, and the ultimate effect of the USBLM Instruction Memoranda 2012-43 and -44.

10. Conclusion

This outline is submitted with respect for the significant amount of work and consequence facing the County. Randy and all charged with that effort, use it as you see fit. It's an honor to witness and participate in the discussion, and I hope this contribution is of value.

This morning I formalized the tabulation which was a basis for both my April 19 BLM RAC submittal and my May 22 Free Press editorial. Both of those, with the table, are attached with this memo. That table speaks directly to the philosophical disparity Quinton perceived in the USFWS findings, and is included in that light.

We and every affected county in the west are not being persecuted because of what we do to the sage grouse. Apparently like the logging counties, we are being persecuted because we exist.

If any of you take that as an overly harsh statement, please consider that we citizens, producers, merchants, and elected representatives are in the Constitution of these United States. The regulators who are in open defiance of a duly enacted law are exercising power to which they have never been enumerated. Those regulators are not in the Constitution and they are wielding terrible commercial and political damage on our community.

Respectfully,

Ralph R. Sacrison

Att:

SG Selective Mgmt apr 19 2012 w table
SG subsidized predator with table