

MEMORANDUM

TO: Participants in the “Renewable Energy & Sagebrush Conservation Partnership” meeting, April 26th 2010.

FROM: Pete Dalke

SUBJECT: Action Items and Notes from the April 26 Meeting – *DRAFT*

DATE: May 25 2010

This memo includes the following information from the April 26, 2010 meeting to convene a “Renewable Energy & Sagebrush Conservation Partnership” held in the Governor’s Conference Room at the State Capital: (1) identified action items, (2) a brief meeting summary, and (3) participants.

Meeting purpose: To agree to forming a partnership to address issues related to renewable energy development and sagebrush conservation, and set a course to establish an on-going collaborative approach to address the needs and issues inherent to both.

Desired outcome: agree to “figure this stuff out” and proceed on a unified front with an agreed-to Statement of Principles and Objectives, and to express the partners’ initial agreements and intentions in a Declaration of Cooperation.

NEXT MEETING: **THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 2010 - 2:00 TO 4:00 P.M.**

Location: Portland State University. The meeting will take place in the Browsing Lounge (Second Floor - Room 238) of the Smith Memorial Student Union.

Agenda to include:

- Review draft Statement of Principles and Objectives/Declaration of Cooperation and initial support statements.
- Discuss “talking points” for the opportunities map development and broader circulation of a draft for stakeholders’ benefit, comment.
- Further discussion on scope of partnership expanded to include renewable energy and conservation needs across Eastern Oregon.
- Next steps specifically with sagebrush conservation and “opportunity map” development and roll out.
- Additional participation to include USFS.

ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS

- Staff to develop a common set of talking points about the Partnership that includes framing up language to accompany a draft “opportunity map(s)”.
- ODFW to provide BLM with GIS layer of energy facilities in Oregon. ODOE to review map for completeness and accuracy.
- Staff to draft a Declaration of Cooperation that will reiterate principles, objectives and stakeholders support for the Partnership.
- Identify USFS participation for the 6/17 meeting.

BRIEF MEETING SUMMARY

The purpose & goals of the meeting, partnership vision were introduced by Mike Carrier and Mike Haske.

This effort is lead by the Governor’s Office with the BLM “co-convening”. The purpose of this initial meeting is to bring important stakeholders into the discussion and to create the framework for a partnership to move forward.

BLM’s previous work with the Governor’s office has placed Oregon ahead of other states in response to the March 5, 2010 Sage Grouse “Warranted but Precluded” decision and corresponding BLM IM 2010-071. The BLM opportunities map approach is a solid foundation to move forward.

The *Statements of Principles* laid out in Mike Carrier’s memo for the meeting will serve as a guide for future efforts.

Background and Context:

Existing efforts (MOU, BLM opportunities map etc.) – Mike Haske and Miles Brown, BLM.

Provided background materials:

- MOU among Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, USFS, BLM, USFWS, USGS, NRCS and USDA Farm Service Agency (2008);
 - Oregon BLM Energy Resources Team Draft report (2009);
 - Energy and Transmission Projects on BLM in Oregon & Washington (2010). (right of way applications)
- BLM is developing “opportunities map” for renewable energy as discussed in the recommendations in the 2009 Energy Resources Team draft report. Based off initial

work lead by Kenny McDaniel, BLM Burns District manager. A larger version of an "Opportunity Map" with GIS-overlays that include mule deer winter range, pygmy rabbit habitat, DOD air space and wilderness areas (NLCS) was posted on the wall for discussion during the meeting.

- Need to reconcile and agree on "key" (BLM) vs. "core" (ODFW) sage grouse habitat designations. BLM seems to prefer use of the ODFW core habitat and is eager for GIS data to become available. Discussion is needed on how best BLM and the state can partner to roll out an "opportunities map" using the "core" habitat information.
- BLM is discussing candidate conservation agreements with the grazing community.
- Interior Secretary Salazar has placed an emphasis on development of renewable energy and many opportunities will overlay some of the best sage brush habitat.
- BLM met recently with wind developers and interest group regarding right-of-ways. Both ONDA and TNC have interest in an event around renewable energy.

Context- Sage grouse "warranted but precluded" for ESA listing – Paul Henson and Miel Corbett, USFWS.

- USGS was commissioned to complete a sage grouse study, and is released (The information will be formally published as a scientific monograph in the series *Studies in Avian Biology*. See website information: <http://sagemap.wr.usgs.gov/monograph.aspx>).
- "warranted but precluded" decision does not trigger NEPA consultation by other Federal agencies. USFWS often will do "quasi-consultation" (conferencing) on their projects.

NRCS & USFWS agreement for sage grouse protection – Ron Alvarado and Bill White, NRCS

- NRCS has a sage grouse habitat improvement program, developed in cooperation with ODFW and compliments the recent agreement with US FWS. Involves \$8M for Baker, Malheur, Harney and Crook Counties. 5 year program. \$1.2M in the first year with annual sign ups. 30 applications to date. Juniper focus. Practices include juniper removal, range planting, upland management. NRCS can invest on public lands when working with a private entity.
- ODFW is exploring opportunities to cost share technical assistance positions to work with landowners.
- DSL is working on juniper eradication on state lands and exploring the opportunity for lessees working with NRCS on NRCS-funded projects.
- Wildfire, cheat grass and juniper pose the greatest threats to sage grouse populations on BLM lands as identified in the Eco-regional Assessment. Reviewing threats to intact sagebrush at the landscape scale (100K-200K acres) is a next step.
- NRCS, BLM and USFWS are meeting with the Oregon Cattlemen's Association on 5/27 in Burns to discuss program, relationship to BLM and USFWS, issues of assurance, recognition to participating landowners for practices completed if there is a listing.

Renewable Energy efforts and current situation – Tom Stoops, ODOE

- Renewable Portfolio Standards are highlighting the shortcomings of the current transmission grid for renewable energy development.
- Energy projects less than 104MW do not go through the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Process, and are subject to the appropriate County’s conditional use process. The Association of Oregon Counties recently published a “Wind Energy Task Force Report, Final Draft”, 11/2/2009.
- Wind developers suggest to ODOE their willingness to mitigate, “just tell us where we can go”.

State role – Mike Carrier & Eric Rickerson & Bob Hooten, ODFW

- ODFW is reviewing a draft revision to the Oregon Sage Grouse Conservation Strategy. This will include a “core” concept based on leks. Looking at a 3 mile radius for protection. A technical team will review the draft which will eventually go to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission for adoption later this year. A public process will be involved prior to adoption.

Other issues brought to the discussion:

- Migratory bird and eagle mortalities continue to be a concern, and a liability to the project owner (Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act).
- A map of existing renewable energy projects in Eastern Oregon, and transmission, will be helpful as a baseline. ODOE and ODFW will confer and discuss how best to provide a map.
- There needs to be a Fed/state collaborative effort to roll out an “opportunities map”, and discussion of “what it is, what it isn’t”. Note that Idaho BLM has pursued publishing maps that may be useful models.
- NRCS has different uses for their GIS maps. There needs to be recognition and discussion to capture available data layers and their various existing and potential uses.
- Who else needs to be included with this group as a “Core Team”? Consider Association of Oregon Counties, USFS, USGS, Farm Service Agency, Tribes, developers, interest groups including ONDA, TNC.
- This Partnership should have as its scope renewable energy across the entirety of Eastern Oregon, not just sage brush habitat. The issues are similar for other habitat and species as well.

Participants

Meeting Convener: Mike Carrier, Governor's Natural Resource Office

Agency	Attendee
BLM	Ed Shepard
BLM	Mike Haske
BLM	Mark Brown
BLM	Miles Brown
BLM	Cathie Jensen
Dept of State Lands	Lanny Quackenbush
Governor's Natural Resource Office	Ivo Trummer
NRCS	Ron Alvarado
NRCS	Bill White
ODFW	Eric Rickerson
ODFW	Bob Hooton
ODOE	Tom Stoops
ODOE	Lisa Pinheiro
ODOE	Diane Enright
US F&WS	Paul Henson
US F&WS	Miel Corbett
Staff:	
NPCC	Greg Wolf
NPCC	Pete Dalke