

## MEMORANDUM

**TO: Fire and Invasives State Work Group Participants**  
**FROM: INR Staff**  
**SUBJECT: June Fire and Invasives State Working Group**  
**DATE: July 27, 2013**

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This memo follows up on the June 27th meeting of the Fire and Invasives State Working Group. The memo includes the following: (1) identified action items and (2) brief meeting summary

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meeting	Date	Location	Potential Agenda Items
<b>Fire and Invasives State Working Group</b>	July 25, 2013	Prineville, OR	Draft Work Plan

### ACTION ITEMS

Action Item	Who	Date
Share Local Implementation Team Meeting Dates	ODFW	TBA
Report findings of ODFW fire response study	ODFW	Late September
Collect GIS data to populate the work groups' fire and invasives layers for future discussion and analysis	*Brian Pew and Joan Suther can provide quality/quantity data for private fire-fighting equipment	Ongoing
Provide links to other state conservation plans	Eric Rickerson	Ongoing

### BRIEF MEETING SUMMARY

## **USFWS COT Report findings: How Fire and Invasives are a threat to Sage-Grouse**

Jodie Delavan of USFWS shared key elements of the COT Report explaining the general objectives to prevent population loss in Priority Areas of Conservation (PAC's) (which are identical to ODFW's core areas and BLM's PPH areas). The report was developed through a multi-state team to assess conditions and programs and guide future conservation priorities.

In regards to fire conservation recommendations, the following priorities are identified on pages 40 of the COT:

1. Restrict or contain fire within the normal range of fire activity (assuming a healthy native perennial sagebrush community), including size and frequency, as defined by the best available science.
2. Eliminate intentional fires in sagebrush habitats, including prescribed burning of breeding and winter habitats.
3. Design and implement restoration of burned sagebrush habitats to allow for natural succession to healthy native sagebrush plant communities. This will necessitate an intensive and well-funded monitoring system for this long-term endeavor. To be considered successful, restoration must also result in returning or increasing sage-grouse populations within burned areas.
4. Implement monitoring programs for restoration activities. To ensure success, monitoring must continue until restoration is complete (establishment of mature, healthy native sagebrush plant communities), with sufficient commitments to make adequate corrections to management efforts if needed.
5. Immediately suppress fire in all sagebrush habitats. Where resources are limited, these actions should first focus on PACs and any identified connectivity corridors between PACs.

Similarly conservation recommendations have been laid out in the COT for invasives (42-43) as an estimated 69 million acres of sagebrush are compromised by their presence with specific threats and targets identified for juniper (47). See the COT report and Jodie's powerpoint for more information.

## **ODFW Sage Grouse Plan: Overview of Conservation Actions**

Eric Rickerson, ODFW reviewed memo 7/24/2012-8/2/2012 for reference and page 98 of the plan. For community engagement, five Local Implementation Teams (based on BLM districts) were developed to vet core areas and work with private landowners, the LIT's

have been on hold with staffing changes and should be meeting again soon.

ODFW is conducting a study with collared birds to understand the impacts of the 2012 fires on health of the bird and its habitat with a report expected late September.

### **INR Geospatial Data: what we know – Fuel loads; Conifer Encroachment; Fire**

After Theresa's presentation, there was a discussion about priority data layers and remaining questions that could help guide our discussion by identifying what we now know and what we think is necessary to include in the state plan. Below are notes from the brainstorm:

- Roads – travel management data from BLM; includes width and use.
- Accessibility
- Prioritized areas (wilderness areas, reserves, wilderness study areas (BLM))
  - “lands with wilderness character” □ (Joan) these aren't allocated as anything yet, are still general BLM lands
- Locations of fuel breaks
- Leks
- Core areas
- Private fire fighting equipment locations and quantity/quality
- Ownership and land allocations
- ODF structure counts
- Lightening strike data
  - ODF has historic
  - BLM has historic
- Fuel loads
  
- How likely are the core areas to burn?
  - probability of burning
  - fuel loads
- What is our response time to get to the core areas?
- What are the policies that are being discussed by the BLM in the RMP?

### **Noxious Weeds**

Dan Hilburn described noxious weeds like a slow moving fire and let everyone know they were in season now and there is some public awareness occurring to support widespread eradication.

### **Lessons learned – Suppression; Rehabilitation; Response**

1. **What works well? Where is improvement needed?**
2. **Discussion – begin to identify new tools/practices needed**

Brian Pew described the impetus for Rangeland Fire Protection Associations to provide capacity on private land for fire suppression in areas not covered by public services. The

program repurposes military equipment for firefighting. The projections of fire risk are overwhelming in comparison to the current resources available and ODF is looking for ways to be more strategic in prevention and resource management to avoid catastrophic levels. Please find ODF report here for more information:

<http://www.oregon.gov/odf/fire/fpfc/rfawhite.pdf>

BLM plans will be spatially explicit and will focus on the core areas

- BER, COT are strongly informing the RMP
- Other states will be pretty similar

#### Draft Attendees List

**(apologies for names not listed)**

Joan Suther, BLM State Office, Burns

Cahty Macdonald, TNC

Eric Rickerson, ODFW

Bob Hooten, Klamath Watershed

Jodie

...more not listed here...

On the phone:

Zola Ryan, NRCS

Angela Sitz, USFWS (usual rep)

Kris Babbs, ODF

Ken Mayer

Jeremy Maestas, NRCS