

MEMORANDUM

TO: Habitat Fragmentation and Mitigation Work Group

FROM: INR Staff

SUBJECT: September Habitat Fragmentation and Mitigation Work Group Notes

DATE: October 3, 2013

This memo follows up on the September 20, 2013 meeting of the joint meeting with participants from the Habitat Fragmentation and Mitigation Work Groups. The memo includes the following: (1) upcoming meetings (2) identified action items and (3) brief meeting summary.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Date	Meeting	Location	Potential Agenda Items
Mondays Ongoing	Core Team Meetings	Portland	Share updates to align federal and state processes
September 24, 25	Federal Family Meeting	Denver	Focus will be on status and conservation management of sage grouse and species habitat
September 30	Agency Alignment Meeting	Portland	Coordinate federal and state processes

November 21, 22 (October 24-cancelled)	Sage Grouse Conservation Partnership	Prineville	Next iteration of baseline maps showing disturbance by PAC's and further delineation of the impact and footprint of threats in OR BLM RMP Process, anticipated public comment period Review draft state action plan
October TBD	Energy/Utility Focused Meeting	Portland	Review ODOE draft feasibility analysis

ACTION ITEMS

Action Item	Who	Date
Develop next iteration of baseline maps showing disturbance by PAC's and further delineation of the impact and footprint of threats in OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List threats by PAC's from COT Report Clarify sage grouse populations within PAC's in OR to build/update lek buffers to show base and satellite leks Continue data collection and building landscape assessment tools (ongoing) 	Technical Staff	Report out at October Work Group Meeting
Identify Mitigation Technical Team to develop example project to test landscape and project level assessment tools.	GNRO, BLM, TNC, USFWS, ODFW & USFS	Report out at October Work Group Meeting
Review Modified Table 2 from the COT report	Jeff Everett?	Report out at October

		Work Group Meeting
Work with Jon Jinings and counties to update integrate their work.	Habitat Fragmentation Work Group	Report out at October Work Group Meeting
Review Holloway Fire analysis, to understand if “everything” could have been done, what would the outcome have been?	?	Report out at October Work Group Meeting
Refine comparison of agency mitigation policies	Habitat Fragmentation/Mitigation Work Group	Ongoing
Dig into protocols and mitigation program rules including definitons for direct and indirect impacts	Habitat Fragmentation/Mitigation Work Group	Ongoing

MEETING MATERIALS TO POST TO WEBSITE

- Mitigation Powerpoint (Cathy Macdonald, the Nature Conservancy)

BRIEF MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome, Introductions, Meeting Objectives and Agenda

Opportunity to take a closer look at the science approach developing through the technical work presented at the SageCon meeting. Are there remaining questions, what is surprising, what else needs to be considered? What are the next steps for input from these work groups?

- Need to organize our work in order to address multiple scales. For example four spatial scales are tentatively identified landscape, ecosystem, project matrix and project level .
- Review anthropogenic features of a secondary nature to replicate Knick model in terms of landcover; secondary roads, highways, powerlines, towers, pipelines, etc. Critical elements of baseline condition. Showing birds response to date to those features.
- The core areas are in great condition when you get outside the populations are not as healthy of populations. Not seeing linear features cutting through core.

Presentation and Discussion: Emerging Mitigation Framework for Oregon

- BLM is still working through the appropriate scale for reporting to USFWS, management zones, subpopulation level, etc. How to define population levels at subareas, still determining factors on where Oregon fits into the larger picture. BLM has a monitoring protocol from 2010 that is relevant to mitigation discussion.
- Unit of analysis critical for developers to understand where and how to site projects based on impacts and current and project disturbance.
- Need more information to define these relationships between the landscape and project scale. We can work on both simultaneously but understand that the data will have to link down the road. In addition, opportunity to align reporting and mitigation.
- In terms of process, USFWS will assemble a panel of biologists as a group for species threat analysis which will likely relate to distinct subpopulations as well as management zones. Knick reviewed lek resilience over time, disturbance is not only defined as development. There is a downward trend related to development but its not the only factor in disturbance. Safe to work within PAC's (same as core) as a starting point. Four PAC's in Oregon. ODFW has identified 32 focal areas with the PAC's in the Conservation Strategy.
- Need to understand satellite leks as well as lek complexes to understand activity and the movement of populations.
- Current policy is avoidance of core, if we have a process for development in core we need to set a standard for what level of disturbance is acceptable and what is the required offset.
- Decision trees and dichotomous key can help set if, then statements to rank order to roll up state data.
- Suggestion to track criteria emerging from scale discussions, how to get to course of implementation. Regulators provide an important lens but our intent here is to determine where investments will benefit the landscape. USFWS have a strong mandate and are building a biological case to make a decision. The technical team has an opportunity to track ideas to show where we can apply action on the ground.
- Need project example to help test analysis to review scenarios. Ensure project is objective, replicable, sensitivity to change over time, etc. to avoid bias and to build buy-in methodology from range of stakeholders.
- Consensus that the technical team will move forward with PAC's as the unit of analysis and report back at October meeting.

Presentation and Discussion: Emerging Mitigation Framework for Oregon – Core Group

- Three guiding documents; ODFW Policy and Interim Guidance, BLM Instructional Memo and 1981 USFWS Policy and policies under ESA.
- BLM IM will be supplemented by a manual section over the next year to draw from lessons learned and revise interim guidance.
- Developers need to know where the best place to site is and where are the areas that are being protected indefinitely.

- Need to be reminded that mitigation framework may need to go beyond the traditional framework in order to address main threats such as fire and invasives.
- Difficult to break out direct and indirect impacts. As an example the noise propagation model has shown that its not only the impacts to sage grouse but also the displacement of big game. Need to build systems that can account for cumulative impacts.
- West Butte example of mitigation across private and public lands that is useful.
- Mitigation may ultimately be a combination of preservation and restoration, ratios should be established for both. Concerns about market mechanisms working across public and private lands.