

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Sage Grouse Conservation Partnership**  
**FROM: Julia Babcock, Oregon Solutions Staff**  
**SUBJECT: May 2nd SageCon Draft Meeting Notes**

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This memo follows up on the May 2, 2014 meeting of the Sage Grouse Conservation Partnership. The memo includes the following: (1) upcoming meetings calendar and (2) identified action items and (3) overview meeting notes and (4) attendance list.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Potential Agenda Items</b>
Mondays Ongoing (every two weeks)	Core Team Meetings	Portland	Share updates to align federal and state planning processes
Mondays Ongoing (every two weeks)	Mitigation Technical Team Meetings	Portland	Develop mitigation framework for state plan
May 13, 2014	Mechanics of Mapping Baseline Followup Meeting with County Planners	Burns	Review mapping concepts with county planners to ground baseline and disturbance analysis
May 21, 2014	Harney County CCAA Signing	Burns	To bring together the parties involved in developing the CCAA and sign up private land owners.
May 22, 2014	LCDC Presentation-Jon Jinings and Jamie Damon	Salem	Potential regulatory approach to sage grouse conservation tied to ALAT State Plan
May TBD	Fire and Invasives Meeting	Burns/Bend TBD	Review Chapter 5 assignments
June 10, 2014	County Commissioner Follow up Meeting at AOC Spring Conference	Hood River	Review potential regulatory options and land use assessment updates from USFWS
June, July TBD	SageCon	TBD	To review progress on ALAT Plan and share related federal and state efforts.

ACTION ITEMS

Action Item	Who	Date
Land use allocations submitted to National Operations Center (NOC)	BLM	May 15, 2014
State will work with BLM to sync process timelines for ALAT State Plan and Governor's Consistency Review	Core Team	Ongoing

MEETING MATERIALS POSTED TO SAGE CON WEBSITE

- [Final Draft Agenda](#)
- [Chapter 5 Outline](#)

BRIEF MEETING SUMMARY BY AGENDA ITEM

Welcome from Conveners

- Richard Whitman, Governor's Office -Thanks to everyone for continuing to take part in Oregon's efforts to address sage grouse conservation. Particular recognition for the hard work of the counties as shown through agreements reached in the CCAA in Harney County and ongoing meetings with county commissioners to come to the table. Mike Haske and BLM have been excellent partners and we continue to work together to build a path forward through our planning efforts. Governor Kitzhaber has expressed his resolve to work with SE Oregon to build a plan that works and helps local communities thrive in a sustainable manner.
- Ron Alvarado, NRCS (and echoed by others)-Special recognition for Bill White's retirement May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Bill was a model partner and partnership builder throughout the state and will be missed in the sage grouse efforts.

Recent Accomplishments and Upcoming Federal and State Milestones

USFWS

*Paul Henson with Shanna Ginger and Jeff Everett*

- Reminder of the rangewide scale of sage grouse conservation efforts; USFWS assessing 56 million acres across 11 states (9 of the states are developing plans including Oregon). . BLM is amending 96 land use plans. BLM and USFS together have 15 Environmental Impact Statements underway. BLM and USFWS sharing comments back and forth to maintain coordination to address national comments NRCS, SGI efforts going well on private lands.
- USFWS listed lesser prairie chicken, allowing five states to enter into 4(d) rule. May not be a precursor for sage grouse, but might provide some insights. More information available here:

[http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/documents/R2ES/LPC\\_Final\\_4d\\_rule\\_FR\\_20140327.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/documents/R2ES/LPC_Final_4d_rule_FR_20140327.pdf)

- USFWS encourages the state and counties to build on the scientific approach developed through ODFW's Conservation Strategy. There is a sense of urgency for the state to provide USFWS some additional information on a regulatory framework for evaluation. State and counties should continue working to be aligned with BLM as much as possible in addressing the COT report and demonstrating working towards the same goals.
- Signing Harney CCAA around May 21st. Thanks to all the hard work folks have put in from Harney County, the SWCD, USFWS and others to make this happen. Other counties will build their own CCAA programs and benefit from the early work put in by Harney County.
- USFWS adding significant amount of capacity, around 40 positions across 11 states. Want to clarify, dispel notion that this is indicative of a pending listing decision. In fact, it is to meet conservation opportunities emerging from states being responsive and proactive about sage grouse work. Review and approval of CCAA's is a growing and important workload. One of the positions will be at ODFW.

#### BLM

*Sally Sovey in person with Robin Estes, Tim Barnes, Craig Goodell and Glenn Frederick on the phone*

- Unprecedented scale of work for BLM. ID team scope intensive and doubled staff team to get through work and resolve comments.
- Held 3 day meeting to work through and resolve internal comments. Likewise, held 3 day meeting for external comments on how to address all in the last month. Hoping to be done soon. National level, land allocation layers due to NOC by May 15th.
- FEIS expected August 2014, ROD expected October 1st 2014
- National Guidance issued around fire operations to field level staff external from RMP, more information here: <http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/>
- Fire and Invasives Assessment Team (FIAT) based out of Boise is still developing protocol for assessing risk of fire for sage grouse habitat and developing mitigation measures. Jeremy Maestas on FIAT.

#### State

*Richard Whitman with Brett Brownscombe and Jamie Damon*

- Reminder, February SageCon focused on public comments for BLM with many folks coming together from counties, state agencies, conservation organizations to provide feedback on BLM's plans. At that meeting introduced the disturbance framework concept and we'll build on that discussion at this meeting.
- Richard's vision is that we continue to work together across boundaries to address development, and put mitigation resources where we get the biggest bang for the buck.
- Working to finalize state plan in Fall 2014 to align with BLM's process and continue to work towards the goals in the COT report. Core team meeting biweekly to engage Federal and State leadership.
- Mitigation Technical Team meeting weekly to work through mitigation concepts to shape state plan.
- April 22, Core team leadership met with county commissioners to talk through state planning process and potential regulatory components. USFWS has offered to flag

any issues in the [County Land Use Planning Assessment](#) and DLCD will outline details for a county or state option. On June 10<sup>th</sup> a follow up meeting will be held to review these tasks.

- On April 30, [OWEB approved \\$300,000 in funding to support SageCon](#) and related processes to continue to build the ALAT State Plan.
- Brett and Richard are requesting input on legislative strategy to shape a budget request with an emphasis on addressing fire and invasives threats. Rural Protection Districts will need investment, OWEB will be considering invasives along with ODA. Other agency budgets, investments will also be open to discussion.
- Interest in how to leverage federal investments to achieve common goals. Help make BLM successful.
- OCA is working with BLM through Oregon Consensus to set up a pilot project on Beatys Butte that will incorporate species mitigation goals. Governor's Office is also tracking this opportunity to leverage resources, work together on the ground.
- Counties concerned about the sequester of Taylor Grazing funding. Need to work together with BLM to leverage those funds in the future.

#### Governance Model and Disturbance Framework Update

- Review of draft approach to implementing ALAT Plan. Working with state and county partners to develop collaborative approach to manage and monitor disturbance, with a commitment to align efforts for reporting to USFWS backed by best available science. Suggestion is for the governance approach to include a special assistant in the Governor's Office to manage, have accountability.
- Draft model includes a statewide governance board, likely drawn from SageCon, to address barriers and consider allocation of resources.
- ODFW's state technical team and the local implementation teams (LITs) are also seen as continuing in key roles.
- The governance approach may not need to be outlined in OARs (like was done for the salmon plan) but may want to have the Legislature recognize the ALAT governance structure and have recognized opportunities for input going forward.
- Ag community feels important to have staff with ag experience working with ag on implementation, desired outcomes and all the details that will come with this.
- "Oregon's Evolving Approach to a Disturbance cap" set at 3% based on Knick work, showed sage grouse intolerance to human disturbance. Cap is based on anthropogenic disturbance and is not a goal to attain BUT a threshold to be avoided. Fire and invasives not included in cap. Existing ag not included in initial disturbance baseline but new conversion is viewed as a possible future disturbance.
- Proposing metered approach with 10 year monitoring period. Initially core areas are put into 1 of 3 tier categories based on existing disturbance (since 2010) and then provided a small percent of allowable disturbance for the first 10 year period. Increments are low to counter uncertainty of fire and invasives threats.
- Developing GIS-based central registry to track disturbance across sage grouse habitat within Oregon. Need to work with counties to determine how to set up digitizing and tracking development.

- Working with counties to refine approach, understand development pressure (such as what has been permitted but is not yet developed) and review land use samples to talk through potential development scenarios.
- Roads – more data may be available regarding traffic volumes and similar surrogates regarding levels of existing and potential disturbance.
- Measure 37 and 49 questions raised as well as what is allowed outright under EFU land use.
- Concern from counties and ag community about regulating irrigated agriculture and the permitting of pivots.
- Requests were heard for mapped examples of the baseline, and how the disturbance threshold might be applied under different conditions.
- Recognized need for more dialogue regarding top down approach that comes with a listing versus state taking lead on regulatory framework for steering development to appropriate locations, pursuing flexibility with managing, monitoring core areas and populations, and generating mitigation resources to better address fire and invasives threats.
- USFWS wants to avoid situations that result in disincentives for landowner voluntary conservation actions and the net benefits these investments provide for the bird and its habitat.
- See presentation for more information.

#### State Work Group Updates

##### Chapter 5-*Ken Mayer and Dawn Davis*

- Shared draft outline. Working through threats from COT report to develop direct actions as well as a strategy to measure progress. Addressing three key threats; conifer encroachment, annual grass invasion, and large-scale wildfire. Seeking assistance for input on secondary threats, please email Dawn and Ken if you are able to contribute to threat assessment.

##### Fire and Invasives – *Ken Mayer*

- Plugged into processes around the West wrestling with similar issues, need to ameliorate threats within a sound ecological framework. Held a productive all day conference call in April. Focus on wildfire, conifers and invasives. Moving forward with GIS mapping analysis to understand risks, predict where highest fire potential and propose additional fuel strips as well as where resources needed for RFPA's.

##### Mitigation Technical Team-*Sara O'Brien*

- Working with CIG Research team to develop list of credible scientific findings to shape mitigation approaches to habitat restoration. Sara will meet with Brenda Smith and colleagues in Burns in May.

##### Technical Work– *Theresa Burcsu*

- Theresa is coordinating invasives species mapping with ODA, the habitat baseline analysis with counties and creating an Oregon Explorer website to share data. Theresa has been meeting regularly with BLM to ensure data is consistent and the

feds and state are using their resources efficiently when maps/analyses are mutually beneficial. Interest from participants to see maps and analyses at next SageCon meeting.

Contact Jamie Damon if you want to be more engaged in any of the state work group discussions and or if you represent a group and feel the need to pull together a meeting of relevant stakeholders for more focused discussion of the issues and ALAT. (This has been done for OCA and the Energy Work Group).

Please see calendar for upcoming meetings and contact Julia Babcock ([jjb@pdx.edu](mailto:jjb@pdx.edu) or 503-725-8109) if you have any to add.

#### ATTENDANCE

##### Conveners

Ron Alvarado, NRCS

Richard Whitman, Governor's Natural Resource Office

##### Participants

Andrew Shields, Roaring Springs Ranch

Annette Liebe, Regional Solutions

Bob Sallinger, Audubon Society

Bob Skinner, OCA

Brett Brownscombe, Governor's Natural Resource Office

Brandon McMullen, Harney County

Bruce Taylor, Defenders of Wildlife

Cathy Macdonald, TNC

Damon Hess, Sitka Technology

Dan Morse, ONDA

Darwin Johnson, Lake County

Eric Rickerson, ODFW

Garth Fuller, TNC

Holly Michael, ODFW

Isaac Sanders, DOGAMI

Jeff Everett, USFWS

John O'Keefe, OCA

Jon Jinings, DLCD

Judge Steve Grasty, Harney County

Ken Kestner, Lake County

Ken Mayer, WAFWA

Lanny Quackenbush, DSL

Margi Hoffman, Governor's Office

Mark Nystrom, AOC

Meta Looftsgaarden, OWEB

Mike Freese, OFB

Robin Estes, BLM

Roy Elicker, ODFW

Sally Sovey, BLM

Sara O'Brien, Willamette Partnership  
Stacey Davis, OCA  
Shauna Ginger, USFWS  
Varner Seaman, Renewable Northwest

By Phone

Sandra Ackley, BPA  
Tim Barnes, BLM  
Stacey Baczkowski, Idaho Power  
Judith Callens, ODA  
Glenn Frederick, BLM  
Craig Goodell, BLM  
Ginnie Gustafson, ODOE  
Paul Henson, USFWS  
Christian Jilek, ODOT  
Jimmy Kagan, INR  
Sue Oliver, ODOE  
Lynn Sharp, Renewable Northwest  
Brian Fritz?

Staff

Jamie Damon, OSN Sage Grouse Project Manager  
Turner Odell, Oregon Consensus  
Theresa Burcsu, Technical Lead  
Julia Babcock, Administrative Lead  
Pete Dalke, Oregon Solutions (by phone)