

The Annual Wildlife Planning meeting for the Pinedale Anticline Project was held on October 26, 2011, at the Pinedale BLM office.

The following updates were provided on the wildlife monitoring:

- Pygmy Rabbit – by Jennifer Hess (Hayden-Wing Associates (HWA))
- White-Tailed Prairie Dog - Troy Rintz (West, Inc.)
- Raptors – Chad Olsen (Hayden-Wing Associates (HWA))
- Sage Grouse - Therese Hartman (Wyoming Game & Fish Department (WGFD))
- Snow Depth & Traffic - Katie Lane (Asset Environmental Services (AES))
- Pronghorn - Ryan Nielson (West, Inc.)
- Mule Deer - Hall Sawyer (West, Inc.)

Audience Questions on Wildlife Monitoring:

Courtney Skinner – Where is DA-4?

Response Katie Lane, AES – Showed on the map on the wall, Warbonnet Area.

Mathew Copeland, Wyoming Wildlife Federation (WWF) – Why was habitat avoidance dropped from monitoring?

Response Therese Hartman, WGFD – Through the cooperative review, it was dropped because of redundancy . The matrix required there to be habitat avoidance combined with a decline in numbers for that trigger to be met. You can find the review on the PAPA website.

The following presentations were provided from BLM and WGFD:

Shane DeForest, BLM, summarized the BLM's Decision Regarding Matrix Species:

Pygmy Rabbit is a BLM sensitive species. The monitoring matrix criteria is the 3-years change. There is only 2 years of data and no change detected.

White-Tailed Prairie Dog is a BLM sensitive species. The monitoring matrix criteria is the 3-years change. There is only 2 years of data and there is little change detected.

Sage Grouse: One of the monitoring matrix criteria is the sage grouse leks. With the data, there is no change in the Mesa complex, the Dukes complex went up, then down, so not change and the Yellowpoint complex went slightly down. With all the data there is a 12.5% decline, under the matrix. In male attendance, there was a decrease in the reference area than in the core area. With noise, the methodology was changed.

Snow Depth & Traffic: There was variability in snow cover and last year was a big snow year. The trends in traffic, with decrease timing and use unexpected.

Pronghorn: The monitoring matrix criteria is 15% decline in any year or cumulatively over all years compared to the reference area. There is high survival in the PAPA. There

is a delay in data until April, collars will drop in November. The matrix was not prompted.

Mule Deer: The matrix was hit last year. This year there is a slight increase possible. This is the only species that the matrix level was hit.

Shane DeForest, BLM, discussed the status of the 17 actionable items. It is updated since the February meeting and is available on the website.

Dan Stroud, WGFD, discussed the Sublette Mule Deer Habitat Assessment.

Theresa Gulbrandson, BLM, discussed the Mesa Fertilization Project.

Audience Questions on BLM/WG&FD topics:

Mathew Copeland, WWF – With mule deer hitting the matrix would there be any restrictions to surface occupancy or exceptions?

Response Shane DeForest, BLM – There are 4 steps,

1. Look at onsite implementation treatments.
2. Look at off-site implementation treatments.
3. Adjust the implementation treatments.
4. Make modifications of specifications, only after exhausted all onsite and off-site treatments.

Mathew Copeland, WWF – Is there timeframes on steps 1-3?

Response: Shane DeForest, BLM – No timeframes. The purpose is to work towards a goal. Recognize impacts and that they might be negative and significant. What is not allowed is for a significant impact that the species would be unable to recover and become irreversible. Looking at the historical data, there was very little mule deer when the pioneers went through here, so the herd size has been variable. The approval is to not reach that detrimental effect and continue monitoring

Neil Thagard, Theodor Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) – Is there going to be monitoring of the fertilization treatments for mule deer use.

Response: Therese Hartman, WGFD – There was no utilization measured this year related to mule deer because the fertilizer was just applied last fall.

Response: Shane DeForest, BLM – It is such a smaller area, probably will not see usage, possible in the expanded projects area. In receiving comments on the project, the areas were chosen where the deer are.

Linda Baker, Upper Green River Alliance (UGRA) – Is there going to be a noise report and available to the public?

Response: Therese Hartman, WGFD – We are collecting the data and plan to use the UC Davis monitoring methods for next year's monitoring. The Report will be published.

, Renee Seidler WCS – Is there going to be sampling of pronghorn survival rates?

Response: Therese Hartman, WGFD – For pronghorn survival was never a matrix component, so no.

Melanie Purcell, Sublette County Conservation District (SCCD) – Is the fertilization always going to be done in the fall?

Response: Theresa Gulbrandson, BLM – Yes

Melanie Purcell, SCCD – Is there any consideration when dropping down on the Mesa and less precipitation?

Response: Dan Stroud, WGFD – The success of fertilization is totally based on the precipitation. A dry year anywhere on the Mesa may not produce the results we want to see no matter where it is applied. It is applied in the fall to get snow on it, so it gets into the ground.

Rollin Sparrowe, TRCP – Is there any research on mule deer preference for fertilized areas and the nutrient value in plants?

Response: Dan Stroud, WGFD – There are 5-6 sources related to plant responses including some on nutrient value changes. I haven't seen any research depicting mule deer preference to fertilized areas but there is research related to elk response.

Rollin Sparrowe, TRCP – Is there going to be any connecting of the dots related to mule deer use and areas where habitat should be improved?

Response: Dan Stroud, WGFD – Yes. We are looking at areas where deer are actually using the habitat and then considering those same areas to potentially treat them to improve the habitat. We are using Sawyer's collaring information, in part, to help identify potential project areas.

Response: Shane DeForest, BLM – Additionally, we are conducting a landscape scale habitat assessment approach and then we will develop more specific habitat improvement projects. In 2012, the intent is to fine-tune the assessment with specific projects, then in 2013 conduct on the ground treatments.

Rollin Sparrowe, TRCP – How do you know deer will use it?

Response Dan Stroud, WGFD – We don't know if deer will be attracted to the project areas. The proposed projects will be planned for both transitional and winter habitat areas that have been identified as areas that mule deer use.

Linda Baker, Upper Green River Alliance (UGRA) – Are operators required to have workers take the buses? Why so much traffic with the LGS installed and other measures?

Response: Shane DeForest, BLM – The operators can either answer today or in February when the topic will be addressed.

Response: Cally McKee, Ultra Resources – There are a lot of workers that take the buses. Although, there are workers that are not assigned to rigs that need to drive. Lately, they have been moving some rigs that haven't moved in 2 years. Overall there has been a significant reduction of traffic.

Response: Kyle Schumacher, BLM – Echoing what Cally said, with pumpers going to locations and busing to frac sites.

Other topics:

Operators Reclamation Activities , Cally McKee, Ultra Resources, Aimee Davison, SWEPI and Dennis Beccue, QEP Energy

PADMS System Update, Windy Kelley, Wyoming Department of Agriculture – The Pinedale Anticline Data Management System (PADMS) was designed by USGS for the PAPA to make the data uniform. PADMS tracks surface disturbance, status of reclamation and vegetation. The operators collect and upload data. Duane Bayes did training on the system in October and another one in November. Jonah has a similar system, which can be found at:

www.wy.blm.gov/JIO-PAPO/PAPO/index.html

data.fort.usgs.gov/jio/homePad Spacing & Expansion, Shane DeForest, BLM – After this meeting, set up another meeting with the operators to discuss DA-1.

Adaptive Management/2011 ROD Clarification, Shane DeForest, BLM – Reviewed the latest adaptive management letter, the adaptive management process and comment time frame.

Audience Questions/Comments on all topics:

Linda Baker, Upper Green River Alliance (UGRA) – What happened with the concept once on a pad, stay on a pad with 3 weeks requirement?

Response Shane DeForest, BLM – This resulted from the 2001 ROD. Problems resulted from being able to maintain a workforce, equipment and management of these activities. The logistics of moving the rig on to finish with times of low activity was also an issue. The concern depended on when the break occurred and – as an example – there could be a conflict with raptors. A company would survey and find no nest, then break and when resume again, a raptor was nesting right next to the pad. It was a catch 22.

Debbie Stanberry, Ultra Resources – Were all the proposals in the adaptive management internal?

Response Shane DeForest, BLM – Yes.

Final – PAWG meeting November 8th, 9:00 am, at the Pinedale BLM. The PAWG membership has 2 openings: one is the public at large and the second is cultural/historic. The application is online and due by November 21st. A news release available in the lobby.

The next meeting will be in February for Development Activities. Topics include – wildlife passages, air quality milestones, enhanced reclamation strategies and preliminary easy to read brochure on water quality.