

Northwest Basin and Range Synthesis Steering Committee Meeting

**July 27, 2016
Conference Call**

Committee Attendance

Mark Freese, Western Region Supervising Habitat Biologist, Nevada Department of Wildlife
Jeremy Austin, Hart-Sheldon Coordinator, Oregon Natural Desert Association

Randy Wiest, Rangeland Manager, Oregon Department of State Lands Management

John Kasbohm, Project Leader, Sheldon-Hart NWR Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Chip Dale, Watershed Manager, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Rick Kearney, Director, Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative (BLM)

Unable to attend—(will inform post-meeting via meeting notes)

Todd Forbes, Field Manager, Lakeview Resource Area and
Acting DM Northern California, Bureau of Land Management

Chad Karges, Malheur NWR, Refuge Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Cidney Bowman, Wildlife Passage Coordinator, Oregon Department of Transportation

E.Lynn Burkett, District Manager (DM), Lakeview, Bureau of Land Management

Facilitator

Levi Old, NWBR Synthesis Project Coordinator, Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative

Other Attendance

Tom Miewald, Landscape Ecologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Aaron Collins, Park Ranger/Recreation Planner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Important Decisions Made

There was no major decisions made during this call, however there were sessions where attendees provided valuable project input.

Meeting Purpose and Agenda

The purpose of this meeting was to update the Steering Committee on recent project news, ask for input about the February 15-16th, 2017 science symposium, and discuss a bird's eye view of the project's next six months.

Agenda

- NWBR Status Update (Levi) (Outreach progress, Science synthesis progress, Science Symposium planning)
- Input: Potential science symposium topics
- Input: Planning for our September 28, 2016-- in-person Steering Committee meeting

2017 Science Workshop Status Update and Steering Committee Input

- Levi is working to get a venue - either Lake County Fairgrounds building and/or Interagency Office Conference Room, Lakeview, Oregon
- Levi is looking into small amounts of funding from three sources that will cover expenses
- Invitations will be sent out within 3 weeks

Steering Committee input to focus Science Workshop around major themes identified through May 2016 Steering Committee meeting and outreach work

- Current state of knowledge and practice for habitat restoration and rehabilitation (aquatic and terrestrial - e.g. native seed and plantings) - J.K.
- Great Basin Sage-Steppe Conference themes as starting points/ideas for discussion - R.K.
 - State of science for cheat grass control
 - State of science for conifer expansion and management
 - Effects of livestock grazing on sage-grouse and habitats
 - Native plants and native seed
 - Wildfire management
 - Landscape scale conservation planning
 - Hydrology of sagebrush systems
- Climate change predictions for major issues
 - Current predictions of juniper expansion
 - Current predictions of hydrologic cycle (major driver for other issues – e.g. juniper expansion)
- General sagebrush biome - M.F.
 - Ecology
 - Threats
 - Management and Restoration
 - Techniques and practices
 - Planning at landscape scale for restoration and implementation
- Landscape Level Focus - R.W.
 - Dealing with issues such as medusahead at a large landscape scale (e.g. large treatment areas many hundreds of acres in size led by OSU extension in Ontario)
- Restoration - J.A.
 - Wet meadow, riparian and spring restoration
 - Climate change models
- Building and Expanding Partnerships - J.A.
 - Increasing monitoring capacity through volunteers and NGOs
- Invasive species - J.A.
 - Where and what methods for control/ eradication get us the biggest bang for the buck
 - Common best practices for control/ eradication
- Unintended effects of conifer removal - R.K.
 - Effects on wildlife
 - Common indicators everyone should be assessing to measure impacts
- Movement corridors/ connectivity – R.K.
 - Sage-grouse
 - Pronghorn
 - Pygmy rabbit
 - TNC modeling efforts
 - Other examples for application

- Current state of science related to management with fire – J.K.
 - Recent research relating to prescribed fire effects
 - Recent studies and management efforts for landscape scale fire breaks
- Listening session to assess science and research needs – R.K.
- Branding of workshop to target audience of researchers, practitioners/ managers

Outreach Update

Levi reported out on his contacts with stakeholders since the May Steering Committee meeting

- John O'Keefe (Oregon Cattleman's Assoc.)
 - Still need to contact Mr. Taylor in Plush and Mr. Marshall in Burns area
- Lake County Commission presentation and outing with Commissioner Winters
- Jason Kiesling, Burns-Paiute Tribal biologist and setting a meeting with Tribal Council members
- TNC – still keeping them in the loop
- Still trying to contact sporting groups in Nevada
- Meeting early next week with Sierra Club and Audubon in Nevada
- Oregon State Parks - interested in outcome of science workshop and science synthesis work
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (small grant funding for science symposium) and interested in synthesis products
- Oregon Inst. For Natural Resources - possible resource for spatial analysis if funding is available

Science Synthesis Update

Levi reported on recent work sessions with regional experts relating to key conservation targets identified for the Synthesis. Levi and Tom Miewald have received input and feedback from biologists with ODFW and BLM, fire managers with Burns and Lakeview BLM, Lake County Watershed Council and others.

There is potential value perceived in synthesizing:

- Aquatic/ Riparian Assessments and data to support project prioritization and grant funding proposals
 - USGS recently started a climate and groundwater/springs project
 - Elias Flores, Applegate Field Office BLM involved in a recent assessment project
- Mapping pre-settlement/colonial juniper stands
- Wildlife connectivity modeling and/or mapping
- Human dimensions work - possibly with assistance from Oregon Consensus – in conversation with Chad Karges about the process and looking for local economists to help with the process

Other News

- Project Boundary has been revised based on Steering Committee feedback, the maps are being updated at the moment
- Revised Synthesis project vision statement is forthcoming -- based on Steering Committee feedback
- **The Steering Committee provided the following objectives for the September 28, 2016 meeting (location TBD)**
 - Clearly define Synthesis goals
 - Establish a project timeline

- Develop project work plan
- Science workshop outline/ agenda
- Review of other landscape conservation projects products and their use in order to help define goals for this project