

***Managing Pinyon-Juniper Expansion in Sagebrush Ecosystems:
Next Step for the Bi-State***

AGENDA

February 25-26, 2015

CVIC Hall

1602 Esmeralda Avenue, Minden, NV 89423

Forum Purpose/Objectives:

To advance the next step of conservation for Bi-State sage-grouse populations and achieve prioritization and implementation of large-scale projects through recently committed funding and collaboration between federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations and private individuals. Specific objectives are:

- To better understand the cause and effect of pinyon-juniper expansion and pinyon-juniper treatments on sage-grouse habitat.
- To determine what can be learned from other large-scale pinyon-juniper projects on public and private lands in adjacent states.
- To review existing approaches for prioritizing and managing pinyon-juniper expansion and fine tune treatments outlined in the 2012 Bi-State Action Plan.
- To gain rancher, private interests, media and general public perspective's on the sage-grouse listing issue.

Wednesday, February 25

7:30 a.m. Coffee and pastries (provided)

8:00 a.m. Welcome, introductions, housekeeping, thank sponsors – *Steve Lewis, University of Nevada, Reno Cooperative Extension Educator*

8:10 a.m. Keynote – Setting the stage for collaboration: what's happening with Bi-State Distinct Population Segment/Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies/Fire and Invasives Assessment Team/Executive Oversight Committee, funding, listing timeline, etc., and what we hope to accomplish at this forum – *Tony Wasley, Nevada Department of Wildlife Director & Bill Dunkelberger, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Supervisor*

Session 1: The Current State of Knowledge

8:45 a.m. The Basics of Pinyon/Juniper Expansion: definition of true pinyon woodlands, how much expansion is occurring and where, what are the effects of expansion on fire ecology, hydrology, species composition, general wildlife habitat, soils, etc., with emphasis on Bi-State – *Rick Miller, Oregon State University Professor Emeritus of Range and Fire Ecology*

9:25 a.m. Conifer Encroachment: what does the transition mean to sage-grouse; perspectives from the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment and beyond – *Shawn Espinosa, Nevada Department of Wildlife Upland Game Staff Biologist; Pete Coates, U.S. Geological Survey Research Wildlife Biologist; Jeremy Maestas, Natural Resources Conservation Service Oregon State Biologist*

10:05 a.m. Break (refreshments provided)

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- 10:30 a.m. Current Understanding of Pinyon-Juniper Reduction Treatments: what types of treatments are being used; how is effectiveness related to ecological site type, tree phase and post-treatment management; what are the potential impacts – *Bruce Roundy, Brigham Young University Professor of Range Science & Lee Turner, Nevada Department of Wildlife Habitat Ecologist*
- 11:15 a.m. Considering Other Resource Values: cultural values, pine nut production, pinyon jay habitat, livestock grazing, recreation and aesthetics – *Darrel Cruz, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California Tribal Historic Preservation Officer; Elizabeth Ammon, Great Basin Bird Observatory Executive Director; Steven Fulstone, Lyon County Rancher*
- 11:50 a.m. Lunch (provided)

Session 2: Defining the Target & Linking It to Action

- 12:30 p.m. Incorporating resistance and resilience concepts to refine prioritizations and select treatment sites and types – *Jeanne Chambers, U.S. Forest Service Research Ecologist*
- 1:10 p.m. Conservation Planning Tool Model: running the habitat use models to prioritize future projects and management activities at landscape scales – *Pete Coates, U.S. Geological Survey Research Wildlife Biologist*
- 1:50 p.m. Bureau of Land Management Fire and Invasives Assessment Team Report: prioritizing treatment areas based on resilience and resistance concepts – *Jeanne Chambers, U.S. Forest Service Research Ecologist*
- 2:15 p.m. Using ecological site types and soil characteristics to characterize old growth and expansion woodlands – *Patti Novak, Natural Resources Conservation Service Nevada Rangeland Management Specialist*
- 2:40 p.m. Group Discussion
- 3:00 p.m. Break (refreshments provided)
- 3:30 p.m. Strategies from Other Western States: panel on large-scale collaborative approaches – *Moderator: Jeremy Maestas, Natural Resources Conservation Service Oregon State Biologist*
- Oregon: South Warner Juniper Removal Partnership Project – *Todd Forbes, Bureau of Land Management Lakeview (Oregon) Field Manager*
 - Idaho: Burley Landscape Sage-Grouse Habitat Restoration Project – *Elliot Traher, Natural Resources Conservation Service Idaho District Conservationist*
 - Group Discussion
- 5:00 p.m. Adjourn

Session 3: An Open Rancher & Public Conversation on Pinyon-Juniper Management

- 5:30 p.m. Reception (refreshments provided)
- Welcome, introductions, objective of the evening session and summary of what was covered in Sessions 1 and 2 – *Sherri Lisius, Bureau of Land Management Bishop (California) Wildlife Biologist & Mark Freese, Nevada Department of Wildlife Habitat Biologist*

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- Group Discussion/Panel: what is the role of private landowners, local governments, non-profits, and other non-agency stakeholders?
 - Programs and resources for private landowners – *Tom Moore, Natural Resources Conservation Service California State Biologist; Thad Heater, Natural Resources Conservation Service Nevada State Biologist; Susan Abele, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program Nevada State Coordinator*
 - Private industry concerns and tie-in with ongoing conservation – *Kevin Hostert, Praxis Optical Networks, Inc. Environment & Safety Director*
 - Examples of successful collaboration with private landowners and non-profits – *Katrina Krause, Natural Resources Conservation Service/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologist*
 - How might we work better together?
 - Discussion with audience (using microphone and questions on index cards)

8:30 p.m. Adjourn

Thursday, February 26

Session 4: Looking Toward the Future

7:30 a.m. Coffee and pastries (provided)

8:00 a.m. Welcome and debrief of Day 1 – *Steve Lewis, University of Nevada, Reno Cooperative Extension Educator*

8:10 a.m. Review of 2012 Bi-State Action Plan pinyon-juniper treatment completed and proposed project locations, treatments, funding and timelines – *Sherri Lisius, Bureau of Land Management Bishop (California) Wildlife Biologist*

8:40 a.m. Monitoring and Adaptive Management: how do we know if the treatments are working; what do we do if we're not getting the desired results? – *Lee Turner, Nevada Department of Wildlife Habitat Ecologist; Tim Griffiths, Natural Resources Conservation Service Sage Grouse Initiative National Coordinator*

9:15 a.m. Break (refreshments provided)

9:30 a.m. Facilitated Breakout Session – *Steve Lewis, University of Nevada, Reno Cooperative Extension Educator*

- Based on meeting discussions, what fine tuning should be made to the pinyon-juniper actions outlined in the 2012 Bi-State Action Plan?
- What important rancher/public contributions would improve the conifer encroachment approach, and how do we further leverage partnerships, shared resources, and additional collaboration?
- Group reports

10:45 a.m. The Future and Proactive Collaboration: where do we go from here? – *Steve Nelson, Bureau of Land Management Bishop (California) Field Office Manager*

11:00 a.m. Field Tour Preview: what treatments/responses are we going to see in the field, and how do these tie to the forum – *Katrina Krause, Natural Resources Conservation Service/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologist & Thad Heater, Natural Resources Conservation Service Nevada State Biologist*

11:30 a.m. Adjourn

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Session 5: Field Tour – Learning on the Land

- 11:30 a.m. Field Tour participants select a box lunch (provided at CVIC Hall).
- 11:45 a.m. Field Tour participants board bus (provided) at CVIC Hall.
- 12:00 p.m. Bus departs for Wellington.
- 12:40 p.m. Bus arrives at Rosie's Place parking lot, 2881 Highway 208 in Wellington (approximately 40 minutes southeast of Minden).
- 12:55 p.m. Bus departs Rosie's Place. Travel to Buckskin area to view projects on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) allotments. Tour through areas that have been recently treated with mastication/chainsaw and view Bison fire in the distance.
- 1:30 p.m. **Stop #1** – Stop along road to view an uncut area, showing declining vegetative understory, and portion of Bison Fire that reached this area. Discuss effects of pinyon-juniper/fire on the understory vegetation; Bison Fire behavior related to the pinyon-juniper; use of the Resilience and Resistance Work Sheet to evaluate post-fire or post-treatment recovery potential and the need for seeding.
- 2:30 p.m. **Stop #2** – Compare 2011, 2013, and 2014 mastication projects all adjacent to each other. Discuss noted differences in vegetation. View a fence showcasing sage-grouse fence markers. Discuss possible sage-grouse uses of habitat.
- 3:45 p.m. Depart for Rosie's Place to return field tour participants to Wellington, followed by the CVIC Hall in Minden.

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