



# Twin Falls District Resource Advisory Council



MEETING MINUTES  
9/10/2015

**Resource Advisory Council (RAC) members present:**

**FEB 05 2016**

***Category One – Commodity Interest***

- Richard Austin
- Mike Henslee
- Daniel Butler
- Jeffrey Williams
- James Wills

***Category Two – Non-Commodity Interest***

- Shauna Robinson
- Peggy Stanley
- LaMar Orton

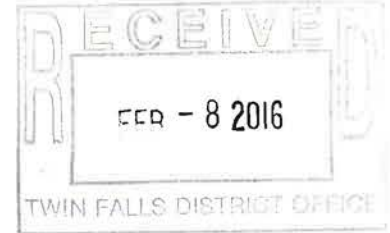
***Category Three – Public Interest***

- Jody Hawkins
- Tom Courtney
- Charles Howell
- Katie Shewmaker
- Hunter Osborne

**Quorum Present:**  Yes     No

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representatives present:**

Michael Courtney - District Manager  
 Heather Tiel-Nelson- Public Affairs Specialist  
 Elliot Traher, Jarbidge Field Manager  
 Codie Martin, Shoshone Field Manager  
 Ken Crane, Burley Field Manager  
 Sue Kennedy, Burley Field Office Administrative Assistant  
 Glen Burkhardt –Twin Falls District Fire Management Officer (acting)  
 Jon Beck – Idaho State Office Planning and Environmental Coordinator





**Public Attendees:**

Tetona Dunlap- The Voice/Times-News  
Julie Thomas – Sawtooth National Forest  
Jenni Blake – Sawtooth National Forest  
Kari Emond – Senator Risch’s Office  
Leana Carey – Progressive Ranch

*Note to readers: A copy of each handout listed in the text of, or at the end of these minutes, is on file with the official copy of the minutes in the BLM Twin Falls District Office. Persons desiring to view handouts should contact Sue Kennedy at (208) 677-6627, or by email at [skennedy@blm.gov](mailto:skennedy@blm.gov).*

*Copies of certified minutes are posted on the Idaho BLM website at:  
[http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/get\\_involved/resource\\_advisory/twin\\_falls\\_district.html](http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/get_involved/resource_advisory/twin_falls_district.html)*

**Item I: Welcome and Introductions**

Michael Courtney introduced Sue Kennedy who will provide administrative support for the committee.

*Public comment period opened at 9:15. There were members of the public present. Public comment period closed at 09:58 without comment.*

**Item II: University of Idaho Sage-Grouse and Spring Grazing study update – Ken Crane**

Ken gave an overview of the study stating there were nine study sites for spring grazing in sage-grouse habitat within the Burley Field Office, and the University of Idaho is also looking for additional sites.

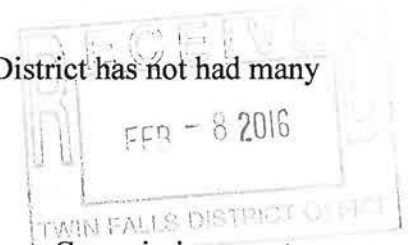
Burley Field Office has processed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Jim Sage area to put up fences so we can monitor uncontrollable factors during spring grazing within sage-grouse habitat. The size of the study areas is variable, but they are large areas. Idaho Department of Fish and Game and permittees are involved in the process.

Ken had a handout entitled, “Spring Grazing and Sage-Grouse 2015 Field Season Summary.” This study is important as there really isn’t data available indicating whether spring grazing affects sage-grouse and their brood-rearing habitat. It is known that the mortality rate for sage-grouse chicks before six weeks is high but after that they have a 90% survival rate.

**Item III: Gateway West Transmission Line Project update – Michael Courtney**

Michael gave an overview of the project stating in 2007, Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power Companies proposed a Transmission Line from Wyoming to western Idaho near the Oregon border for renewable energy in the Northwest grid. The BLM performed an

Environmental Impact Study (EIS) from 2007-2013 and the Twin Falls District has not had many changes for routing.



**Item IV: Life on the Range video – Heather Tiel-Nelson**

In June, Steve Steubner, a videographer with the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission spent a day with Twin Falls District staff, and drove approximately 700 miles shooting video footage within each of the three Twin Falls District field offices to highlight fuels and rehabilitation projects. The video produced highlighted Secretary Jewel’s fire prevention and rehabilitation strategy.

Mike Courtney added that the rehabilitation procedures are rapidly changing for the better and have recently gone to a 21 day Plan of Action after the fire.

**Item V: Sawtooth National Forest Christmas Tree Permit fee increase proposal – Jennifer Blake and Julie Thomas [See Handout 1]**

With an average of 5,000 Christmas tree tags sold every year, the Forest Service requested a fee increase recommendation from the Twin Falls District Recreation RAC, to increase the fee from \$5 to \$10 for a Christmas tree permit. All other Intermountain Region Forest Service offices currently charge \$10 per permit and this would align Sawtooth National Forest with the rest of the Intermountain Region. The additional funds would be added to the general fund and go toward providing visitor services.

A recommendation was made to approve the Christmas Tree Permit fee increase from \$5 to \$10. A verbal vote was taken and the recommendation passed.

**Item VI: 2015 Fire Season Overview – Glen Burkhardt**

Fire season isn’t over. Currently we have 11 trucks, 3 dozers, and aircraft in the District and a helicopter in Coeur d’Alene. The country is using Twin Falls as a staging area because fire condition warrant high level of fire preparedness. In contrast, Burley has only lost 15 acres of habitat while northern Idaho has reached a record in the amount of retardant ever used. The largest fire so far was 2,400 acres south of Shoshone.

**Item VII: Farewell to RAC members Katie Shewmaker, Dan Butler and Jeff Williams**

Heather Tiel-Nelson showed a video highlighting some of the recent photos for these members and presented them with plaques for their time serving on the RAC. The nomination applications are pending approval in Washington DC; we hope to hear this fall when the new nominations will be approved.

**Item VIII: Sage-grouse EIS Overview – Jon Beck**

There were 20 protest letters on the final EIS. The Washington office is finalizing the details of the EIS. There was a 30 day appeal process which ended on September 8.

The Sage Grouse plan amendment has been approved and is currently in 508 compliance checking. It will be signed the end of September and a copy will be sent to all District Offices.

When signed, it will specify how areas are to be protected, a ten year schedule of treatments and a data call to Field Offices for NEPA and projects. Permit renewal will be prioritized in sage-grouse habitat

**Item IX: Wild Horse Emergency Gather – Heather Tiel-Nelson**

Due to the range damage of the Soda Fire, there was an emergency wild horse gather. The goal was to gather 284 horses and 279 were captured. Twenty nine horses perished in the fire and eight more had to be euthanized from their injuries.

The horses from Sand Basin HMA were the hardest to catch and it took a couple days to capture a limited number of them. In the Hardtrigger HMA, 173 horses were gathered – these horses had the most visible burn injuries, primarily affecting the mares and their colts. Black Mountain HMA was only 1/3 burned, so the low Appropriate Management Level of horses (30), were left on the range. Of those, four mares were treated with PZP, which is a time release fertility control application.

The gathered horses were transported to the Boise Wild Horse Corrals where public observation was held that first week and nearly 200 visitors observed the horses during that time. The Boise Corrals will hold the horses that will return to the range when it recovers. Additionally, there will be horses available for adoption and the 2016 Extreme Mustang Makeover.

**Item X: Burley Field Office Update – Ken Crane [See handouts 2]**

Ken Crane, Burley Field Manager, provide the presentation for the Burley Field Office

The Supplemental Agreement to the Interagency Agreement for BLM to manage the Bureau of Reclamation lands within the American Falls Archaeological District has been finalized and signed.

The Burley Field Office is writing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address the issues at Cedar Fields. The draft EIS is still undergoing internal review and should be released to the public during fall/winter 2015.

The Burley Field Office has placed traffic counters on travel routes to gain data on use of the recreational area. Data collected by the counters will allow identification of numbers and more important periods of use. Additional steps have been taken to identify closed routes and discourage use of closed travel routes.

The proposed supplementary rules required to implement the closure to climbing activities were issued October 15, 2014, with a 60 day comment period. Three comments were received, but were not specific to Castle Rocks and did not warrant any changes the rules. The final

supplementary rules are have been reviewed by the state office and are at the Washington Office waiting final approval.

BLM has been working with the Idaho Parks and Recreation, National Park Service, and Tribes to address a number of non-compliance issues and ensure Treaty Rights are provided for by IDPR on the Smokey Mountain Campground.

The Milner Loop road paving project was very successful and popular. Use of the campground increased dramatically as demonstrated by receipts. Additionally, the typical patrons shifted as well, from some unsavory to a more family friendly environment. The Twin Falls District also provided support for the Burley Highway District's application to the Federal Land Access Program to pave the 1.5 miles of road that access the recreation area from the east. The Federal Land Access Program toured the site this summer to gain additional information to determine final funding decisions and it looks positive.

The Burley Field Office is also beginning the process to look at fee increases at the recreation area due to the improvements being made to the site.

Jim Sage Mountain Research - A power point update is being prepared but Ken brought a handout for Spring Grazing and Sage-Grouse 2015 Field Season Summary (See handout 3).

Berger - The EA has been internally reviewed and staff is addressing comments by the State Office.

Shoshone Basin Permits - Staff has been updating field data such as stream Proper Functioning Condition data, seep and springs, and will be refreshing Habitat Assessment Framework for sage-grouse nesting habitat in preparation for moving ahead with these renewals.

Walker Ranch (Geothermal) - The Burley Field Office is currently working with a contract developing and Environmental Assessment for 16 additional wells, as well as the Utilization Plan to build the infrastructure to connect the wells and the power plant. Chapters 1 and 2 have been drafted and are in the process of internal review. A decision is expected in the fall of 2015.

Raft River Ditch - The BLM is processing the application to maintain the ditch. An archaeological study on the historic ditch has been performed and it is being determined the best option for impacting some cultural values.

#### **Item XI: Jarbidge Field Office Update – Elliot Traher [See handouts 2]**

The NEPA Permit Renewal Team (NPR) and Jarbidge staff were integrated last fall to finish writing Group 1 (Devil Creek) RHAs. RHAs are projected to be in final draft form by mid-May. The integrated teams will transition to field work to gather data for writing Group 3 (Foothills). The additional assistance of integrated teams will help complete field work by late summer. Writing Group 2 (Inside Desert/Diamond A) RHAs will begin shortly after the completion of Group 3 data collection. Permittee meetings/review of RHA and determinations have not yet started. RHAs need to be in final draft form and reviewed by management prior to

presenting to permittees. Determinations will not be finalized until permittees have had an opportunity to review and provide comment. The present strategy is to prepare a single EIS for Groups 1-3 and an EA for Group 4. Depending on the issues identified during the assessments, the proposed alternatives carried forward for analysis, or other activities that may contribute to cumulative impacts, the level of analysis for Group 4 may change.

Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register on August 22, 2014, which started a 30-day protest period and a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review. There were 8 protest letters were received and the Protest response letters will be mailed to protesters one day before ROD is signed. Protest Resolution Report will be posted online the day the ROD is signed Governors' Consistency Review. There was no response was received from the Nevada Governor's Office however, Idaho Governor's Consistency Review Letter was received on March 31, 2015. The JFO and ISO currently working on responses.

On February 12, 2015 the ISO directed work on the Jarbidge ROD/RMP to resume. In a change from what was reported in June, the current objective is to complete and sign the Jarbidge ROD/Approved RMP in late July 2015, before the RODs are signed for the ID/SW Montana and NV/NE California Sage-grouse Amendments. Those plans would then amend the Jarbidge RMP, as the will other existing plans. The ROD was signed September 2, 2015.

The EA for Bruneau Canyon Overlook was completed in late March. The JFO will be preparing a FONSI and decision for the project and is identifying possible funding sources.

#### **Item XII: Shoshone Field Office Update – Codie Martin [See handouts 2]**

BLM has partnered with Trout Unlimited and Wood River Land Trust to conduct a geomorphic assessment on the Big Wood River which will lead to a better understanding of the river function, processes, and conditions for the 40 mile stretch of river. This assessment is currently in progress and is scheduled to be completed in October 2015. The current R&PP application is on hold until the study is completed and the information can be used as baseline information in the NEPA analysis.

BLM received an IBLA decision in our favor for the two remaining portion of the Dry Creek Trespass. Pensco Trust is now required to pay for damages associated with mineral removal and realty trespass in addition to the previous ARPA violation. BLM will soon be issuing a new Notice of Trespass to address the new mineral calculations portion of the IBLA decision that was remanded to BLM. As a result the bill is approximately \$11,000 more than the original calculations. Included in that notice will be requirements for them to provide a plan to remove and rehab the area. This will however allow for another appeal opportunity.

Idaho Conservation League has hired a seasonal stationed in Hailey, that will be conducting Lands with Wilderness Characteristics inventory in the Shoshone FO and possibly in the Burley FO. We have been sharing some of our GIS data already in addition to having a meeting with Jonathon Oppenheimer of ICL do discuss areas that are yet to be inventoried. According to policy the public can conduct these inventories and submit the information to the field office for use in making final determinations for Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.

TFD is working with partners like Idaho Fish and Game and other sportsman groups in an effort to reduce the amount of dumping and trigger trash that has increased in recent years. Special efforts will be made in the North Rim/Devils Corral area in addition to the public outreach.

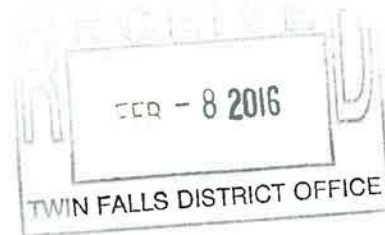
The Beaver Creek Closures expire on July 1, 2015. SFO has been working with the Camas County Road and Bridge to develop a plan for the Little Beaver Creek Road that remains washed out. The county is going to submit a proposal to reroute a small segment of road and construct two temporary water crossings which would allow access for a full sized vehicle. In addition to recreationist, permittees, mining claimants and BLM staff all need to be able to access the area by this summer. SFO is also starting work with contractors to start rebuilding sections of trail in the Wood River Valley that were damaged following the fire.

Shoshone FO is starting to gather information in anticipation of writing an EA for a seasonal closure to motorized vehicles in the Bennett Hills area. We have met with IDFG and they are extremely supportive of this effort and will be helping us delineate the area this would apply to. The primary reasons for this closure is to protect critical big game winter range, sage grouse winter and spring concentration areas, and reduce the amount of time and money required annually to repair all the roads damaged from use during wet conditions. I expect to get a lot of push back from horn hunters, as they are the primary user of that area that time of year.

The portion of the Little Beaver Allotment that did not burn is being opened back up this year. Permittees were required to sign an agreement identifying use areas and how they were going to closely monitor to keep livestock in the appropriate location. The remaining burned areas will continue to remain closed until we are meeting resource objectives. Past experience has shown that area takes longer than others to adequately recover and we expect the same in this case.

The BLM would like to like to make you aware of a delay in the Draft Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Plan Amendment and EIS. As a result of the Washington Office reviews, it was determined that the No Action Alternative that analyzes current grazing levels (actual use) as well as current permitted grazing levels is somewhat confusing. Because the actual use and permitted use levels are drastically different, Idaho BLM has decided to split the No Action Alternative into two separate Alternatives. The No Action Alternative will analyze current permitted AUM levels. The new alternative will analyze AUM levels at actual use. This fifth alternative will result in a delay in release of a draft Craters Plan Amendment/EIS. In addition, due to the upcoming Sub-Regional Sage Grouse EIS Final/ROD, a decision was made in Idaho to wait until that document is released in May 2015 to determine what changes will have to be made to the draft Craters Plan Amendment/EIS, as it will amend the current Craters Management Plan and may include substantial changes to land management objectives and allowable actions.

The NPS and members of Butte and Blaine County Economic Development Groups are trying to get legislation to change the name of the National Monument to a National Park. This will only affect the name of the original NPS Craters of the Moon National Monument. The BLM National Monument will continue to be managed the same.



**Other Business:**

Next meeting will be January 27, 2016 at the new Twin Falls District Office at 0900.

**Handouts Provided:**

- 1- Forest Service Fee Report (1 p)
- 2- Field Office Updates (4 pp)

Minutes certified by:

Mike Henslee chairman  
Mike Henslee, TFD RAC Chairman

1/22/16  
Date

Ben L. Amos (Acting)  
for Michael Courtney, TFD Manager

2/9/16  
Date

Minutes recorded by:  
Sue Kennedy, Burley Field Office Administrative Assistant





# Forest Service Fee Report

Site Name: Christmas Tree Permits  
Site Type: Permit

Action: Increased Fee  
Fee Type: Special Recreation Permit  
Forest Name: Sawtooth National Forest

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## Fee Information

Current Fee: \$5.00 per permit

Proposed Fee: \$10.00 per permit

## Price Justification:

All Forests within the Intermountain Region charge \$10.00 per tag with the exception of the Sawtooth and Salmon-Challis National Forests and the Bridgeport Ranger District on the Humbolt-Toiyabe National Forest. Currently there are two other Forests in the region that are going through the same fee proposal process to increase their Christmas tree permits: the Ashley National Forest in Utah (from \$10.00 to \$15.00), the Caribou-Targhee National Forest in Idaho (from \$10.00 to \$15.00) and the Bridgeport Ranger District on the Humbolt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada/California (\$5.00 to \$10.00).

## Background Information:

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) authorizes the Forests to charge a fee for visitors wanting to adventure into the backcountry and cut down a Christmas tree. These are issued as "Special Recreation Permits" and are issued as a means to ensure extra measures are required for natural and cultural resource protection, the health and safety of visitors, or to allocate capacity and/or disperse recreation use. To address these needs, specialized services and/or additional management actions are required.

Cutting down a Christmas tree has become a very popular activity, one that is a tradition for many families and friends throughout the United States. The Sawtooth National Forest sells on average 5,000 tags each year. With these funds collected the Forest provides visitors with district offices being opened beyond normal hours of operation, law enforcement, agreements with counties to provide funding for snow plowing of roads, and area maps.



# Forest Service Fee Report

Site Name: Christmas Tree Permits  
Site Type: Permit

Action: Increased Fee  
Fee Type: Special Recreation Permit  
Forest Name: Sawtooth National Forest

## Public Participation:

Posted Notice in Rec Area: February 23  
News Release: February 23, 2015  
Website Post: February 23, 2015

Federal Register Notice: February 25, 2015  
Local Elected Official: April, May, and June 2015  
Federal Legislator: February 9, 2015

### Public Participation Tasks:

- A Federal Register notice was published on February 25, 2015.
- Signs were posted at ranger district offices about the proposal and how to comment.
- A news release was distributed to local media outlets on February 23, 2015.
- The Forest and Regional Office's posted the proposal to their websites.
- The Forest briefed the county commissioners in April, May and June 2015.
- Federal legislators were briefed on February 9, 2015 to Simpson, Crapo, and Risch's offices.
- The proposal will be presented at the Twin Falls BLM Recreation RAC, upon approval.

### Public Participation Results:

- A news release was distributed to local media outlets on February 23 and May 30, 2015 and articles were published in the Times News, Mountain Express and other weekly newspapers. In addition KMVT Channel 11 did a story, Magic Valley Newspaper, My Informs, and local Channel 10 television station.
- The Forest briefed the Twin Falls County Commissioners on April 13, 2015; Cassia County Commissioners on May 18, 2015; Blaine County Commissioners on June 2, 2015; Camas County Commissioners on June 8, 2015; Elmore County Commissioners on June 8, 2015; and Custer County Commissioners on June 24, 2015. They had no issues with the fee increase, other than 2 Camas County Commissioners felt \$10 was reasonable.
- The Custer County Commissioner said this, "He understands that we can't operate without funding, but it seems like fees just keep on increasing." He thought the fee increase was a done deal, but I explained to him that the \$5 minimum stumpage fee is a done deal, but the SNF raising fees is not a done deal, it's just the fact that we will have no funds/limited funds to operate with. He understands that. He doesn't like to see the fees raised, but he gets it."
- Federal legislators were briefed on February 9, 2015 and no comments were received.
- The district received no public comments.

## **Burley Field Office Update for Twin Falls District BLM Resource Advisory Council**

**Date: Sept 1, 2015**

**Contact: Ken Crane, 208-677-6635; kcrane@blm.gov**

*The following information is designed to give you an update of projects or activities occurring within each Field Office of the Twin Falls District. Please review the information and bring any questions you may have to the next meeting. There will be time on the agenda to discuss those questions with the Field Managers.*

### **Recreation**

#### **Cedar Fields Climbing**

- The Supplemental Agreement to the Interagency Agreement for BLM to manage the Bureau of Reclamation lands within the American Falls Archaeological District has been finalized and signed.
- The Burley Field Office is writing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address the issues at Cedar Fields. The draft EIS is still undergoing internal review and should be released to the public during fall/winter 2015.
- The Burley Field Office has placed traffic counters on travel routes to gain data on use of the recreational area. Data collected by the counters will allow identification of numbers and more important periods of use. Additional steps have been taken to identify closed routes and discourage use of closed travel routes.

#### **Castle Rocks**

- The proposed supplementary rules required to implement the closure to climbing activities were issued October 15, 2014, with a 60 day comment period. Three comments were received, but were not specific to Castle Rocks and did not warrant any changes the rules. The final supplementary rules are have been reviewed by the state office and are at the Washington Office waiting final approval.
- BLM has been working with the Idaho Parks and Recreation, National Park Service, and Tribes to address a number of non-compliance issues and ensure Treaty Rights are provided for by IDPR on the Smokey Mnt Campground.

#### **Milner Historic Recreation Area**

- The Milner Loop road paving project was very successful and popular. Use of the campground increased dramatically as demonstrated by receipts. Additionally, the typical patrons shifted as well, from some unsavory to a more family friendly environment. The Twin Falls District also provided support for the Burley Highway District's application to the Federal Land Access Program to pave the 1.5 miles of road that access the recreation area from the east. The Federal Land Access Program toured the site this summer

to gain additional information to determine final funding decisions. Looks positive.

- The Burley Field Office is also beginning the process to look at fee increases at the recreation area due to the improvements being made to the site.

## **Livestock Grazing**

### **Jim Sage Mountain Research**

- A power point update is being prepared.

### **Berger**

- The EA has been internally reviewed and staff is addressing comments by the State Office.

### **Shoshone Basin Permits**

- Staff has been updating field data such as stream Proper Functioning Condition data, seep and springs, and will be refreshing Habitat Assessment Framework for sage-grouse nesting habitat in preparation for moving ahead with these renewals.

## **Minerals**

### **Walker Ranch (Geothermal)**

- The Burley Field Office is currently working with a contract developing and Environmental Assessment for 16 additional wells, as well as the Utilization Plan to build the infrastructure to connect the wells and the power plant. Chapters 1 and 2 have been drafted and are in the process of internal review. A decision is expected in the fall of 2015.

## **Realty**

### **Raft River Ditch**

- The BLM is processing the application to maintain the ditch. An archaeological study on the historic ditch has been performed and it is being determined the best option for impacting some cultural values.

# Spring Grazing and Sage-Grouse 2015 Field Season Summary

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We deployed 90 new VHF radio transmitters on 93 hens in spring 2015 (3 transmitters were re-deployed because of mortalities; Table 1). In addition, 48 radio-marked hens whose collars were deployed in past years were present at our sites in February 2015. We also deployed small VHF transmitters on 10 chicks and GPS transmitters on 2 hens and 9 adult males (Table 1). We located 107 nests during the 2015 breeding season (Table 2). We also conducted 37 spotlight brood surveys and 107 flush brood surveys to monitor brood and chick survival.

We intensively measured vegetation at 89 nest plots, 89 dependent random plots, and 280 independent random plots (5 May-8 July). We measured utilization by measuring grasses at the 280 independent random plots and through the landscape appearance method (20 July-6 August). We also deployed 15 utilization cages (1-m<sup>2</sup> grazing exclosures) to test the cage design.

We sampled insects from 14 June to 24 July. We deployed an array of 4 pitfall traps at each of 60 independent random plots, sampling each plot for a total of 3 weeks. We also conducted line-transect surveys to estimate the density of ant mounds at the 60 independent random plots and we collected ~240 sweep net samples.

## **Sage-grouse Demographic Parameters**

### *Brown's Bench Study Site*

We radio-marked 23 hens with VHF transmitters in 2015 and 30 radio-marked hens survived from 2014: 36 (68%) adults and 17 (32%) yearlings. We documented 9 mortalities and 1 hen dropped its collar (Table 1). We also deployed GPS transmitters on 2 hens and 9 males in 2015. We found 31 first nest attempts and 1 re-nest (17 of these nests were within one of our proposed experimental pastures). Apparent nest success for first nest attempts was 67% (Table 2). Nesting propensity was 90% ( $n = 29$ ) for hens on and near proposed experimental pastures (monitored every 2-3 days; Table 2). Overall hen success for hens on and near proposed experimental pastures was 71% ( $n = 28$ ; 1 unknown nest fate; Table 2). We also attached VHF transmitters to 8 chicks; 2 are confirmed dead and the other 6 were not detected with their biological mother and are either dead or were adopted by another hen.

### *Jim Sage Study Site*

We radio-marked 20 hens with VHF transmitters in 2015 and 18 radio-marked hens survived from 2013 and 2014: 27 (71%) adults and 11 (29%) yearlings. In February 2015, we detected 9 VHF-transmitted males that were radio-marked in 2013 and 2014; 1 of those males is dead. Five of 10 hens that received PTTs in 2013 or 2014 survived to 2015 (Table 1). We found 19 first nest attempts and no renests (11 of the 19 nests were within our proposed experimental pastures). Apparent nest success for the 19 first nest attempts was 39% (Table 2). Nesting propensity was 71% for the 17 hens that stayed on or near our proposed experimental pastures (monitored every 2-3 days; Table 2). Overall hen success for hens that stayed on or near our proposed experimental pastures was 31% ( $n = 16$ ; 1 unknown nest fate; Table 2). We attached VHF transmitters to 2 chicks; both are confirmed dead.

### *Sheep Creek Study Site*

We radio-marked 16 hens with VHF transmitters in 2015: 12 (75%) adults and 4 (25%) yearlings. We found 15 first nest attempts and 4 renests. Apparent nest success for first nest attempts was 33% (Table 2). Nesting propensity was 100% ( $n = 15$ ; we lost contact with 1 radio-marked hen early in the season and so we did not include her in our estimate of nesting propensity; Table 2). Overall hen success was 40% ( $n = 15$ ; Table 2).

### *Big Butte Study Site*

We radio-marked 34 hens with VHF transmitters in 2015: 26 (76%) adults and 8 (24%) yearlings. We documented 5 mortalities (Table 1). We found 30 first nest attempts and 7 renests. Apparent nest success for first nest attempts was 30% (Table 2). Nesting propensity was 94% (all birds monitored every 2-3 days; Table 2). Overall hen success was 41% ( $n = 32$ ; Table 2).

## **Jarbidge Field Office Update for Twin Falls District BLM Resource Advisory Council**

**Date: September 10, 2015**

**Contact: Elliot Traher, 208-736-2380, [etraher@blm.gov](mailto:etraher@blm.gov)**

*The following information is designed to give you an update of projects or activities occurring within each Field Office of the Twin Falls District. Please review the information and bring any questions you may have to the next meeting. There will be time on the agenda to discuss those questions with the Field Managers.*

### **Livestock Grazing Permit Renewal**

#### **Rangeland Health Assessments**

- The integrated teams will transition to field work to gather data for writing Group 3 (Foothills). The additional assistance of integrated teams will help complete field work by late summer.
- Writing Group 2 (Inside Desert/Diamond A) RHAs will begin shortly after the completion of Group 3 data collection.
- Permittee meetings/review of RHA and determinations have not yet started. RHAs need to be in final draft form and reviewed by management prior to presenting to permittees. Determinations will not be finalized until permittees have had an opportunity to review and provide comment.

#### **NEPA**

- The present strategy is to prepare a single EIS for Groups 1-3 and an EA for Group 4. Depending on the issues identified during the assessments, the proposed alternatives carried forward for analysis, or other activities that may contribute to cumulative impacts, the level of analysis for Group 4 may change.

### **Jarbidge RMP Update**

#### **ROD/Approved RMP**

- 07/20/2015: BLM Director Briefing requesting permission to sign the Jarbidge Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP)
- 09/09/2015: Tentative Signature Date for the ROD/Approved RMP, we will then
  - Publish the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register, and
  - Distribute the ROD/Approved RMP to the public
    - Internet via ePlanning
    - Hard Copies
    - CDs

### **Bruneau Canyon Overlook**

- The EA for Bruneau Canyon Overlook was completed in late March. The FONSI and decision for the project is completed and working on possible funding sources.

## **Shoshone Field Office Update for Twin Falls District BLM Resource Advisory Council**

**Date: September 10, 2015**

**Contacts: Codie Martin, Shoshone Field Manager, 208.732.7227, [cjmartin@blm.gov](mailto:cjmartin@blm.gov)**

**Holly Crawford, Craters of the Moon National Monument, 208.732.7288, [hcrawford@blm.gov](mailto:hcrawford@blm.gov)**

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### **Lands and Realty**

#### **Beaver Creek Road**

- Roadwork done while repairing segments of road in the Little Beaver and Big Beaver drainages, did not incorporate “Best Management Practices”, did not have proper permits with DEQ, IDWR, and Coops of Engineers, and extended beyond the existing ROW.
- As a result BLM is now working with all agencies involved to assess the current situation and develop mitigation measures to address the issues.
- BLM has contracted a survey of the roads and riparian areas to identify where encroachments occurred and to what extent.
- BLM will be writing an EA and/or CX to address impacts associated with what has happened and mitigation alternatives.
- On the ground tours have/will take place to identify mitigation needs.
- At this time BLM’s goal is to try to have all critical mitigation work completed by December 1, 2015 to minimize potential impacts associated with high flow events next spring.

### **Fire**

#### **Dietrich Butte Fire**

- On 7/3/15 the Dietrich Butte Fire burned a total of 2,436 acres.
- 1,218 of those acres will be treated with rehabilitation efforts in our Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan.

#### **900 Fire**

- On 8/14/15 the 900 Fire burned a total of 2,268 acres.
- 1,315 of those acres will be treated with rehabilitation efforts in our Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan.

### **Recreation**

#### **Devil’s Corral Motorized Closure**

- SFO recently placed signs and rock at the primary entrance to the Devil’s Corral Area along the North Rim in an effort to restrict motorized use that has been occurring in the area. This area was closed to motorized use in 1979, to protect sensitive resources. Since then BLM has made numerous efforts (fencing, gates, rock, etc) to restrict motorized use with varying results. Unfortunately previous efforts have slowly been removed by users thus causing an increase of use once again. BLM has received several calls from the public about the new signs and rock. The Shoshone Field Manager and Recreation Planner also recently met with Southern Idaho Off Road Association to explain our recent actions.



### **Snake River Canyon Jump**

- Omega Point recently came in and amended their application for the proposed canyon jump by the Hansen bridge. They are planning on conducting the jump in September/October. Their application has been amended to accommodate county regulations which caps the number of participants at 499.

### **Blue Fire SRP**

- SFO issued the Blue Fire SRP on 7/16/15 which allows them to conduct their youth therapy program on BLM administered lands North of Gooding in the Bennett Hills area.

## **Wildlife**

### **Yellow-billed Cuckoo ESA Consultation**

- SFO is conducting formal consultation on all projects associated with Yellow-billed cuckoo habitat along the Big Wood River. This requirement is adding significant time to applications and requests to conduct activities in this area. Specifically our ability to issue several SRP's, ROW's, and vegetation maintenance have been affected. SFO should eventually be able to conduct most activities once consultation has occurred, they are however taking longer to process as a result.