From: Lohoefener, Ren
To: Walsh, Noreen
Subject: Re: if you have a minute...
Date: Thursday, November 15, 2012 4:14:48 PM

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you saw the email from Richard?

> we support BLM restoring sage grouse habitat
> we want to help them anyway we can
> we are concerned that funding the effort at the level they propose will jeopardize FWS fire funding for years to come
> we are concerned that they may be reacting and not strategically putting resources to work where they may do the most good
> we could help set priorities where restoration might have the best probability of success
> we would welcome a high level conversation to better understand each other's concerns, as soon as possible, and find a win for everyone involved.

this is what I capture from your logic train

Sent from my iPad

On Nov 15, 2012, at 4:08 PM, "Walsh, Noreen" <noreen_walsh@fws.gov> wrote:

> If the logic works I can boil that down to 4 or 5 statements – was just looking for whether you were aware of anything salient that I am missing or any flaw in my logic? Thank you much.
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Lohoefener, Ren
> **Sent:** Thursday, November 15, 2012 4:05 PM
> **To:** Walsh, Noreen
> **Subject:** Re: if you have a minute...
>
> Very good, you will need to capture in 4 or 5 pointed statements to keep the collected attention.
>
> Totally agree we cant just say no. I think we should offer a sit down at the highest levels to discuss mutual concerns and find mutual solutions. This should be a win for all, esp. sage grouse habitat.
>
> happy to help any way I can
>
> rl
>
> Sent from my iPad
>
> On Nov 15, 2012, at 3:54 PM, "Walsh, Noreen" <noreen_walsh@fws.gov> wrote:
>
>> I forgot to say please, how rude

From: Lohoefener, Ren
Sent: Thursday, November 15, 2012 3:52 PM
To: Walsh, Noreen
Subject: Re: if you have a minute...

wilco

Sent from my iPad

On Nov 15, 2012, at 3:50 PM, "Walsh, Noreen" <noreen_walsh@fws.gov> wrote:

> …can you read through this outline and give me any feedback before the morning? Particularly whether you disagree with the recommendations or have a better idea. Many thanks,
> Noreen
>
> **In 2012, 2.5M ac (3% of preliminary priority habitat) and 0.8M ac (1%) of preliminary general habitat for sage-grouse burned on BLM lands.**
>
> **Question is whether to lift the cap so that BLM would receive additional Emergency Stabilization (ES) funds to address priority sage grouse habitat that burned in 2012.**
>
> **BLM needs an estimated $52M to address the FY12 fires:**
>
> 24.4M = already utilizing under FY13 ES Cap
> + 27.6M = addl need to address FY12 above cap
> 52M = total need to address FY12
>
> **The Service has concerns in 2 major categories about saying an unqualified yes to their request:**
>
> **Impacts to future fire budgets**
>
> <!--[if !supportLists]-->1. <!--[endif]--> Additional ES funds will come from Emergency Suppression account. Emergency Suppression funds are allocated to the bureaus on the basis of a 10 year

rolling average. If we exceed the cap, the 10 year average will increase and all the other parts of the pie will continue to get smaller and other bureaus are disproportionately impacted

<!--[if !supportLists]-->2. <!--[endif]-->In particular, we will receive less in Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR)

<!--[if !supportLists]-->a. <!--[endif]-->FWS fire program already experiencing reductions; real worry about additional losses and impacts to other suppression needs

<!--[if !supportLists]-->b. <!--[endif]-->In R6 we have a 16% decrease in fire funding this year compared to FY12. Anticipating not being able to pay salaries in 2014. We receive 50% from preparedness and 50% from HFR.

Likelihood of success - effectiveness– likelihood that they will actually successfully establish grass.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->1. <!--[endif]-->Whether the funds spent on ES are effective:

<!--[if !supportLists]-->a. <!--[endif]-->See Jeff's briefing paper: 55% prevent invasion of non-natives, 45% did not

<!--[if !supportLists]-->b. <!--[endif]-->Additional briefing paper suggests only 25% effective

<!--[if !supportLists]-->c. <!--[endif]-->"native" seed is from UT; not locally adapted

<!--[if !supportLists]-->d. <!--[endif]-->Timing of precip is a driver for success; predicting dry winter

<!--[if !supportLists]-->2. <!--[endif]-->Whether BLM is really prioritizing and utilizing the funds in the areas that are highest priority and highest likelihood of success:

<!--[if !supportLists]-->a. <!--[endif]-->They are prioritizing and allocating funds by state in proportion to PPH burned: UT 3%, CA15%, ID 21%, NV 21%, OR 40%

<!--[if !supportLists]-->b. <!--[endif]-->Within each state they are prioritizing sites by elevation and precipitation (primary drivers of successful seeding.)

<!--[if !supportLists]-->c. <!--[endif]-->Whether they could focus on the areas with high likelihood of success and also with no cheatgrass yet

established in the area.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->3. <!--[endif]-->Need for a comprehensive monitoring strategy to evaluate success and adapt in future

Also concerns about saying just saying "no."

Concerns about cheatgrass invasion perpetuating the threat to sage-grouse

Concerns about the partnership. Careful communication is imperative. We could *appear* to have called out a threat that will contribute highly to a need to list, and then told them to ignore it. If FWS as the expert in threats to the sage grouse does not believe this is the best way, or even a necessary way, to address the threat of wildfire/invasives, we need to be prepared to tell them what it is that we recommend they do instead.

A lack of clarity about our Service position on this issue will be interpreted as a lack of support to address this threat, may undermine our relationship with BLM on sage-grouse, and call into question our collective commitment to the conservation effort.

Recommendation:

<!--[if !supportLists]-->1. <!--[endif]--> Ask BLM (if they have not already) can they prioritize and focus to ensure greatest success with the ES funds? This would likely lead to a smaller project, smaller price tag, and a lesser need to exceed the cap

<!--[if !supportLists]-->2. <!--[endif]-->Because it is better to keep sagebrush from burning than try to restore it, don't let this treatment impact 2013 suppression efforts. Ask BLM if they can look to other sources of funds besides ES (because using ES will deplete or drain suppression account):

BLM BAR – 8.2M so far

BLM HFR – 66M -

Congress – a supplemental prior to the spring window for seeding

Richard – any FWS carryover we can offer?

<!--[if !supportLists]-->3. <!--[endif]-->Offer to work with BLM on a robust monitoring protocol – we need to learn from this expenditure in order to adapt for greater effectiveness in future. If they

have one, we're not aware.

Position of Interested Parties

NPS has not supported BLM's request to date – has expressed concern that BLM is not redirecting internal funds to support this priority (e.g., they could have made a stronger commitment with base land management funds)

WGA has petitioned Congress to support additional funding

SGTF continues to place a high priority on reducing the threat associated with wildfire and invasives

Noreen Walsh
Deputy Regional Director
Mountain-Prairie Region
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

303 236 7920