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| **From:** | Theresa Rabot |
| **To:** | Noreen Walsh; Richard Hannan |
| **Cc:** | Dawn Davis |
| **Subject:** | RE: if you have not started yet, here is a version with attachment 1 added |
| **Date:** | Tuesday, June 09, 2015 4:07:19 PM |
| **Attachments:** | 20150609_next steps fire and invter.docx |

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I made some changes, in the intro paragraph and the section on the conservation and restoration strategy  I didn't add an attachment 2 but can think more about that.  And I don't know what to add on the fuels allocation methodology, maybe jeff Rupert?

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**From:** Noreen Walsh [mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov]
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 09, 2015 2:29 PM
**To:** Theresa Rabot; Richard Hannan
**Subject:** if you have not started yet, here is a version with attachment 1 added

*Noreen Walsh*
*Regional Director*
*Mountain-Prairie Region*
*U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service*
*303 236 7920*

## Fire – Invasives: Moving Forward

Secretarial Order 3336 (SO), the Initial Report (March 9, 2015), and the resulting Final Report, An Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy (May 19, 2015) reduces the threat from fire and invasive weeds that previously existed. Between the SO, completion of short term action items the resulting final strategy, the, FIAT actions underway, and the Federal RMPs, there is a more robust infrastructure to deal with this threat than has previously existed. What will be most helpful in the short term is additional certainty that prioritizing actions, finding necessary funding, and effective implementation will occur. The Initial Report contained a number of actions to be completed within FY 15; its' imperative that the actions listed are completed and measures taken to evaluate their effectiveness, where appropriate. Doing so will establish a track record of implementation critical to the Service's evaluation. The Strategy took a longer view on restoration and recovery, and identified a list of actions critical to sage brush restoration. **The following are highest priority action items from the final report to consider for immediate additional assistance and emphasis:**

**Section 7 b vii action item 4 - Develop a process to coordinate with APHIS and EPA on registration and labeling for biological and chemical control agents for invasives:** Instead of just *developing a process* to coordinate with APHIS and EPA on this issue, we suggest immediate intervention to move the Battalion Pro Registration Package to EPA as quickly as possible and ask EPA to accelerate the registration process. See Attachment 1.

**Section 7 b iv action item 1: Develop a Conservation and Restoration Strategy –** This is a significant commitment. This overarching strategy that will be based on sound science is due in the 4th quarter 2016. This strategy will tie in a number of critical elements as we control fire and invasives and move towards an aggressive restoration strategy. A critical concern raised by the WAFW Invasives report was the disparate efforts of weed and invasives control. In addition, restoration of sage brush has been largely unsuccessful for a number of reasons, including seed source, lack of adequate seeds, and the inability to prioritize restoration across a large landscape. These concerns would largely be addressed in the strategy, and would provide the information necessary to strategically restore sage brush to conserve and expand sage grouse strongholds.

**Section 7 b vi action item 5: Commit to multi-year investments in restoration – develop comprehensive policies and consistent funding to implement the Conservation and Restoration Strategy:** This is due in the 4th quarter of 2016, commensurate with the Strategy. This item is highly important to

certainty that the threat of fire and invasives has been reduced. We suggest accelerating the commitment in two ways:

1. **Specify funding sources now:** If we had a commitment now that specified where the consistent funding would come from (in both FY16 and beyond), we would have a higher level of certainty that the strategy is likely to be implemented and effective. For example, $10M was committed for the first time this year to "resilient landscapes" and about 70% of it went to sage-steppe ecosystem projects. What can we expect in the future with certainty before and after the Strategy is finalized?
2. **Consider establishing a multi-party, cooperative Great Basin/Sage-Steppe Restoration Consortium to provide overall leadership and direction:** This "Restoration Consortium" need not be bricks and mortar, but instead a consortium of professionals working on science and management issues that will accomplish effective habitat management and restoration in a coordinated way across this landscape into the future. This entity would also monitor implementation of the Conservation and Restoration Strategy, ensuring that the strategy remains relevant. With additional staffing, the Great Basin and Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperatives could serve as the nucleus of a multi-disciplinary Restoration Office that involves state and federal land management experts as well as academia.

**Section 7 b iii action Item 8 – Use risk-based landscape-scale approaches to identify and facilitate investments in fuels treatment in the GB:** Due 4th quarter 2015. What, if anything, can be done to provide additional certainty that the risk based model to prioritize fuels treatment funding to bureaus and within bureaus will be completed and used by the due date? Also, we need to have clarity on what model will be used.

## Attachment 1. Targeted Recommendations to Accelerate Battalion Pro Bio-Control (ACK-55) EPA Registration Process

Recommendation

Immediate intervention to move the Battalion Pro registration package to EPA as quickly as possible and to request an accelerated EPA registration process.

Specific Actions

1. Policy-level engagement with USDA to highlight the urgency of this effort and direct staff to prioritize work to complete the necessary steps for registration.

2. Parallel engagement with EPA leadership to request expedited package review and registration.

3. As part of a commitment to an overall Conservation and Restoration Strategy, we have recommended the establishment of a Great Basin/Sage-Steppe Restoration Consortium to coordinate management and restoration issues. This Consortium could also coordinate multi-agency involvement in in Battalion Pro registration, NEPA (and other regulatory compliance as necessary), study design, application plans, interface with ongoing wildland fire restoration efforts, and other related functions. This group should be fully operational in advance of registration to ensure swift deployment of Battalion Pro.

4. Direct BLM to accelerate NEPA compliance process for use of Battalion Pro on federal lands (BLM, USFS, FWS) once registered. (Note: BLM is lead for the NEPA process but compliance should apply to all affected DOI and USDA lands in the range.)