From: Sitz, Angela
To: Shauna Ginger
Cc: Jeff Everett; Jeff Dillon; Paul Henson
Subject: Re: FW: HQT workplan and conceptual model
Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 2:33:10 PM

Agreed with Shauna, I think this will be a balancing act. I think there may be a way to incorporate some of the site scale indicators, but I hesitate to include them all, as they are very difficult to measure with any accuracy and/or repeat-ability. I would be happy to brainstorm with you Shauna on how to incorporate some of those indicators and how we might capture some of the other indicators as well. Angela

On Tue, Mar 17, 2015 at 9:18 AM, Shauna Ginger <shauna_ginger@fws.gov> wrote:

> FYI – OR BLM opinion on using site scale indicators for mitigation – more detail than CCA(A)s
>
> The level of detail needed at the site scale to measure quality of habitat is being handled in different ways in other state mitigation programs – it's not something FWS has really had a strong opinion about. While more detail is always more accurate, the increased resources needed to do this may hinder participation in these programs and make it difficult to compare with CCAAs, etc.
>
> Just a heads up – I think this will be a balancing act
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> Shauna Ginger
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> **From:** Frederick, Glenn [mailto:gfrederick@blm.gov]
> **Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2015 5:18 PM
> **To:** Sara O'Brien
> **Cc:** Angela Sitz; Bobby Cochran; Brenda Smith; Chad Boyd; Garth Fuller; Jacqueline B Cupples; Jamie Damon - OSU; Jay Kerby; Jessica Rubado; jsuther@blm.gov; Julia Babcock; June Reyes; Michael Schindel; Shauna Ginger; Theresa Burcsu; Tony Svejcar
> **Subject:** Re: HQT workplan and conceptual model
>
> With this conceptual model, I see a move away from describing habitat quality at the site scale (i.e., availability of protective cover and food within seasonal use areas) to describing habitat at the fine or mid-scale (availability of seasonal use areas and the connectivity within and between these areas). This distinction, between third and fourth order habitat

selection, is explained in Stiver et al (2010, volume II). For this HQT to work, seasonal habitats must be mapped and a grain size appropriate to the analyses must be identified. Generally, a 30-m pixel size is good for fine scale habitat descriptions using remote sensed data.

I support the fine scale indicators in this HQT, but I am disappointed at the lack of widely recognized site scale indicators. I understand the difficulty and resistance to measure shrub, forb, and grass cover, height, and composition. They're labor intensive to measure, and values vary spatially and temporally. Site scale data requires professional judgement to interpret, which some people are unwilling to grant public land managers. Nevertheless, site-scale indicators should not be swept aside in favor of a conceptual model. Habitat structural components are very closely tied to the vital rates that drive sage-grouse population growth (female survival, chick survival, nest success). Published work by Hagen et al (2007), Kirol et al. (2012), Taylor et al. (2012), and Doherty et al. (2014) demonstrate the structure of grasses and sagebrush and availability of preferred forbs in sagebrush communities are particularly important to sage-grouse occurrence and nest success. These components must be measured in the field at the appropriate time of year. Using an "ecologically based model" is fine to a point (e.g., in a CCA/CCAA), but they have been shown to effective in describing sage-grouse habitat quality (Doherty et al. 2011).

If there is one thing we can count on after BLM signs the ROD, the NEPA it completes for any project in sage-grouse habitat, particularly in priority/core, will be closely scrutinized. The BLM will be required to assess sage-grouse habitats at all scales, consistent with Stiver et al (2010). I suggest we make this a goal for Oregon's HQT, while keeping in mind there is some flexibility if we can provide strong and consistent rationale.

On Mon, Mar 9, 2015 at 2:49 PM, Sara O'Brien <obrien@willamettepartnership.org> wrote:

Hi folks,

Apologies for the radio silence after the last meeting. As planned, we've been working on a detailed draft workplan outlining what we think are the steps needed to get us to a draft sage-grouse HQT this summer, based on the results of our last few meetings. We've also been checking in with TNC and INR folks to make sure we fully understand the technical tasks needed to integrate the HQT with the sage-grouse decision support system.

Attached are a detailed draft workplan and conceptual model for the HQT. Since these are intended to reflect and elaborate on the results of our last meeting, they should look quite familiar.

I believe the last direction we received from the group was to move forward with development of a draft tool along these lines, tapping into individuals and small groups as

needed to complete specific tasks. **Could you please review the attached documents by Friday, March 20th**, and respond to the group with any edits or concerns? If significant issues arise, we can convene the group for a quick phone call, but I understand folks are dealing with a lot of deadlines right now, and I believe we have what we need to move forward if everyone is in agreement.

Thanks, and we look forward to coming back to you soon with some draft products!

Sara

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