From:	Abbott, Tyler
To:	Martinez, Astrid - NRCS, Casper, WY
Cc:	Sheley, Casey - NRCS, Casper, WY; Jensen, Brian - NRCS, Casper, WY; Leanne Correll; Pauline Hope; Rox Rogers; Angela Burgess; Mark Sattelberg
Subject:	GRSG CCAA/SGI Coordination
Date:	Tuesday, March 31, 2015 12:52:07 PM
Attachments:	CCAA NRCS PA Coordination_FWS_March 31 2015.pdf

Thank you Astrid!

As agreed during our March 10 meeting, attached please find a summary of NRCS technical assistance expectations as a Participating Agency in the context of the WY GSG CCAA.

It seems to me that it would be very worthwhile to have another discussion on this topic (even if only a conference call) once everyone has had a chance to review the attachment. I do have some concerns about Brian's direction as communicted in the message to Casey in the email you forwarded below. In particular, point #3 stating that the CCAA and SGI programs "don't necessarily overlap/complement" eachother. This statement is at odds with what we (FWS and NRCS) have been saying publically during our jointly attended workshops throughout Wyoming over the past year, as well as during discussions between FWS and NRCS in Denver (on March 5) and during our meeting in Casper (March 10).

It would be most helpful if both Brian and Casey could particpate in this discussion so that we can all come away from the meeting with the same understanding.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed or if you have any questions.

Thank you again, Tyler

-- Tyler Abbott, Deputy Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wyoming Ecological Services Field Office
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Cheyenne, WY 82009
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tyler_abbott@fws.gov

On Fri, Mar 27, 2015 at 7:09 PM, Martinez, Astrid - NRCS, Casper, WY <Astrid.Martinez@wy.usda.gov> wrote:

> Tyler
>
> Here it is the guidance provided by Brian after our meeting. Casey and Brian are on leave next week but if needed Casey and I can visit with you. Just let us know.
>
> Thanks
>
> Begin forwarded message:

From: "Jensen, Brian M - NRCS, Casper, WY" <Brian.M.Jensen@wy.usda.gov>
Date: March 23, 2015 at 9:39:17 PM MDT
To: "Allen, Blaise - NRCS, Powell, WY" <Blaise.Allen@wy.usda.gov>, "Elkins, Brandon - NRCS, Gillette, WY" <Brandon.Elkins@wy.usda.gov>
Subject: Fwd: CCAA/CCA FO Involvement

Blaise and Brandon,
Here's the basic info on ccaa plan development that Casey presented last week. Let me know if you have questions.
Brian

Sent From my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** "Jensen, Brian M - NRCS, Casper, WY" <Brian.M.Jensen@wy.usda.gov>
> **Date:** March 17, 2015 at 9:37:42 AM MDT
> **To:** "Sheley, Casey - NRCS, Casper, WY" <casey.sheley@wy.usda.gov>
> **Subject: CCAA/CCA FO Involvement**
>
> Casey,
>
> My recent email regarding tomorrow's CCAA/CCA update has generated several phone calls already. Would it be possible for you to give the field a little guidance on their involvement during Mary's program meeting on Thursday? I'd do it, but I'll be at the SGIT meeting.
>
> I was basically thinking the message you and I discussed Friday:
>
> 1. If they want us to be the lead agency, the plan will be written to our standard and fall into our normal prioritization schedule (contract work first, TA as we have time), which is up to the individual DC to determine. However, if the DC is getting a lot of requests they don't think they'll be able to get to, they need to be coordinating with their AC/SO. If the CCAA applicant is a past/current contract holder, we can provide that info to USFWS following normal PII

procedures. In most cases, what we have collected in the past will be more than enough for what the CCAA requires.

2. If we aren't the lead agency on the plan, we can provide some basic TA assistance (e.g. id plants, recommend seed mix, etc). But again, this should fall in line with the basic prioritization mentioned above. Be clear that a plan that meets CCAA criteria may not necessarily meet SGI criteria. If an individual wants moved to the top of our pile, they should consider signing up…

3. During the CCAA development, we agreed to help as our resources allow. But CCAAs are a USFWS product/program that don't necessarily overlap/complement our programs, so don't jeopardize our mission and priorities to do their work.

4. Other?

Brian

NRCS PARTICIPATING AGENCY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION
For
GREATER SAGE-GROUSE UMBRELLA CCAA FOR WYOMING RANCH MANAGEMENT
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, March 31, 2015

During the CCAA/SGI Coordination meeting between U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Casper on March 10, 2015, FWS committed to providing language regarding expectations for NRCS as a Participating Agency (PA) for the Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Umbrella CCAA for Wyoming Ranch Management. Provided below is language taken directly out of the final, signed (November 8, 2013) CCAA currently under implementation:

1.4 CCAA APPLICATION PROCESS (p.17)
The appendices in this document provide specific information and necessary application forms for an individual CCAA and the section 10(a)(1)(A) permit. The following steps (described in more detail in Appendix A) summarize the process:

1. Contact the FWS Field Office in Cheyenne. The FWS will provide landowners with a pre-application screen (Appendix B) to complete. The pre-application screen includes the information necessary to initiate project review (e.g., landowner name; contact information; legal description of property location; identification of structures, fences, and pastures; and description of land use and management).

2. The FWS will contact the appropriate PAs to assist with review of the individual CCAA pre-application screen.

3. The FWS and other PAs will gather maps of property boundaries (based on the legal description provided by the landowner), soil maps, ecological site information, existing shrub cover, known leks, and topographical features. In consultation with the FWS and other PAs, landowners will determine if the property warrants further consideration for inclusion under this umbrella CCAA.

4. An EOS permit application must be completed and submitted by the landowner. The application form is available online at http://www.fws.gov/forms/3-200-54.pdf. The permit application must include the draft individual CCAA. Landowners will complete their individual CCAA in cooperation with PAs (e.g., identify current habitat conditions, threats for all lands and land use practices, CMs to be implemented and potential monitoring sites). (Appendix C). The application must include a $50 application fee.

1.6 DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL CCAAs (p.18)
The following steps describe how to develop individual CCAAs:

1. Landowner will complete Information Screen (Appendix B).

2. Landowners and PAs will select appropriate CMs from the list provided in the umbrella CCAA for inclusion in each individual CCAA application (Appendix C). Individual CCAA applications will be consistent with the threats and CMs identified in the umbrella CCAA and will describe specific CMs that will be (or are currently) implemented on enrolled lands. The selected CMs will conserve, restore, or enhance habitat for the sage-grouse, as well as reduce unfavorable impacts to the species arising from the management and use of these lands.

3. Before submitting the application for an individual CCAA to the FWS, the landowner should conduct a risk analysis and cost/benefit evaluation of potential costs and ranch commitments resulting from this CCAA process.

4. The landowner will finalize the individual CCAA and EOS permit application, and submit them to the FWS for review.

5. The FWS will review individual CCAA and EOS permit applications. Under the umbrella CCAA and relevant regulations and policy, if CCAA and permit issuance criteria are met, the Regional Office (Region 6) will approve the individual CCAAs and issue individual ESA section 10(a)(1)(A) EOS permits to enrolled landowners within the State of Wyoming. The EOS permit will become effective if the species is listed, which is when ESA take prohibitions for the species become effective.

6. Following FWS approval of an individual CCAA, if the landowner does not have an adequate conservation management plan already in place, the landowner will be expected to develop a site-specific conservation plan with assistance from PAs or other qualified service providers (e.g., consultant). The landowner will have 12 months from the signing of the individual CCAA to complete a sage-grouse conservation plan. If an adequate conservation plan is not completed within 12 months, the FWS and PAs will work with the landowner to complete a plan. However, if an adequate plan has not been completed within 18 months of signature of the CCAA, FWS reserves the right to suspend or revoke the CCAA and EOS permit.

7. PAs will establish field monitoring sites and record initial values. The landowners (or their designee) will implement a compliance and biological monitoring program within one year of enrollment.

5.4 NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE AND CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (p.37)

At the request of landowners and as resources allow, the NRCS and local Conservation Districts agree to provide the following technical assistance to landowners, FWS, and other PAs [Participating Agencies] *to assist in implementation of this CCAA.*

1. Assist [in] implementation of grazing management or conservation plans where they exist.
2. Develop grazing management or conservation plans where they do not exist.
3. Revise grazing management or conservation plans when needed.
4. Initiate or revise a range monitoring program.
5. Provide resource and ranch information to the FWS and other PAs.
6. Complete CCAA enrollment documentation, including any ranch and resource condition inventories or current and proposed grazing management plans. Select CMs compatible with the landowners' operations and the long-term goal of removing or reducing threats to the sage-grouse.

The language in the Umbrella CCAA is explicit and clear. Consequently, FWS provides only clarification regarding expectations as implementation of the CCAAs continues:

(a) FWS will be the lead agency for all CCAAs and, when NRCS is selected to be a PA by the CCAA participant, NRCS will work with the landowner and the FWS in accordance with the CCAA guidance for PAs. While general guidance and expectations of NRCS as a PA are defined within the CCAA, it may be appropriate for NRCS and the CCAA participant to, cooperatively, modify details based on the needs of the CCAA participant;

(b) FWS will be the lead agency for all CCAA Conservation Plans and will use the *USFWS Greater Sage-Grouse CCAA for Wyoming Ranch Management Individual CCAA Conservation Plan* template (Template; dated December 1, 2014). If NRCS is the requested PA by the CCAA participant, then the expectation for technical assistance provided by NRCS will be that which is necessary to complete this Template;

(c) If an NRCS Conservation Plan already has been completed for a CCAA participant, details of that plan may be used to complete the CCAA Conservation Plan (following the FWS CCAA Conservation Plan Template) rather than starting from scratch;

(d) If a CCAA participant also chooses to participate in SGI and will need to develop an NRCS Conservation Plan, then it may be appropriate for NRCS to take the lead for the NRCS Conservation Plan that would meet the NRCS 528 policy standards. Once an NRCS Conservation Plan has been developed, details of that plan may be used to complete the CCAA Conservation Plan following the FWS CCAA Conservation Plan Template).