From: Heather Johnson
To: Doherty, Kevin
Cc: Matt Kales; Noreen Walsh; Michael Thabault; Theresa Rabot; Mary Grim; Jesse DElia; Dawn Davis; Pat Deibert; Lief Wiechman; Angela Burgess; Nicole Alt; Will Meeks; Paul Henson; Kathy Hollar; Jeff Everett; Kate Norman; Trina Vigil; Jennifer Sturdivant
Subject: Re: GRSG: Summary of meeting w/NRCS re: SGI coordination issues
Date: Saturday, March 07, 2015 10:07:24 AM

Nice job to the whole team!!! What an awesome group! I think we had all the right people there and really made some great progress on several issues! Congrats everyone!!!!

Heather

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 6, 2015, at 2:58 PM, Doherty, Kevin <kevin_doherty@fws.gov> wrote:

> Hi all,
>
> I meet with the the NRCS folks (Dave, Jeremy, and Tim) yesterday afternoon and we have a path forward. I just followed up with Pat, Jessie, and Lief and they are on board as well.
>
> -The NRCS is going to provide the conifer treatment data in the format of Jessie's recommendation letter. This will allow us to create spatial maps on the locations of NRCS conifer treatments and visually assess how they relate to our abundance and distribution models.
>
> -Within Oregon, we will work with NRCS to provide a full worked example that will quantitatively link to our distribution modeling. One of Dave Naugle's students will actually crunch the numbers. I will work with him and provide our spatial models and ensure the work aligns with our question. The high resolution conifer mapping will not be completed in time for Nevada, so we cannot run the same resolution of analyses across the entire great basin regardless.
>
> Have a great weekend!
>
> Kevin
>
> On Fri, Mar 6, 2015 at 1:21 PM, Matt Kales <matt_kales@fws.gov> wrote:
>
> > Noreen,
> >
> > A brief summary of our meeting with NRCS yesterday to discuss SGI coordination follows. It was a full meeting involving lots of folks far smarter than me so those folks will kindly add anything I missed here:

- The meeting was productive and collegial. All involved came to the table ready to contribute and resolve the primary issues (spatial data sharing and CCAA-SGI coordination).

- FWS representation included the folks copied here. NRCS representation included national and regional leadership, as well state conservationists, state biologists, and other program and technical staff. IWJV and local S&WCD staff also participated.

- NRCS presented a recap of their roll up narrative of SGI accomplishments to date and future commitments. We advised NRCS we'd like them to present to the FWS GrSG FMT in the near future so all our PLs and staff can better understand the evolution of SGI and where they are headed so we can better integrate our efforts for private lands conservation in GrSG range.

- We were able to quickly agree on the following re: spatial data:

    - Thanks to ongoing efforts involving Lief, Jesse, Jim Lindstrom, NRCS staff and others, we are able to access and use NRCS' SGI conservation easement data, which leaves only conifer data at issue.

    - We agreed any solution to the conifer data access issue must balance (a) Farm Bill S1619 compliance with (b) adequate spatial scale to support a robust analysis for our status review and (c) timely delivery.

    - We discussed various technical approaches to achieve the above outcome and tasked a small team (Kevin, Jesse and Lief for FWS; Tim, Dave and Jeremy for NRCS) to line out details. That team met during a break and after the meeting. All signs point to a swift and satisfactory resolution of this issue that will allow us to fully access and utilize NRCS' conifer data in our status review without compromising landowner PII. We'll circle back soon with any updates but at this time it appears thanks to the above folks' efforts we have a solution in hand and will implement same inside of 2 weeks.

- We then moved into a discussion of the CCAA-SGI interface and associated issues, namely predictability and assurances; standards for each program; and, communications. Many thanks to Angela for leading that conversation for FWS and for Paul's input re: his/team's experience in Oregon. Much of the conversation on these issues focused on communications and, happily, we were able to fairly quickly clarify and reach agreement on the following items:

    - NRCS and FWS will continue to use as an umbrella communications piece the existing joint fact sheet.

    - NLT the next SGTF meeting (3/30-31), we will complete another, supplemental fact sheet that (a) contains clarifying language about the relationship between predictability and assurances and what that actually means in terms of coverage and commitments for participating landowners; and, (b) a side-by-side comparison of CCAAs and SGI that identifies differences and similarities between the two programs. This product will help inform both internal communications on how the two programs interface and also help dispel some of the confusion among landowners and other stakeholders re: how these tools work and for whom/where they are best-suited. NRCS accepted our draft clarifying language without any edits and their WLW coordinator will work with Angela and others on our team to revise the comparison product. Our ARDs will seek RD review of this product in the near future.

    - Once we have the above products in hand, both bureaus will use various opportunities (for us, FMT calls, future private lands practitioners workshops, etc.) to communicate to all parts of our organizations the expectation that all personnel will use this information to communicate about CCAAs and SGI in a consistent (and constructive) manner and help guide private landowners as they consider the right tool for the job. For some, it will be CCAAs; for others, SGI. For others still: both. PFW PLAs factor in there, too. The idea is for the federal government to promote as one a "menu" of options from which willing landowners can choose and never say "no" to an interested landowner but instead help him/her navigate that menu based on their particular circumstances, which may range from ecological conditions and stocking rates to whether they are seeking financial assistance.

    - Lastly, in recognition that some state- and/or site-

specific CCAAs may require a finer grain of detail when it comes to communicating some of the these issues, we agreed that field staff working on CCAAs will be responsible for developing any step-down communications (internal/external) to address those details but that any step-down communications must be consistent with the umbrella products described above.

- The one area we agreed required further conversation involved operational questions re: the various roles/responsibilities for each bureau (and other partners) in delivering future CCAAs and SGI. Much of this conversation centered on the recently-completed Wyoming CCAA and responsibility (and capacity) for follow-on grazing management plans and how that responsibility relates to different rangeland management standards associated with the two different programs. Tyler and Pat are in good, regular communication with state NRCS leadership on these and other issues and are meeting early next week to follow up. Similarly, we discussed looking at the recent Oregon experience and how we can learn from that as we build new CCAAs from the ground-up.

- We concluded by agreeing to continue to communicate more regularly and not wait until we have critical issues to resolve. NRCS expressed their appreciation for our team and FWS' overall GrSG conservation efforts, and we theirs. Mention was made of taking the lessons learned in our GrSG partnership and employing them in other landscapes where NRCS and FWS are developing partnerships to conserve at-risk species on private lands.

Matt Kales, Senior Advisor for Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation

Office of the Regional Director

US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region

Office: (303) 236-4576

Mobile: (720) 234-0257

--

Kevin Doherty, PhD
Spatial Ecologist
USFWS Region 6 --Science Applications
134 Union Blvd, Lakewood, CO 80228
Phone: (303) 921-0524
Email: kevin_doherty@fws.gov