From: pat_deibert@fws.gov
To: Larry_Crist@fws.gov
Subject: Re: Fw: Utah - HQ report - 9.19.12
Date: Wednesday, September 19, 2012 5:13:55 PM

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good job Larry!

Pat Deibert
National Sage-grouse Coordinator
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307-772-2374, ext. 226

got leks?

Larry Crist/R6/FWS/DOI

Larry Crist/R6/FWS/DOI
09/19/2012 04:53 PM

To Pat Deibert/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS
cc
Subject Fw: Utah - HQ report - 9.19.12

Pat,

See below but in a nutshell all that came out of my meeting was a request for another meeting. We did discuss that BLM could move forward if the BLM wanted to ignore our recommendations.

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----- Forwarded by Larry Crist/R6/FWS/DOI on 09/19/2012 04:25 PM -----

Larry Crist/R6/FWS/DOI
09/19/2012 04:25 PM

To Kate Miyamoto/R6/FWS/DOI
cc Michael Thabault/R6/FWS/DOI@FWS, Julie Lyke/R6/FWS/DOI
Subject Utah - HQ report - 9.19.12

Kate,

For this week I've only updated the Sigurd to Red Butte Transmission Line Project base on a

meeting with BLM State Director today 9.19.12 Note that I left last weeks entry on the Project in to provide the background and context for the update

Rocky Mountain Power Sigurd to Red Butte Transmission Line Project in central Utah

9.13.12

The BLM is the lead agency on this proposal to construct and operate a 345-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Project which includes the single-circuit, alternating-current, overhead transmission line, ancillary facilities, and expansion of the existing Sigurd Substation. The Utah Ecological Services Field Office (UFO) has participated in the analysis of potential project impacts to the Bald Hills greater sage-grouse population in Iron County, Utah and has recommended complete avoidance of occupied habitat. This population has a risk ranking of C2 (at-risk) as described in the recently published Sage-grouse Conservation Objectives Draft Report (USFWS 2012). The BLM preferred alternative route for the transmission line crosses 11 miles of occupied brood-rearing and wintering habitat for the Bald Hills population, 5 miles of which is within 4 miles of the Mud Springs lek. The UFO is currently reviewing and commenting on a proposed compensatory mitigation plan developed by Rocky Mountain Power for the BLM preferred alternative. Although BLM will require appropriate seasonal restrictions to avoid disturbance to wintering, lekking, and nesting birds, in discussions between the BLM field office and the UFO no agreement has been reached on how to compensate for habitat loss and fragmentation, the presence of tall structures and new perching opportunities for avian predators. The Utah Field Office has elevated its concerns to BLM State Office and is in discussions on how BLM will proceed under NEPA and BLM IM No. 2012-043 (12/27/2011). For further information contact Amy Defreese, Ecologist or Larry Crist, Field Supervisor

9.19.12

Larry Crist, Field Supervisor, Utah Ecological Services Field Office (UFO) met with Juan Palma, BLM State Director and Mike Styler, Director, Utah Division of Natural Resources on 9/19/12 to discuss issues that have arisen on the Sigurd to Red Butte Transmission Line Project. Concerns were raised by the BLM over FWS proposed mitigation ratios that ranged from 6-10:1 or requiring up front mitigation at a 4:1 ratio. BLM requested that the

FWS and UDWR biologists meet one additional time to determine if a mitigation package acceptable to all parties can be developed. Concerns on both sides revolved in large part around the possible precedent setting nature of mitigation ratios whether they are in the FWS proposed 4 -10:1 range or the BLM proposed 1-4:1 range. BLM was also not receptive to the idea of mitigating for temporal loss of habitat. If no resolution can be reached it is possible that BLM may choose to move forward without accepting and implementing FWS recommendations. Due to the ongoing BLM planning process a final decision is expected by October 12. Additional items discussed included possible mitigation banking for sage grouse and status of the state management plan.

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