From: Carlson, John
To: Berglund, Jeff
Cc: Catherine Wightman (cwightman@mt.gov); jlchaffi@blm.gov; jthompso@blm.gov; ramiller@blm.gov; thanley@blm.gov; Brooks, Sandra S; Kimberly Prill; Kelly Bockting
Subject: Re: Management zone boundaries at the local scale
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2013 4:05:02 PM

Jeff,
I think given Catherine's earlier response and thinking this over a bit, what I was trying to do was make the BLM effort to assess impacts at the MZ level more meaningful for our planning area boundaries. I feel that Catherine's response is correct - the management zones are what they are at this point and trying to make them fit BLM's planning process isn't the best approach - even though I still have a hard time justifying the inclusion of the Shields River population into MZ 4 despite the conclusion of Connelly et al. 2004 (which included this area in Floristic Province 4 (MZ 2)). I am not sure when in was moved to MZ 4 (Floristic Province 3) (Figure 1.5 in Connelly).
Anyway, I think that this conversation provides me with more justification for a MZ level report of effects rather than trying to fit this into NEPA process cumulative effects for our plans and I don't think it requires any more input on your end. Thanks Catherine for pulling me back to reality! Let me know if you have any comments etc. J

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On Wed, Mar 13, 2013 at 2:24 PM, Berglund, Jeff <jeff_berglund@fws.gov> wrote:

> Hi John. Before I pass this on for thoughts - at the meeting last week, weren't you folks talking about potentially combining the Montana portion of MZ-2 with the MZ-1 analysis (Billings RMP)? If so, does that mean you're now considering combining that Montana portion of MZ-2 and the areas described below in MZ-4 with the MZ-1 analysis, or am I not understanding what you're considering correctly? Thanks,
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> Jeff
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> On Wed, Mar 13, 2013 at 12:47 PM, Carlson, John <jccarlso@blm.gov> wrote:
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>> Hey Jeff and Catherine,
>> I would like to solicit some advice/guidance/feedback from you and your agencies as we struggle through this management zone level effects documentation effort.
>> Here is my first request.
>> Attached is a map that depicts our MT sage-grouse distribution (general habitat) with the boundary between MZ 1 and MZ4. The particular portion in question is the big northern loop of MZ4 that takes in the distribution in the Shields River and areas north of that (in general the area bounded by the red circle #3). This particular portion of the distribution

appears to be problematic in the delineation of the management zones since I have found other versions that have included this portion in MZ 2 as well. From a biological/ecological view this population still appears to not be assigned to the most logical MZ given the contiguous distribution of birds from MZ 1 into this area from the south and east and the gap in distribution with the rest of MZ 4 to which it is currently assigned. This is now coming up as an issue for us as well at how to document effects at the MZ level and which planning effort will be using this distribution in their analysis which is an artifact of your planning area boundaries in relation to this depiction of population affinities as defined by these MZ boundaries.

Catherine, I suspect the FWP had the most influence in these delineations since it is a WAFWA product, so if you would find out what the thought process was to include this area in MZ 4 that would help us chart a course to deal with this. I would like to propose that we merge that loop, including the areas circled and labeled as 2 and 3 on this map into MZ 1 for our MZ effects documentation if you both concur and we will provide a narrative justification for that decision. Thoughts?

Thanks - John

PS. as a side note - Catherine, do you happen to have any idea on the status of sage-grouse in the area under questions. I am under the impression the area no longer has a population of sage-grouse due to the conversion of much of the habitat along the Shields to irrigated cropland. Are there any active leks know in the area any more?

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