From: Amy Defreese
To: Joe Helfrich; Dustin Schaible; Rhett Boswell; Bill James; Carmen Bailey; JASON ROBINSON; Nicole Frey; Lisa Church; Clint Wirick; Melissa Burns; Nile Sorenson; Laura Romin; Susan White; Ingrid Campbell
Cc: Betsy Herrmann
Subject: RE: Sage Grouse Report
Date: Wednesday, May 01, 2013 11:26:46 AM

Hi Joe,
I didn't have as much time to review the progress report as I would have liked, but here are some comments:

1) In general, it would be really helpful if the authors could provide some context to the report. They could either refer the reader to a document that outlines the avoidance/minimization/mitigation requirements or include them in the document for the reader's reference. It would also be useful to list the goals/objectives of the mitigation plan and then document where the Mine is in reaching those goals/objectives. As it is currently written, it is hard to make this determination from the information provided and how it is presented.
2) For context, it would be really helpful if the authors would include the boundaries of DWR greater sage-grouse occupied habitat types, and the point location of the Sink Valley and Hoyt Ranch leks in the maps.
3) There is a statement in the progress report on page 5 that "Based on these surveys, it can be assumed that Fords Pasture supports a population during at least some portion of the year and is subsequently the southern-most population of the species". I'd like to hear Rhett Boswell and Nicki Frey's thoughts on whether this determination can be made based on one year of observations. If not, I'd suggest leaving the observation in the document, but taking out the conclusion that the extent of the species population/range has changed in the last few years.
4) On page 10 (last paragraph), I read that mining activities including large equipment activity, was on-going within 50 yards of strutting birds (documented March 15). I can't recall, did the State apply any seasonal or spatial buffers to mining activity? It would be super helpful to include avoidance/minimization/mitigation requirements from the original permit in the Progress Report.
5) Relative to on-going predator control and documented discussions about additional coyote control as a conservation measure, has the local working group documented that predators are a high threat (that needs to be addressed) for this local population? Do the greater sage-grouse biologists agree that this is a useful measure? I think the author's decision to expand coyote control measures to Ford Pasture should be reviewed by Rhett and Nicki. It seems like an aggressive and perhaps pre-mature measure given little information to support it.
6) I'm wondering if either Rhett Boswell or Nicki Frey could fact-check the summary on page 20. In addition, some of the conclusions the author makes seem pre-mature (ie that sage-grouse have habituated to human-related activities or are not being impacted by surface mining activities to the degree predicted).

Best regards,
Amy

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From: Joe Helfrich [mailto:joehelfrich@utah.gov]
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2013 3:03 PM
To: Dustin Schaible; Rhett Boswell; Bill James; Carmen Bailey; JASON ROBINSON; Nicole Frey; Lisa L Church; Clint Wirick; Melissa_Burns@fws.gov; Nile Sorenson; Laura Romin; Amy Defreese; Susan White; Ingrid Campbell
Cc: Kirk; Steven L. Petersen; Daron Haddock
Subject: Sage Grouse Report

Friends,
The folks at the Coal Hollow Mine, (owned by Alton Coal Development Co.), have compiled their Sage grouse monitoring and habitat treatment data for 2012. I sent out a draft earlier, this is the final version and is open for discussion and comment. Comments are most welcome by way of "E" mail and I would ask that they be submitted to me by May 2nd. I would also like to schedule follow up meetings with DWR and FWS in order to meet the consultation requirements of our coal regulations I will be contacting you to set up an appropriate time, I will plan on driving to Panguitch, the mine or Cedar City to meet with the DWR folks and can meet with Laura, Amy and Melissa pretty much any time when I'm not in the field.....Looking forward to your input.....Joe

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Joseph C. Helfrich
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