From:	Berglund, Jeff
To:	Deibert, Pat
Cc:	Brent Esmoil; Alex Schubert; Mark Sattelberg; Michael Thabault; Nicole Alt; Noreen Walsh
Subject:	Re: Revised/Final NPT Briefing Papers Attached
Date:	Wednesday, November 28, 2012 9:18:27 AM
Attachments:	HiLine NPT Briefing Paper11-27-12-JB Comments.docx

---

Hi Pat. The Miles City document looks good (recall that Charles did review the DEIS and summary information in that case). The Hi-Line document is much improved - they missed clarifying what was reviewed in a sentence near the end (see attached). Should be fine once that's fixed. Thanks,

Jeff

On Wed, Nov 28, 2012 at 8:48 AM, Deibert, Pat <pat_deibert@fws.gov> wrote:

> Hey folks -
>
> BLM has revised their briefing papers for this afternoon's discussion. Please review ASAP and let me know if you have any outstanding concerns (including those outside briefing papers).
>
> Thanks for your patience on this effort.
>
> p
>
> ---------- Forwarded message ----------
> From: **Munson, Johanna** <jmunson@blm.gov>
> Date: Tue, Nov 27, 2012 at 5:26 PM
> Subject: Revised/Final NPT Briefing Papers Attached
> To: "Rubado, Jessica A" <jarubado@blm.gov>, "Roberson, Edwin" <eroberso@blm.gov>
> Cc: "Hiner,Caleb M" <chiner@blm.gov>, "Thompson, John H" <jthompso@blm.gov>, "Hanley, Theresa M" <thanley@blm.gov>, "Simpson, Donald A" <dsimpson@blm.gov>, "Lueders, Amy L" <alueders@blm.gov>, "Mermejo, Lauren L" <lmermejo@blm.gov>, "Deibert, Pat" <pat_deibert@fws.gov>
>
> Hi Jessica/Ed:
>
> Thanks for your help in identifying briefing paper suggestions from FWS. Revised briefing papers for HiLine, Miles City and Buffalo with edits incorporated attached. Please distribute to all at your earliest convenience tomorrow.
>
> Thanks!
>
> Johanna Munson
> Rocky Mountain Sage Grouse Project Manager
> BLM Wyoming State Office
> 5353 Yellowstone Rd.
> Cheyenne, WY 82009

Email: jmunson@blm.gov
Work: (307) 775-6329

--

Pat Deibert
National Sage-grouse Conservation Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5353 Yellowstone Road, Suite 308A
Cheyenne, WY 82009
307-772-2374, ext. 226

got leks?

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR THE GREATER SAGE-GROUSE NATIONAL POLICY TEAM

FROM: BLM State Director, Montana/Dakotas

SUBJECT: Greater Sage-Grouse Briefing – HiLine Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement

DATE: November 28, 2012

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this National Policy Team (NPT) briefing is to demonstrate that all necessary and appropriate interagency coordination and issue resolution has been completed at the local, regional, and national levels for the HiLine Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DRMP/DEIS). The expected outcome of this briefing is to confirm that no outstanding policy issues exist.

This briefing also alerts the NPT agencies that the HiLine DRMP/DEIS will be presented to the BLM Director. The BLM Director will then decide whether to sign the Notice of Availability for the HiLine DRMP/DEIS, which will be published in the Federal Register to initiate the release of the document to the public, affected land users, and elected officials.

II. BACKGROUND

The HiLine District includes three BLM field offices and encompasses 17.6 million acres located in north-central Montana. The Havre, Malta and Glasgow Field Offices manage 14 percent of the surface lands (2.4 million acres) and 21 percent of the mineral estate (3.8 million acres) in the planning area. The BLM manages about 1.6 million acres or 53 percent of the occupied sage-grouse habitat in the planning area. Over one million acres of BLM-administered lands are priority sage-grouse habitat.

The HiLine District planning effort began in 2006. The affected lands are currently managed under two RMPs: the Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP (1994) and the West HiLine RMP (1988). The key issues raised during the planning process include renewable and traditional energy development, management of solid minerals; soil and vegetation management; land tenure; access; travel management; wilderness characteristics; wildlife habitat and special status species; cultural and paleontological resources; special designations and management areas; wildfire and prescribed fire management; and social and economic conditions across the HiLine.

Throughout the RMP process, the BLM has coordinated with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MFWP) to identify sage-grouse conservation-related planning issues as well as data and scientific studies related to sage-grouse habitats, threats to sage-grouse, and management opportunities for sage-grouse conservation. Coordination with local offices continued through analysis of the BLM management situation, alternative development, and impact analysis. The BLM worked with local U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and MFWP biologists to incorporate applicable National Technical Team (NTT) measures into the range of alternatives. The BLM briefed local and state level FWS and MFWP officials and biologists concerning sage-grouse conservation measures in the HiLine DRMP. Local FWS and MFWP biologists provided additional review of the preliminary DRMP/DEIS summary documents and offered comments and suggestions which have been addressed in the DRMP. The Greater Sage-Grouse (GSG) Regional Interdisciplinary Team was briefed on July 18, 2012 and the GSG Regional Management Team was briefed on July 31, 2012. Both teams endorsed the range of alternatives.

III. KEY GREATER SAGE-GROUSE ISSUES

Local, regional, and national GSG reviews have been completed. Comments received from MFWP and FWS regarding GSG habitat management and consistency with the National Technical Team (NTT) report have been address in the DRMP/DEIS. Solicitor comments have been addressed and responses are included in the HiLine District response to WO GSG comments. Scoping, reviews, briefings, and comments influenced the following:

1. Most BLM surface or mineral estate identified as sage-grouse priority areas is located in the MFWP sage-grouse core areas (see attached map).
2. The DRMP/DEIS analyzes a broad range of alternatives for GSG conservation including an alternative that analyzes in detail closing GSG priority habitat to oil and gas leasing and applying a 3 percent "limit" objective on surface disturbance. This alternative analyzes two GSG Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that would recommend mineral withdrawal, no fluid mineral leases, and would be a right-of-way exclusion area. The GSG ACEC designations would protect 1.4 million acres of grassland bird and GSG habitat.
3. NTT measures that apply to the HiLine District were analyzed in detail and incorporated into the DRMP/DEIS Alternative B. (Some NTT measures, e.g. wild horse management, do not apply to the HiLine District.) The 3 percent limit on surface-disturbing activities is considered and analyzed as an objective in Alternative B. BLM resource management opportunities to meet this objective are limited since the HiLine DRMP provides management prescriptions for only 14 percent of the total land base and 21 percent of the mineral acreage within the planning area.
4. Conflicts between livestock grazing management and GSG were not identified as a major issue in the HiLine DRMP. Rangeland Health Standards are currently being met on all allotments within priority sage-grouse habitat. Rationale is provided to explain why this was not analyzed in detail in the DRMP/DEIS.
5. Montana Congressional staffs were briefed on the sage-grouse planning strategy. The Montana Governor's Cabinet and their representatives, as well as representatives from MFWP and the FWS were briefed on the Implications and Implementation of the National Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy.
6. Compensatory mitigation of surface-disturbing and disruptive activities was added to the DRMP/DEIS to provide regulatory assurance of sage-grouse conservation based on coordination with cooperating agencies, emphasis on providing adequate regulatory measures, and Regional Management Team review and recommendations.
7. The preferred alternative ameliorates threats by supporting a landscape approach to GSG conservation, by limiting surface disturbance and habitat fragmentation on BLM lands and minerals, and by requiring GSG protective design features and conservation measures on BLM authorized activities.
8. Recommend that this blank #8 be deleted…

IV. POLICY DIRECTION NEEDS

The FWS, MFWP, and Rocky Mountain Regional Management Team have reviewed the HiLine DRMP summary documents. Regional and Washington Office Solicitors' comments have been incorporated in conjunction with local, Rocky Mountain Region and Washington Office reviews. No additional GSG policy direction is needed for the HiLine DRMP.

Comment [UF&WS1]: This was well-clarified above, but not here

V. NEXT STEPS

Additional coordination with cooperators will be appropriate during the 90-day public comment period on the DRMP/DEIS, in response to public and agency comments, and during preparation of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The 60-day Governor's consistency review of the Proposed RMP will also focus on coordination with MFWP and other state agencies regarding GSG conservation and consistency with relevant state agency plans.