

From: [DElia, Jesse](#)
To: [Dennis Mackey](#); [Kathleen Hendricks](#); [Jason Pyron](#); [Pat Deibert](#)
Cc: [Michael Carrier](#)
Subject: Fwd: GRSG: ID disturbance calc methodology
Date: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 3:49:54 PM

Before responding to Terry wanted to circle back to make sure I've captured our conversations from last week and this morning accurately. Please let me know if you have any concerns or if I've misstated anything.

Idaho BLM generated a novel equation for calculating disturbance for the purposes of monitoring for disturbance caps. Although IFWO did not express significant concerns when the calculation was presented by Idaho BLM our recent collective review of this equation in more detail (Pat, Jesse, and Jason) suggests that the genesis of this equation was based on the erroneous assumption that other planning efforts were not "incorporating fire" into their disturbance calculations. They note this in their rationale provided in draft proposal - "[a straight 3% disturbance cap] would not account for changes in effective habitat due to loss through fire or gain through restoration and rehabilitation." This is not true - all other planning areas are accounting for changes to the amount of available habitat (what Idaho BLM calls effective habitat) in the denominator of their disturbance calculations. In addition, the equation inserts two terms in their disturbance calculation that make the equation unnecessarily complex and difficult to interpret. First a term for the entire area of the BSU is included in the denominator, yet anthropogenic disturbance is only being measured in the effective habitat. Second, the inclusion of a "constant" is added as a correction factor. The result of adding these terms is that in some circumstances the amount of disturbance (in acres) actually allowed under a 3% cap would vary significantly depending on the equation applied - with Idaho's equation allowing more disturbance before hitting the cap in some scenarios.

It is unclear why Idaho BLM developed its own disturbance calculation apart from the rest of the Great Basin planning areas as we have been asking for consistency to the extent possible. That said, IFWO is confident that the conservation outcomes for sage-grouse will be the same regardless of the calculation methodology because the anthropogenic disturbance cap is not likely to be hit under either methodology. Fire and invasives remain the greatest threat to sage-grouse habitat in that State. However, there is general agreement that applying Idaho's methodology more broadly would be problematic, because in areas where an anthropogenic disturbance cap is likely to be hit, Idaho BLM's methodology allow for a higher percentage of anthropogenic disturbance before a cap is hit in some scenarios.

Jesse

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Noreen Walsh** <noreen_walsh@fws.gov>
Date: Tue, Jan 20, 2015 at 6:55 AM
Subject: RE: GRSG: ID disturbance calc methodology
To: Pat Deibert <pat_deibert@fws.gov>, Theresa Rabot <theresa_rabot@fws.gov>
Cc: Richard Hannan <richard_hannan@fws.gov>, Matt Kales <matt_kales@fws.gov>, Michael Thabault <michael_thabault@fws.gov>, Nicole Alt <nicole_alt@fws.gov>, Jesse

DElia <jesse_delia@fws.gov>, Dennis Mackey <dennis_mackey@fws.gov>, Michael Carrier <michael_carrier@fws.gov>

Thanks for the summary Pat. I hope your daughter is better and your dentist appointment painless!

I will let you and Region 1 folks and any others appropriate continue discussing this issue to ensure we understand the differences. I mentioned to Terry that a call with you might be a good step to help clarify understanding and answer questions.

Noreen

From: Pat Deibert [mailto:pat_deibert@fws.gov]

Sent: Monday, January 19, 2015 12:05 PM

To: Theresa Rabot

Cc: Noreen Walsh; Richard Hannan; Matt Kales; Michael Thabault; nicole_alt@fws.gov; Mr. Jesse DElia; Dennis Mackey; Mike Carrier

Subject: Re: GRSG: ID disturbance calc methodology

Noreen and all -

Jason Jesse and I did a review of the ID disturbance calculations during the status review meeting. ID does have 3% as their cap but used a variation on the monitoring. It seems we were present at the decision in ID to use this alternative method but did not have much of a say (Jason please correct if I am in error). Jason stated part of the reason for the difference is that ID is trying to compensate for impacts due to fire. My concern is that the calculations only include part of the sagebrush habitat based on the amount of cover where most leks are found as per Knick ecological minimums paper. So in my interpretation the disturbance calculation is based only on the most likely "good" breeding habitats with little consideration of the remaining breeding areas and other seasonal habitats. There is a correction factor in the denominator which I did not understand but was concerned because it was additive (making the denominator larger and hence the disturbance calculation smaller). So my concerns are two-fold: 1. Why are not all seasonal habitats included in the calculation and 2. What is the correction factor and why is it additive? I am hopeful that the explanation will clarify that my interpretation is in error. However i am unclear as to why the deviation was even necessary given the months we jointly spent creating a monitoring framework (including Blm ID personnel).

I'm happy to engage where helpful (and disengage where not). Of course I'm home with a sick child, no computer and a dentist appt first thing Tuesday.

Pat

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 19, 2015, at 6:12 AM, Theresa Rabot <theresa_rabot@fws.gov> wrote:

I believe 3% is consistent however there are differences within that, for example Oregon is 1% per decade. I've reached out to Mike and Denis, perhaps they can arrange for Brent to do a quick phone briefing.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 18, 2015, at 5:45 AM, Noreen Walsh <noreen_walsh@fws.gov> wrote:

Dear friends,

We will need to circle our internal wagons on this issue. I heard this past week, and confirmed yesterday, that ID was using a different disturbance calculation method. To my knowledge, I never had heard that before (yet I am the first to acknowledge my memory is not perfect). I thought we had agreed to 3% with one methodology across the range. When I asked Ed Roberson this weekend WHY ID is using a different methodology to calculate disturbance, he replied:

"Idaho has a far more detailed method that they worked out with Mike and Virgil. Brent explained it when we were in the Governors office.

It factors in more of disturbance variables from the research. If you want more info we reach out to Brent."

I had also reached out to Pat who has seen some (all?) of the ID process and has a potential concern.

So, I think what we need to wrestle with is the following:

Was this process described in the ID alternative that Richard indicated at the last TF meeting we support? As in, have we already indicated as an agency we support it?

Is any potential concern about the outcome of the process significant such that we should raise it now?

Can you all confer to provide a consensus recommendation? Thank you,

Noreen

Noreen Walsh

Regional Director

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