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Subject:	Conference Info.
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Hi all
I've attached some info for you as the Senior Policy Group which maybe helpful. Will have additional coming Monday.
Look forward to seeing you all next week.

Ron Dunton
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10/31/14

Friday Morning -- Proposed Breakout Group Methodology:

Step 1: [Thursday Evening] EnviroIssues team (plus representatives from the policy and fire groups) categorizes and distills input to date from group discussion, MindMixer, and Livestream chat. The product is two numbered "idea lists":

1. Specific suggestions/input regarding policy additions/changes
2. Specific suggestions/input regarding BMPs for fire management/operations

Step 2: Participants in each breakout group (~175 each/round) receive a handout copy of their relevant idea list. They are invited to review and discuss the ideas with those at their table, and to identify any ***new*** ideas not currently represented on the table (truly unique ideas!) [10 min]

Step 3: Each table is invited to share their "new" ideas. The note-taker captures these onscreen, with numbering beginning where the previous list stopped [30 min]

Step 4: Brief group discussion and clarification of suggestions to make sure everyone understand them the same way [10 min]

Step 5: Using ***Poll Everywhere***, participants each identify five ideas from the list (both in hand and onscreen) that they feel are most important/have the most merit for further consideration and evaluation by decision-makers at the local, state and federal levels. Instant results will be viewable in the room once polling closes. Those without the technological capability can ask the notetaker and facilitator enter their top 5. [5 min]

Key Moderator Talking Points:

- *Prior to this conference, a lot of people have worked hard to identify policy changes and best management practices for fire management that they think will make a difference in the conservation of sagebrush steep ecosystems and Greater sage-grouse. Draft federal and state sage-grouse conservation plans attest to these independent and cooperative efforts thus far.*
- *People participating in THIS conference (both in-person and virtually) have, over the last few days, contributed many good, creative ideas that can be used to further the thinking, individually or collectively, on protecting and conserving sagebrush ecosystems and Greater sage-grouse.*
- *The goal of our session this morning is to 1) add any key ideas have not yet been captured to the "idea list" (let's really think outside the box!) and; 2) get a sense from individual participants about which ideas are the most important/have the most merit for further consideration and evaluation.*
- *The outcomes of this exercise will be provided to all those who participated. The outcomes are intended to support individual and joint efforts to further develop best management practices and fire reduction strategies for the Great Basin in order to increase protection and conservation of sagebrush ecosystems and the Greater sage-grouse.*
- *Note: Representatives of the Senior Policy Group and the Senior Fire Management/Operations Group will be in each session to provide a connection between discussions (that is, fire ops rep in the policy discussion and policy rep in the fire ops discussion). This connection is essential to policy and operational success.*

Wednesday, November 5 – Summit Room

7:15	**Registration/Check-in Begins** (in hallway adjacent to Summit Room)
8:00	**Opening Session** ▪ Call to Order: Jesse Juen, BLM New Mexico State Director and Conference Master of Ceremonies ▪ Welcome: Tim Murphy, BLM Idaho State Director ▪ Keynote: Mike Connor, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior ▪ Opening Remarks: Tim Murphy, Moderator ‣ Janice Schneider, Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals, Department of the Interior ‣ Dan Ashe, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ‣ Neil Kornze, Director, Bureau of Land Management ▪ Conference Overview: Jesse Juen and Susan Hayman, Conference Facilitator
9:30	**Break**
9:45	**Overview of Rangeland Fire in the Great Basin Sagebrush Steppe** Moderator: Anne Kinsinger, Associate Director for Ecosystems, US Geological Survey ▪ *Wildfire in the Great Basin and Challenges for the Future*: Dr. Rick Miller, Professor Emeritus of Range Ecology and Management, Oregon State University ▪ *Influence of Fire on Sagebrush-Obligate Wildlife in the Great Basin*: Dr. Jeff Beck, Associate Professor, Wildlife Habitat Restoration Ecology, University of Wyoming ▪ *Climate, Wildfire, and Great Basin Ecosystems*: Dr. Matt Germino, Research Ecologist, US Geological Survey ▪ Participant Q&A
11:30	**Lunch** (on your own)
12:30	**Panel: Management Moving Forward—States' Perspectives on Managing Fire and Sagebrush-Steppe Challenges** Moderator: Will Whelan, The Nature Conservancy, Director of State Government Relations ▪ Virgil Moore, Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game ▪ Leo Drozdoff, Director, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources ▪ Kathleen Clarke, Director, Utah Public Lands Coordination Office ▪ Brett Brownscombe, Natural Resource Advisor to Oregon Governor Kitzhaber ▪ Panel Discussion and Participant Q&A
1:45	**Break**

2:00	**Priorities and Strategies for Sage-grouse Habitat** Moderator: Carol Schuler, USGS-FRESC Director, Northwest Region ▪ *A State Director's Perspective*: Amy Lueders, BLM Nevada State Director ▪ *Fire: Improving our ability to reduce wildfire and invasive impacts through accelerated partner collaboration*: Jeremy Maestas, NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative Technical Lead ▪ *Using Resistance and Resilience Concepts to Reduce Impacts of Invasive Annual Grasses and Altered Fire Regimes on the Sagebrush Ecosystem and Greater Sage-Grouse*: Dr. Jeanne Chambers, US Forest Service Research Ecologist, Rocky Mountain Research Station ▪ *Conducting Fire and Invasives Assessments to address Wildfire, Invasive Annual Grass, and Conifer Expansion in the Great Basin*: Doug Havlina, BLM Fire Ecologist and Fire and Invasive Species Assessment Team Lead ▪ Participant Q&A
3:30	**Break**
3:45	**Panel: Rangeland Fire in the Great Basin—Challenges and Needs from a Field Perspective** Moderator: Jay Gibbs, Basin Leader, NRCS - Oregon ▪ Rosey Thomas, BLM Ely District Manager ▪ Jose Noriega, US Forest Service Ely District Ranger ▪ John Kasbohm, Project Leader, Sheldon-Hart National Wildlife Refuge ▪ Panel Discussion and Participant Q&A
4:30	**Why All This Matters** Presenter: Dr. John Freemuth, Professor, Department of Public Policy and Administration, Boise State University
5:00	**Day 1 Closing Remarks and Announcements** Jesse Juen and Susan Hayman

Thursday, November 6 – Summit Room

8:00	**Introduction of Day 2 and Announcements** Jesse Juen and Susan Hayman
8:10	**Status Updates: Senior Policy Group and Senior Fire Management/Operations Group** Janice Schneider and Rex McKnight, Fire Management Officer, BLM Nevada
8:20	**The Effects of Rangeland Fire on Sage-grouse: A Fish and Wildlife Service Perspective** ▪ Presenter: Ted Koch, US Fish & Wildlife Service - Nevada State Supervisor ▪ Participant Q&A

8:50	**Before the Fire: Rangeland Mitigation Treatments that Work** Moderator: Jim Stovall, Pecos District Manager, BLM New Mexico ▪ *Short-Term Effects of Sagebrush-Steppe Restoration Treatments on Herbaceous Vegetation: the SageSTEP Project:* Dr. Jim McIver, Associate Professor of Forestry and Rangelands, Oregon State University ▪ *Effective Treatments*: Lance Okeson, BLM Boise Fuels District Specialist ▪ *Decision Support for Sage-Steppe Protection: Designing a Regional Network of Strategic Fuel Breaks to Benefit the Greater Sage-Grouse:* Dr. Bob Unnasch, Director of Science for Idaho, The Nature Conservancy
10:00	**Break**
10:15	**Before the Fire: Rangeland Mitigation Treatments that Work (cont'd)** ▪ *Linear Fuel Breaks*: Mike Fettic, BLM Winnemucca District Fire Management Officer ▪ *A Rancher's View of Fire and Grazing Management:* Todd Black, Deseret Land and Livestock ▪ *Managing Landscapes for Sage-grouse with an Emphasis on Fire and Greenstripping*: Dr. Terry Messmer, Professor of Wildland Resources, Utah State University ▪ Participant Q&A
11:35	**Break**
11:45	**Lunch Panel and Presentation (Falcon Room)** Participants pick up boxed lunches and are seated Moderator: Jeremy Maestas, NRCS - Oregon ▪ *Connecting scientists and managers: Lessons from the Great Basin Fire Science Exchange:* Génie MontBlanc, Program Coordinator, University of Nevada, Reno ▪ *Sharing the Story of the Sage-grouse*: Lisa Eller, The Nature Conservancy, Idaho Communications Director
12:25	**Presentation: A Perspective on Fire Policy and Management** *Policy and Analysis in the Larger Picture*: Rocky Barker, Environmental Reporter, Idaho Statesman
12:45	Panel Discussion, including Rocky Barker, and Participant Q&A
1:00	**Break**
1:15	**Panel: During the Fire—Strategies and Tactics (Summit Room)** Moderator: Julia Sullens, Southern Idaho Fire Program Liaison, Idaho Department of Lands ▪ *Center Manager's Perspective*: Jill Leguineche, US Forest Service, Southwest Idaho Dispatch Center Manager ▪ *Battalion Chief's View:* Lindsey Neiwert, BLM Battalion Chief, Boise District ▪ *Local and Rural Fire Engagement:* Rich Harvey, Deputy State Forester, Nevada Division of Forestry and Type I Incident Commander ▪ *Rangeland Fire Protective Associations:* Darcy Helmick, Saylor Creek RFPA ▪ Panel Discussion and Participant Q&A

2:30	**Break**
2:45	**After the Fire: What Works, What Needs to Change** Moderator: Mike Pellant, BLM, Great Basin Restoration Initiative Coordinator ▪ *Effectiveness of Sagebrush-Steppe Post-Fire Rehabilitation Projects:* Dr. David Pyke, USGS Supervisory Research Ecologist ▪ *Application of Current Research in Post-fire Management:* Jeff Rose, BLM Associate District Manager, Burns, Oregon ▪ *Precision Restoration Treatments:* Dr. Jay Kerby, Southeast Oregon Project Manager, The Nature Conservancy ▪ Participant Q&A
4:05	**Stand Up Break**
4:15	**On the Horizon: Potential New Tools to Improve Rangeland Health** Moderator: John Cissel, Joint Fire Science Program Manager ▪ *Cheatgrass Die-Off as a Restoration Opportunity*: Dr. Susan Meyer, US Forest Service Research Ecologist ▪ *Simulation Modelling and Emerging Technologies for Understanding and Prioritizing Management Actions*: Dr. Matt Reeves, US Forest Service, Rangeland Scientist) ▪ *The Use of Seed Enhancement to Improve Sagebrush Establishment Across and Elevation Gradient*: Dr. April Hulet, Range and Forest Management Researcher, Agricultural Research Services ▪ Participant Q&A
5:15	**Summary of Day 2 and Announcements** Jesse Juen and Susan Hayman
5:30-7:30	**After-Hours Casual Conversation Session** Snacks and Refreshments Available

Friday, November 7 – Summit Room

8:00	**Introduction of Day 3 and Announcements (Summit Room)** Jesse Juen and Susan Hayman
8:10	**Move to Breakout Rooms**
8:20	**Breakout Work Sessions** *(two groups that rotate participants at 9:30)* ▪ **Senior Policy Group** (Peregrine Room): Moderators: Dr. John Freemuth, BSU and Laurie Kurth, U.S. Forest Service ▪ **Senior Fire Management/Operations Group** (Kestrel/Merlin Room): Moderators: Bud Cribley, BLM Alaska State Director and Tami DeFries, Associate Manager, Alaska Fire Service
10:30	**Break**

10:45	**Senior Policy Group and Senior Fire Management/Operations Group Summary (Summit Room)** Senior Policy Group and Senior Fire Management/Operations Group will summarize outcomes from the morning meetings.
11:15	**Closing Remarks, Final Thoughts and Next Steps** Moderator: Jesse Juen ▪ Janice Schneider, DOI Assistant Secretary Lands and Minerals ▪ Daniel Ashe, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ▪ Neil Kornze, Director, Bureau of Land Management
12:00	**Conference Adjourned**

Summary and Recommendations

Proactive measures in the fire operations and fuels management arenas are crucial to long-term sage-grouse conservation. Approximately 97% of initial attack efforts are successful at keeping fires under 1,000 acres. Site-appropriate measures before and after the fire represent the greatest opportunities to interrupt the invasive plant and wildfire cycle, and potentially augment initial attack effectiveness. At the same time, the body of knowledge related to "what works" should be bolstered through research and testing.

Based upon the findings synthesized in this status report, following are challenges, barriers, and recommended actions that have potential to enhance sage-grouse populations and habitats.

From Section II: Federal Challenges and Barriers

- Emerging science which synthesizes our knowledge of ecological resilience and potential for success has not been fully integrated into the design and implementation of fuels management projects and fire operations planning
- The capacity of federal agencies is constrained in terms of positions, funding streams, and planning
- Real-time information sharing between sage-grouse biologists and fire managers is sometime lacking during periods of high fire activity across the Great Basin. This deficiency is found within Incident Management Teams, Area Command Teams, and Geographic Multi-Agency Coordination Groups.
- Competing priorities exist across program areas and imperfect integration across these functional areas
- Inefficient planning processes, to include litigation, appeals, and protests of potential treatments
- The current fire suppression funding process needs to be modified to allow fire operation to function more like a "natural disaster" and not fiscally overburden existing program budgets of the federal fire agencies.

From Section III: State Challenges and Barriers

- There is insufficient funding for wildfire preparedness activities including training, heavy equipment/engines, Personal Protective Equipment, radios, and facilities;
- Expanding National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualification requirements and associated time required results in shortages of qualified personnel in many positions;
- The historic seasonal approach to wildfire suppression and management is inadequate given the complexities of natural resource management. A dedicated year round work force and associated funding is needed to address the expanding wildfire management challenges;
- Periods of high wildfire activity with multiple ignitions in short time periods, which results in shortages of suppression resources can limit response effectiveness;
- Clear delineation of the highest priority sage-grouse habitat designated for protection from wildfire is needed at all wildfire response levels and mapping updated appropriately;
- There is a lack of active and timely land management actions, especially on federal lands, due to limited funding, permitting requirements, and litigation;
- Extensive delays in processing fire bills by the federal agencies can create significant cash flow problems and impacts state and local fuel treatment programs;
- Wildfire rehabilitation funding is limited, which perpetuates the invasive plant species problems and increases fire return intervals on all ownerships;

From Section IV: Local Challenges and Barriers

- Firefighter retention and the loss of institutional knowledge of managing wildfire;
- There is insufficient funding for preparedness activities including training, heavy equipment/engines, PPE, radios, and facilities;
- Shortages of qualified wildfire management trainers, programs and inadequate delivery systems in rural areas;
- While the costs of wildfire suppression responses to federal lands are reimbursed by the jurisdictional federal land manager, sufficient preparedness and response capacity is often limited;
- Inconsistent federal land management policies are negatively impacting the sustainability of multiple land uses on public lands;

- There is a significant need for developing and utilization of integrated and dynamic livestock grazing plans that assist with fuels reduction through targeted grazing and consistent monitoring.
- It is difficult to implement a landscape approach to fuels management because of the challenges of environmental regulations, sufficient and available funding, the lack of qualified contractors and the complicated permit process.

Recommendation #1: Incorporate emerging science and analysis (Resistance and Resilience concepts, Fire and Invasives Assessments) to place management strategies and treatments in the locations with the highest probability of success. While many offices have applied knowledge of ecological sites and resilience in past practices, a broader adoption of the resistance/resilience concept is warranted. The implementation of FIAT assessments in the future offers promise related to applying "the right treatments in the right place".

Recommendation #2: (both pertaining to fuel breaks)

a. Conduct research that quantifies fuels treatment effectiveness in terms of limiting fire growth, final fire size, or aiding suppression effectiveness. Currently, the metrics used to evaluate fuels treatment effectiveness are subjective, qualitative, or lack causal relationship (e.g., observed change in fire behavior, dollars spent, acres treated). The assumptions regarding linear fuel breaks, greenstripping, and other treatments need testing and successful outcomes quantified. This should include the timing, sequence, and pattern of treatments.
b. Based upon the findings of (a), scale up implementation of strategically placed fuel breaks in priority PACS and FIAT focal habitat areas to proactively address the 3% of fires that escape initial attack. While it is recognized that linear fuel treatments may potentially fragment habitats, apply those which have promise to augment suppression effectiveness and lessen the trend of "mega-fires". While fuel breaks are not intended to stop fires, they can help reducing fire size by providing firefighters with safe anchor points for suppression.

Recommendation #3: State and Federal biologists with sage-grouse expertise should inform fire management decisions in Incident Management Teams, Area Command Teams, and Geographic Multi-Agency Coordination groups. This should include increased participation

of non-federal Resource Advisors on the line, as well as subject matter experts in real-time decision making with Incident Management Teams. Coordination should also occur before fire season to ensure the real-time participation of key biologists with knowledge of lek locations, populations, and seasonal habitats. All of the above must comply with NWCG qualifications and standards for line going personnel. A mechanism for overtime compensation for non-federal employees is needed.

Recommendation #4: Develop a process whereby sage-grouse and their habitats are highlighted as a high priority value in the above discussions. Currently, sage-grouse is viewed as one of myriad natural resource values to consider during fire operations decisions. This mechanism must highlight the need to minimize fire growth on fires that threaten valued habitat.

Recommendation #5: Fully incorporate sage-grouse information sharing, planning, and coordination in pre-season meetings. This should include full discussions related to delegations of authority, the process for in-briefings, resource advisor roles, and participation by area wildlife biologists with incident managers when fires occur.

Recommendation #6: Develop reliable funding streams focused on pre-fire vegetation management to improve sage-grouse habitat and improving sagebrush ecosystem resilience. This provides continuity for out-year planning and staffing. Prioritize vegetation management resources in priority areas identified through the FIAT process where cooperative landscape approaches are being taken across public-private land ownership boundaries. Acknowledge the reality of multiple interventions, repeated treatments, and adaptive management which exceeds agencies' current budgets. These funding streams are most effective when applied to collaborative landscape approaches.

Recommendation #7: Work with CEQ to explore mechanisms for accelerating NEPA planning for implementation of key fuel treatments in priority landscapes identified through the FIAT process to provide real-time protection capability. With current planning efforts often spanning years, increasing fire frequency and magnitude and outpacing our ability to keep up with implementation.

Recommendation #8: Based upon our knowledge of sage-grouse populations, habitats, and related threats, implement the decisions from the revised land use plan EIS's in order to update fire management plans. Subsequently, agencies should revisit operational plans related to fire prioritization, resource placement, and suppression response procedures.

Integrate lek, population, and key habitat data into fire management responses for Federal and State agencies.

Recommendation #9: Develop decision support tools that contribute to rangeland fire management decision-making. A specific technical gap identified is rangeland fire behavior modeling (dynamic fuel modeling). Currently, predicting the dynamics of fire behavior in forested systems is more advanced than that in rangeland ecosystems. This is a technical gap that is needed for future treatment planning and fire management decisions.

Recommendation #10: Develop an "all lands" solution to wildfire and fuels management relative to sage-grouse habitat conservation. Rangeland Fire Protection Associations represent a key component of incorporating private and ranching interests. Further the cooperation between federal agencies, state fire agencies and local governments to establish RFPAs on a broader scale. Develop commitments to provide training and equipment to RFPAs. Expand training opportunities to include volunteer firefighters, RFPA's, and local fire departments.

Recommendation #11: Finalize proposed legislation which allows fire management (suppression) to be funded like natural disasters, as identified in the 2014 WAFWA Gap Report. The current fire suppression funding process should be modified to where fire costs are funded akin to "natural disasters", thereby easing fiscal competition in federal agencies.

Recommendation #12: In concert with research needs identified by USGS and the 2014 WAFWA Gap Analysis, conduct research on the efficacy and opportunities related to livestock grazing as a fuels management tool.