

Managing Pinyon-Juniper Expansion in Sagebrush Ecosystems: Next Steppe for the Bi-State

Agenda

February 25-26, 2015

CVIC Hall, 1602 Esmeralda Ave.

Minden, NV

Registration

<http://monocounty.ca.gov/community-development/page/pinyon-juniper-expansion-forum>

Forum Purpose/Objectives:

To advance the next step of conservation for Bi-State Sage-grouse populations and achieve prioritization and implementation of large-scale projects through recently committed funding and collaboration between federal and state agencies, NGOs and private individuals. Specific objectives are:

- To better understand the cause and effect of pinyon-juniper expansion and pinyon-juniper treatments on sage-grouse habitat
- To determine what can be learned from other large-scale pinyon-juniper projects on public and private lands in adjacent states
- To review existing approaches for prioritizing and managing pinyon-juniper expansion and fine tune treatments outlined in the 2012 Bi-State Action Plan
- To gain rancher, private interests, media and general public perspective's on the sage-grouse listing issue

Wednesday, February 25

7:30 am (Coffee and pastries)

8:00 *Welcome, introductions, house-keeping, thank sponsors* – Steve Lewis

8:10 *Keynote Speakers: Setting the stage for collaboration – What's happening with Bi-State DPS/WAFWA/FIAT/EOC/funding/listing timeline/etc., and what we hope to accomplish at this Forum* – Tony Wasley & Bill Dunkelberger

Session 1: The Current State of Knowledge

8:45 *The basics of pinyon/juniper expansion – definition of true pinyon woodlands, how much expansion is occurring and where, what are the effects of expansion on , fire ecology, hydrology, species composition, general wildlife habitat, soils, etc. with emphasis on Bi-State* – Rick Miller

9:25 *Conifer encroachment: What does the transition mean to sage-grouse? Perspectives from the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment and beyond* – Shawn Espinosa, Pete Coates & Jeremy Maestas

10:05 Coffee Break

- 10:30 *Current understanding of PJ Reduction treatments – What types of treatments are being used; how is effectiveness related to ecological site type, tree phase and post-treatment management, what are the potential impacts?* – Bruce Roundy & Lee Turner
- 11:15 *Considering other resource values – cultural values, pine nut production; pinyon jay habitat; livestock grazing, recreation and aesthetics* – Darrel Cruz, Elizabeth Ammon & Steven Fulstone

11:50 Lunch provided

Session 2: Defining the Target and Linking It to Action

- 12:30 *CPT model: Running the habitat use models to prioritize future projects and management activities at landscape scales* – Peter Coates
- 1:10 *Incorporating resistance and resilience concepts to refine prioritizations and select treatment sites and types* – Jeanne Chambers
- 1:50 *BLM Fire & Invasives Assessment Team Report – prioritizing treatment areas based on resilience and resistance concepts* – Sandy Gregory
- 2:15 *Using ecological site types and soil characteristics to characterize old growth and expansion woodlands* – Patti Novak
- 2:40 Discussion
- 3:00 Coffee Break
- 3:30 *Strategies from other western states: Panel on large-scale collaborative approaches*
Moderator: Jeremy Maestas
- *Oregon: South Warner Juniper Removal Partnership Project* – Todd Forbes
 - *Idaho: Burley Landscape Sage-Grouse Habitat Restoration Project* – Elliot Traher
 - Group Discussion
- 5:00 Adjourn

Session 3: An Open Rancher and Public Conversation on Pinyon-Juniper Management

5:30 pm Reception - Refreshments provided

Welcome, introductions, objective of the evening session and summary of what was covered in Sessions 1 & 2 – Sherri Lisius & Shawn Espinosa

Group discussion/panel: What is the role of private landowners, local governments, non-profits, and other non-agency stakeholders?

- *Programs and resources for private landowners* – Tom Moore, Thad Heater & USFWS Rep
- *Examples of successful collaboration with private landowner and non-profits* – Katrina Krause & local ranchers
- *How might we work better together?*
- *Discussion with audience* (microphone and questions on index cards)

Adjourn 8:30 pm

Thursday, February 26

Session 4: Looking Toward the Future

7:30 am (Coffee and pastries)

8:00 *Welcome and debrief of Day 1* – Steve Lewis

8:10 *Review of Bi-State Action Plan PJ treatment completed and proposed project locations, treatments, funding and timelines* – Sherri Lisius, Sheila Anderson, Tim Taylor

8:40 *Monitoring & Adaptive Management: How do we know if the treatments are working? What do we do if we're not getting the desired results?* – Lee Turner, Pete Coates, Tim Griffiths)

9:15 Coffee Break

9:30 Facilitated Break-Out Session – Steve Lewis

- *Based on meeting discussions, what fine tuning should be made to the Pinyon-Juniper actions outlined in the Bi-State Plan?*
- *What important rancher/public contributions would improve our conifer encroachment approach and how do we further leverage partnerships, shared resources, and additional collaboration?*
- *Group reports*

10:45 *The Future – Proactive Collaboration: Where do we go from here?* – Steve Nelson

11:00 *Field Trip Preview: What treatments/responses are we going to see in the field and how do these tie to our forum? Also, arrange for car-pooling and transportation planning* – Katrina Krause, Thad Heater

11:30 Adjourn – Box lunches (sponsor provided), head to Wellington

FIELD TRIP – LEARNING ON THE LAND

Session 5:

Meet at Wellington 12:40 pm, Rosie's Place parking lot, 2881 Hwy. 208 (approximately 40 minutes from Minden).

Travel to Buckskin area to view projects on BLM allotments. Between the BLM allotments and private property, over 3300 acres of PJ removal will have been completed by the time of this Forum:

Stop #1 [1:10] Stop along road to look at an uncut area to show declining vegetative understory & portion of Bison Fire that reached this area. Talk about the effects of PJ on the understory vegetation and the Bison Fire behavior related to the PJ. Talk about the use of the Resilience

and Resistance Work Sheet to evaluate post-fire or post-treatment recovery potential and the need for seeding.

Stop #2 [2:10] Compare 2011, 2013, & 2014 mastication projects all adjacent to each other. Talk about noted differences in vegetation. Travel a short distance up a road along a fence showcasing Sage-grouse fence markers. [all near each other]

Stop #3 [2:40] Look at 2013 project done by chainsaw to compare mastication versus chainsaw. Talk about differences-pros & cons of each. This unit also showcases how the Bison Fire behavior changed once it hit an already treated unit. Look at & talk about vegetation responses since the fire.

Optional Stop #4 [3:00] Travel farther up the road to project done in 2012 by both mastication & chainsaw for comparison – a spot between chainsaw & mastication treatment to compare them side-by-side. This unit is also the closest to a known Sage-grouse lek. Can talk about how this habitat can now, possibly, be used by the grouse.

Head for the Barn, 4:10 pm

Forum Sponsors:

Intermountain West Joint Venture

Natural Resource Conservation Service Sage Grouse Initiative

Praxis

Society of Range Management

US Forest Service