

**Vale Sage-grouse LIT Remote Meeting**  
**14 January 2021 from 9:00am – 11:00am (Mountain Time)**

**Meeting Minutes**

Vale LIT Webpage: [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/lit/north\\_vale.asp](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/lit/north_vale.asp)

**Participants:** Julie Unfried (LIT Coordinator), Skyler Vold (ODFW), Megan Creutzburg (SageCon), Dallas Hall-Defrees (Baker LIT Coordinator), Jonathan Dinkins (OSU), Jackie Cupples (USFWS), Eric Evans (Malheur County), Pat Ryan (BLM), Jake Ferguson (BLM), Zack Dufurrena (landowner), Randy Wiest (DSL), Nicole Sullivan (Owyhee Watershed Council), Mike Schmeiske (DSL), Brandon Palmer (Burns-Paiute Tribe), Lynn Larsen (NRCS), Alexis Baker (Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation), Sergio Arispe (OSU), Carter Crouch (Burns-Paiute Tribe), Brian Wolfe (Malheur County Sheriff), Michael O’Casey (Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership), Jeff Palmer (landowner), Marisa Meyer (USFWS), Gary Page (Malheur County), Jeremy Austin (ONDA), Jonathan Dunbar (BLM), Curtis Martin (landowner), Cindy Romans (landowner), Lindsey Perry (OSU), Linda Rowe (Malheur SWCD), Jimmy Taylor (APHIS), Megan McGuire (BLM), Nick Vora (NRCS), *others?*

**Meeting Objective:**

1. Establish structure (charter, decision-making process, consensus group) that can be used to develop the LIT and make decisions about project opportunities to ensure a fair and efficient process
2. Highlight upcoming project opportunities and determine whether the LIT should pursue them

**Context setting**

Baker LIT as a potential model for Vale LIT

- Partners involved with the Baker LIT developed a comprehensive strategy to reduce threats to sage-grouse (Baker Threats Reduction Plan or Baker TRP). As a result, they applied and were approved for a \$6 million Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) grant through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). Baker LIT is now using those funds to help partners implement projects that meet the objectives outlined in the Baker TRP.
- Dallas and Jackie discussed several benefits to developing a Strategic Action Plan.
  - The plan gave the Baker LIT a clear direction from the start and helped with identification of project priorities.
  - The plan helped pursue funding in a more targeted and expedited fashion.
  - The Baker LIT developed a priority ranking system for projects, which alleviated any potential conflicts when deciding how to allocate funds.
- The Baker LIT is very different from the Vale LIT – i.e., landownership is primarily private in the Baker area and primarily public in the Vale area; the Vale LIT area has a much more diverse set of interest groups; however, the Baker LIT is a useful example of LIT success.

**Establishing LIT Structure**

- The majority of participants at the meeting agreed the Vale LIT should start working on a Strategic Action Plan.
  - There was some discussion regarding the decision-making process. The group chose to use the consensus-based mechanism because it gives the opportunity to talk through the initial decisions. There is opportunity to modify the decision-making process to a vote-based mechanism in the future, if deemed necessary.
  - A couple partners mentioned the importance of developing a scoring mechanism for prioritization, similar to Baker LIT.
  - There was discussion related to what should constitute a quorum for consensus. Partners suggested we should have representatives from each “bin” in order for there to be a quorum, where the bins might include landowners, agency, tribal, local/county, and NGO partners.
  - Several partners agreed there should be a minimum amount of participation from local partners for a quorum to be present.

### Project opportunities for LIT to consider

- OWEB 2020 Wildfire Recovery Funds
  - Malheur SWCD will apply. Vale LIT could submit a letter of support.
- 2022 RCPP Funding
  - RCPP would be focused on private, state, and tribal lands.
  - Objectives for the RCPP are to mitigate for effects of wildfire and invasive annual grasses, increase the area and seasonal duration of wet meadows, and improve and expand upland habitat for wildlife and forage production for livestock.
  - Some of the projects would include fuel breaks, fencing, beaver dam analogs, watering system improvements, and native grass plantings.
- Non-lethal Raven Management Program
  - Project is designed to assess the effectiveness of raven management to benefit sage-grouse.
  - Compare lethal raven management, non-lethal raven management, and no raven management.
  - Vale LIT could help inform OSU of raven subsidies, such as bone piles, livestock carcasses, and raven nests built on human structures.
- An anonymous poll was taken after all presentations to see if partners on the call would be interested to learn more about each of these opportunities. Majority (or all) of the responses were “yes”. Using the poll was just a tool to gauge partner interest. We will give the LIT opportunities to learn more about each project in future meetings to determine if each is appropriate for the LIT to engage on.

### Action Items

- Julie is going to follow-up with partners who attended this meeting to discuss and fine-tune Vale’s collaborative process and identify a strategy to build the collaborative in a way that is best suited to the local needs.
- Julie will coordinate with project leads and develop a strategy for the LIT to learn more about each opportunity. If appropriate, the LIT may consider using a consensus process to determine LIT involvement.
- The next LIT meeting will likely take place in 1-2 months – if possible, we will try and host an in-person, outdoor meeting. A Doodle Poll to coordinate timing of that meeting will be forthcoming.
- Meeting minutes are posted on the LIT webpage (link below). The Vale LIT was initially split into two groups so minutes can be found on both North and South Vale LIT webpages. Since we started meeting virtually, meetings between the two teams have been combined; however, the Vale LIT will function as two groups as needed.  
[https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/lit/north\\_vale.asp](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/lit/north_vale.asp)