

Prineville Local Implementation Team Meeting

9 January 2019

Attendees: Julie Unfried (Pheasants Forever – Prineville LIT Coordinator), Robin Vora (Descutes SWCD), Corey Heath (ODFW), Emily Weidner (USFWS), Nathan Hovekamp (Central Oregon Land Watch), Monty Gregg (USFS – Ochoco Forest), Lauri Turner (USFS – Deschutes Forest), Greg Jackle (ODFW), Robbie Piehl (USFS – Ochoco Forest), Gordon Wetzel (ECAS), Tim Deboodt (Crook County), Mike Schmeiske (DSL), David Baker (Farmer), Clay Crofton (Audubon), Randy Wiest (DSL), Stephen Roth (Rancher), Jade Cooper (ZX Ranch), Emily Lent (BLM), Nin McCormack (McCormack Ranch), Stu Garrett (ECAS), Larry Ashton (BLM), Cari Taylor (BLM), Jeff Kitchens (BLM), Jeremy Austin (ONDA), Chris Mundy (NRCS), Monica Tomosy (ECAS), Jim Greer (ECAS), Angela Sitz (USFWS), Dallas Defrees (Baker County – Baker LIT Coordinator), Jackie Cupples (USFWS), *others?*

Meeting Objectives

- Determine agreement method
- Review Baker Threats Reduction Plan and determine if a similar strategy will work for Prineville
- Finalize the charter

Steering Committee Membership

- Steering committee membership was decided by LIT members during the November 13 and January 9 meetings. The steering committee will consist of one individual from each of the following groups,
 - BLM (Stephanie McKinney)
 - ODFW (Greg Jackle)
 - County (Tim Deboodt – Crook County)
 - NGO (Stu Garrett – ECAS)
 - Private landowner (Jade Cooper – ZX Ranch).
- Members agree to serve on the steering committee for at least one year, at which time, the entire LIT will re-evaluate steering committee makeup and membership.
- The purpose of the steering committee is to help the coordinator (Julie Unfried) develop meeting agendas and documents using input from the local level to enhance discussions during LIT meetings. The steering committee does not have decision-making authority over the LIT. See the LIT charter for more information about the steering committee.

Agreement Method

- LIT members discussed the 5-finger consensus method and agreed to add it to the charter (see the charter and appended Coming to Consensus document for more information).
- The consensus method will only be used to make decisions about the LIT proposal and cannot be used to tell landowners, land administrators, etc. what they must or must not do.
- LIT members will identify a sub-group of representatives to participate in the consensus process.

Baker Threats Reduction Plan: Presentation by Jackie Cupples

- Jackie Cupples presented on the Baker LIT's Threats Reduction Plan (TRP) – primarily structure of the plan and what she would modify about the plan in hindsight. Group discussion evolved to determine how Prineville could adapt the structure of the Baker TRP to suit the Prineville LIT.
- Notes form the discussion that followed Jackie's presentation
 - How was landowner confidentiality maintained? For each sub-assessment area, NRCS tabulated the corresponding metric (e.g. acre, miles) for each conservation practice implemented on private

land. This was incorporated into an overall summary of prior efforts that occurred to address threats.

- Why were certain threats not addressed under the TRP; specifically, juniper encroachment, sagebrush cover, climate change? Juniper encroachment was a low priority under the TRP because the threat had largely been addressed through other programs (e.g., EQIP). Sagebrush cover is not a limiting habitat component in the Baker area; however, understory condition is, which was prioritized high. The Baker LIT chose to address threats that are within the immediate control of the collaborative group; addressing climate change goes beyond the scope and capacity of the Baker LIT so it was not addressed under the TRP.
- Why are ravens the only predatory species addressed in the Baker TRP? Data existed to indicate ravens are the predator species that has the greatest impact on the Baker sage-grouse population. Currently, two on-going graduate studies are investigating raven and sage-grouse interactions. This is a summary of where the Baker LIT is at with the project,

Earlier this fall, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) agreed to seek the appropriate EPA permits for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) or their agents to use DRC-1339 (a highly selective corvidicide) as a method for raven removal in Baker County. This method along with other non-lethal removal tactics are proposed within the Baker PAC. However, prior to raven removal implementation, another year of data collection is needed to adequately assess raven depredation and to maintain the scientific rigor of the study to assess the effectiveness of any potential raven removal.

In light of this change to the original study design proposed in ODFW's scientific collection permit application to the USFWS for raven removal (as required by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act), the USFWS will need to update the Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes alternative actions related to ODFW's application. The revised EA will be released for public comment in accordance with NEPA procedures. Public comments will be reviewed by the USFWS prior to issuing a decision on ODFW's application. Should the FWS issue a scientific take permit to ODFW, the earliest raven removal activities could occur in Baker County is 2021.

- The term improper grazing under the list of identified threats generally refers to historic sheep grazing when AUMs were higher than current utilization rates.
- Data used to determine understory depletion included a local BLM survey (Keating Breeding Habitat Survey, 2012) data and BLM's Assessment and Inventory Monitoring (AIM) data.
- Baker LIT was awarded a \$6.1 million OWEB FIP grant. The funding is to be spent over 6 years. In October 2019, LIT board members reviewed applications and voted on the first 5 projects to fund.
- OWEB funding requires long term monitoring. Monitoring protocols for projects across the landscape are consistent with CCA and CCAA protocols and will also adhere to existing agency monitoring protocols (e.g. BLM .data collection standards).
- The first round of FIP-funded projects will begin implementation in Spring 2020, so it is too soon to assess any effects of TRP on sage-grouse populations.
- Need to develop a ranking criterion for threats to sage-grouse in the Prineville LIT geography that minimizes subjectivity whenever possible.
- When developing the threats metric, rather than selecting only threats that apply to the Baker area, the Baker LIT analyzed all threats described in the Oregon Sage-grouse Action Plan and identified the potential threat level for each to the Baker sage-grouse population.

Baker West Nile Virus Surveillance 2019 Pilot Season: Presentation by Jackie Cupples

- Jackie provided a short presentation about the Baker West Nile Virus pilot project. The presentation was cut short due to time limitations, but if the group would like more information about the Baker

project or other information regarding WNV, we can arrange for an informational LIT meeting in the future.

Action Items for Next Meeting

- **JULIE** – Contact steering committee members to schedule pre-LIT meeting
- **JULIE** – Set up Doodle Poll for next LIT meeting (sometime in March)
- **JULIE** – Start inventorying and categorizing existing resources
- **ALL** – Review Prineville Existing Resources document and provide Julie with additional resources, information, data, etc.

Attached Documents

- Prineville Existing Resources – updated 1/15/2020
- Coming to Consensus
- Prineville Draft Charter – updated 1/14/2020
- Slides from Jackie's presentations on Baker TRP and West Nile Virus

Discussion points for next meeting

- Identify geographic parameters for planning purposes (refer to Action Areas developed by LIT in 2012)
- Develop threats inventory and begin categorizing threats