

Sage-grouse Partnership Steering Committee

Meeting Notes

April 15, 2014, 6:30 PM- 8:45 PM

Manyberries Curling Rink

Attendees:

David Heydlauff
Ralph Heydlauff

Sue Michalsky
Cliff Wallis

Christyann Olson

Regrets:

Darcy Wills

Review of March 11 Meeting Notes

SGP reviewed the previously distributed draft notes from the March 11, 2014 meeting and they were approved unanimously.

Future of SGP

- General discussion about increased availability and distribution of information remains important particularly in light of ranching community's increased concern about the Emergency Order's impact on operations; ongoing work to disseminate accurate and timely information is a critical and ongoing need.
- Action Plans defined in earlier meetings continue to be supported and moving forward with Ranch Plan development and doing extension work through "Range Day(s)" at the pilot project(s).
- Potential for opportunities to combine efforts and develop synergy with South of the Divide group (see below), Ranchers Stewardship Alliance Initiative and Milk River Watershed Council were reviewed. It was agreed that it would be worth pursuing. It is important to achieve SGP vision by adding value through connections and bringing other people and experts, agrologists, GIS, biologists etc.

South of Divide Initiative (Saskatchewan)

Sue provided a review of the South of Divide initiative in Saskatchewan. An MOU between Federal Gov't, Provincial Gov't and livestock producers will deal with Species at Risk and has taken almost 4 years of consultation. It includes in large part a results based financial incentive element. If rancher enters into the agreement and has one or more Species at Risk, they could qualify for remuneration and at the same time they will be considered in compliance with SARA and therefore be safe from prosecution under SARA. The thesis is that ranchers know what is happening on the ground and can manage for it if the right information is provided and appropriate incentives given. There currently is a sage-grouse pilot and a second year sage-grouse pilot as well as a sprague's pipit pilot location. SK gov't gave RSAI funds to develop the SG Module under this MOU. They also received some HSP funds. Payments were about \$10k and where there was long-running SG about \$20 – 30K per year. Approach is to reward producers at least in some way. The EO has impacted some participation. SM will provide a copy of the MOU to the committee. **ACTION: SUE**

Concerns with poor communication between groups including specialists; biologists, agrologists and ranchers. Monitoring of results will need to include the experts from each of these specialties. A regional picture is necessary.

Ranch Plan – discussion covered aspects we would want to include in a plan:

- Documentation of oral history – need to develop an outline of what is needed. CW and SM will develop outline for DH to review by May 1. **ACTION: CLIFF AND SUE**
- All to think about suitable collaborator who could assist with an in-depth oral history. Importance of practical day-to-day knowledge to be documented was discussed.
- Public Lands completed an inventory of Heydlauff holdings- CW will ask Terry Hood to provide committee with copy. **ACTION: CLIFF**
- Operation Grasslands Inventory – was done on Heydlauff holdings – DH will find and scan for committee. **ACTION: DAVID**
- Grazing Stocking Rates – Terry Hood and Barry Adams should have grazing stocking rates records. CW will contact them to obtain copies of these records for the 42 townships. **ACTION: CLIFF**
- Structures mapping and files – Ralph will contact Kyla Balderson, U of R student who conducted survey on this region and the Heydlauff lands to obtain a copy of her inventory. **ACTION: RALPH**

Access Control Tools – need to follow through from last meeting discussion regarding seasonal access controls with Terry Hood. CW will contact Terry. **ACTION: CLIFF**

Emergency Order – agreement that at this time we are better not putting too much energy into the EO. There are still no replies from EC to letter written from the SGP.

Economic Measures – discussion about importance of finding suitable expert to help define and conduct the economic measures. RSAI will be engaging someone and if they work out well, SGP could engage the same one.

Fence Flagging – Discussed briefly there are areas on the Heydlauff holdings that could be done, as well on the Armstrong side. Would be possible to organize volunteers, 3 hours 5 volunteers did 5 miles. Late fall, winter weather and frozen ground conditions are best for this work. CO to follow through. **ACTION: CHRISTYANN**

SGI Meeting in Idaho- Attendance, AWA has two seats reserved by Dave Naugle, Would like to send David Heydlauff, SM would like to have Kelly Williamson attend. SM to investigate the meeting more with Dave Naugle and see if we could have more seats at the meeting. SGP to cover expenses. **ACTION: SUE**

Request from Collin Beierbach to join the SGP - CO sent Terms of Reference in response to his expression of interest. CO will write and let him know we will add him to the mailing lists and contact him when the next meeting is arranged. **ACTION: CHRISTYANN**

Next meeting near end of May

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm