

**South Central Sage Grouse Working Group
Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2007
BLM Building, Rawlins Wyoming**

Attendees:

Randy Phipps, Tom Clayson, John Espy, Jack Berger, Frank Blomquist, Bill Nation, Barbara Parsons, Roger Cox, Tim Woolley, Karen Larsen, Chris Burkett (facilitator and recorder)

Guests:

Tom Christiansen
Dan Blake

Start Time: 8:50

Introduction and Preliminary Items:

Tom Christiansen opened the meeting by providing the SCLWG with an update on a wide variety of issues. These included:

- A recent legal challenge in Federal court. A suit has been brought against the USFWS regarding their finding that the Sage Grouse did not warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act. **Tom is following the situation and will keep the SCLWG appraised of the situation as it develops.**
- The local working group in Pinedale encountered a major disruption during the public review of their plan. It seems one member had concerns that were not voiced while the LWG was deliberating, but were aired in the public arena. Tom asked the SCLWG to review their charter and remember that they are working to find consensus. Members were also encouraged to work thru disagreements privately and as a group rather than debate them in the public arena.
- All project proposals are to be submitted to the SCLWG by Jan. 31. Two proposals have already been submitted and Tom expects more to follow before the deadline. These should be reviewed during the next meeting.

Frank Blomquist indicated he would be attending a Sage Grouse Continuity meeting on February 6-8. This is primarily a BLM effort tied to a habitat mapping project. **Frank agreed to provide the SCLWG with an overview during the next meeting.**

Dan Blake, who works for the USFWS in Rawlins, attended a portion of the meeting so he could better understand the working group concept and the plan that is being developed.

Minutes from the December Meeting:

The meeting minutes for the December meeting were reviewed and approved by the workgroup.

Public Comment:

Except for Dan Blake, no other members of the community participated during this meeting.

Discussion of the Group Chair Position:

Members noted that Randy is at the end of his term as chair and questioned if an election was needed to appoint someone new to this position. Many members indicated they were pleased with Randy's efforts. Although others indicated they would accept the chair position, none felt there was an urgent need to change the group's leadership. Ultimately, the group asked Randy to continue his leadership role until the plan is approved. At that time, the group will elect a new chair person.

Review of the Draft Plan:

Tim used the LCD projector to display the draft plan. He then described the changes he's made since the last meeting and the updates he will make before the next meeting.

After Tim's presentation, the attendees began reviewing the text within the draft plan and making corrections. The draft plan is too large to get thru in a single session. To facilitate the review during the next meeting the group agreed on the following actions:

- **Jan. 23 or 24 – Tim will provide the group with the most recent draft of this plan;** including updated biological information and the corrections made during this meeting.
- **By Feb. 1,** each member of the SCLWG will be responsible for reading the entire draft plan and providing comments back to Tim. **If members have concerns about text, they were instructed to provide a suggested revision rather than simply indicating “I have concerns about...”**
- **On Feb. 15, the SCLWG will reconvene.** By this time, Tim will have noted the areas of the draft plan where issues exist. **The group will consider each of these issues and resolve them as a group.**

Public Comment Period:

The SCLWG would like to have the draft plan finished by the March 8 meeting. If this occurs, it should be possible to present the plan to the public during open houses which will be held by the Wildlife Division near the end of March. Additionally, the SCLWG would provide a more formal presentation in Rawlins.

Tom Christiansen provided a brief description of the outreach efforts made by other local working groups.

As the plan progresses, the indicated individuals will be responsible for the following activities:
Tom Christiansen:

- will provide copies of the PowerPoint presentations used by other local working groups.

Tim Woolley:

- will review existing PowerPoint presentations and determine what portions can be “borrowed” and what will need to be created.
- will contact Wildlife Division personnel in Laramie and Green River to let them know the SCLWG would like to make a presentation during the upcoming open houses.

Barbara Parsons:

- will contact members of the press she knows to generate media interest in the SCLWG plan and the open houses.

Chris Burkett:

- will work with the WGFD personnel to load the SCLWG plan onto the Sage Grouse website.
- will work with Tim and others to coordinate efforts for the open houses and the presentation in Rawlins.
- After the public input process, Chris will be responsible for compiling the comments received.

Next Meetings:

Feb. 15, 2007

- Discuss comments from individuals.
- Review and decide on project proposals.
- Refine public input process.

March 8, 2007

- Try to finalize the draft plan that will go to the public for review.
- Finalize public input planning.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:15