Mellissa Wood Report,

Three Creeks: the appeal that Western Watershed and others had against Three Creek was dropped. BLM is working hard to get change applications done for the water rights and that will allow us to have the correct permit to set up the new troughs and turn water into them. BLM is working closely with Forest Service on these changes. Construction of range improvement is being coordinated with Taylor Payne (UGIP) and is ongoing.

Duck Creek Allotment Collaborative Monitoring Effort: Several different groups were interested in monitoring on the Duck Creek Allotment. BLM, Ranchers, GIP, USU Extension, USU University, Utah Division of Wildlife Recourses, SITLA, Western Watersheds, Yellowstone to Uinta’s Connection, and Wild Utah project were part of the group that met to see if we were interested in doing collaborative monitoring. There is general disagreement between BLM monitoring and condition assessments and monitoring done by environmental groups. Matt Preston, Salt Lake Field Office Manager decided that the group did not have the same goals in mind and it was not worth the time of the BLM to continue a collaborative process. From all meetings and discussions it doesn’t appear that the groups agree on what the shared goals would be. BLM will not be hosting any more meetings on collaborative monitoring for the Duck Creek allotment in the near future.

Duck Creek Allotment Appeal: The BLM went through litigation from 2008 to 2017 on the grazing permit renewal for the Duck Creek allotment with Western Watersheds Project and Wild Utah Project. The lower courts favored the environmental groups and BLM appealed that decision. The Interior Board of Land Appeals (an internal Department of Interior court appointed by the Secretary of the Interior) sided with the BLM. In January of 2019 Western Watersheds appealed that decision to Federal District Court. BLM is working closely with our internal lawyers as well as the Department of Justice to decide next steps in the case. Mellissa has talked to permittees about the appeal and will continue to update them and the CRM group when new information becomes available.

Peter Howard Timber Project Manager

The project that they have in Rich County for this year is the Red Rider Vegetation Management Project it runs from the Daniels Experimental Forest clear down almost to Old Canyon near Randolph and it is commercial timber sales, pre-commercial thinning, noxious weed spraying, a host off different activities, trying to mitigate some of the insect and disease damage they have up on the forest as well as diversify the structure and species that they have out there. To have a healthier forest and provide better wildlife habitat generally open things up so as far as the allotments you will have fewer trees more forage in the undergrowth at least in the short term in the next ten fifteen years. We’ve already sold the north part of Red Rider to Thomson Logging here in Randolph and that was approximately 12 million board feet in temple flats near Daniels Forest. We are taking right now through WRI three commercial thinning for this project a little over a thousand acres of extremely over stocked young trees and stands through that project area. That will open up those stands lower fuels better forage better wildlife
habitat. Since this is lodge pole it will keep the trees from stagnating and actually get back to a mature forest. If others are interested in the other commercial sales we are looking at two sales coming out in the southern half of the project around mud lake and otter creek later this fall probably in October. All the stuff around Goring’s property. Hopefully we will be able to coordinate with loggers, Goring and other private owners to get some logging done on their properties. With these projects we have tried to show where these projects are located so they will have minimal impact on the grazers. The loggers are responsible for repairing fences water pipelines you name it. Any updates to where those resources are we would greatly appreciate hearing about them. Taylor and I was talking and out range specialist out of Logan has a bunch of data but it would be good to make sure it is correct. I don’t believe there was any requirement for a resting period following logging and prescribed burning on the north end. We do want livestock owners to be aware of where we have equipment what’s going on. Prescribed burns in the aspen stands could happen as early as this fall. Most of the burns will be fairly small in scale. They have product up there on the stump that is sold that they don’t want impacted by the prescribe fire.

Nate

We are going to try to establish sage brush on our co-op property south of Woodruff and clean out some ponds while we have the equipment there and install a pump we used to have one years ago mostly state land BLM also had interest in cleaning out their own ponds. We could probably coordinate on the effort we do have plans for the dozer after so it will be a tight time table.

Taylor Payne

Three Creeks update

We were able to install about 35 miles of pipeline on BLM and private. We are ready to go with 95 troughs. We have a proposal coming this round with WRI and GIP to do 45 miles of pipeline and about 75 tire troughs. So that will be in the middle part of the three creeks project zone. Below the forest service but above the lower elevation ground. Mellissa we are waiting on getting water rights approved by BLM and Forest Service that’s a major hurdle we need to take care of and accomplish. Nested on private ground Kerry Stacey is straight west of woodruff he is planning on doing a pumping project and about a mile of pipeline to improve water and grazing distribution on private land riparian issues we are trying to address and take care of. We will be approaching WRI and GIP for that project. Another project will be a water project up on some SITLA land that has previously been brought out of CRP. Its in the north end of Rich County the person wants to do a new water well. We are working with STLA and Ethan Hollows to coordinate the project. We are looking for funding through GIP or NRCS. The well would be right in the middle of the big burn area so grazing would not happen for at least two more years. This coming spring and into the summer we are going to be working on the back side of the Crawfords in Utah it’s on the Cumberland allotment that’s managed by the Kemmerer BLM field office. Work will be done on SITLA land on an existing well to distribute water to livestock. We haven’t pumped water out of the well since 1970’s so we are going to make sure the water is good before we spend a lot of money on it. Ethan and his office is working to get the water right into their name. It’s a deep well about 650 ft. We have another project that will be applied for through WRI and Karl Flemming’s office to build border fencing on private land of Eldon Flinders he wants to include more of his private ground into the Three Creeks Project. GIP is not able to fund this so they are looking at WRI or Karls shop. We are also looking at doing a water system on the Rafter J Cattle Company which was previously owned by the Birch Creek Land Development. It is between Three Creeks and Deseret. This
will be taking care of distribution problems. The Grazing Improvement Program has been addressed to do more aerial gunning to help with predator control. On top of what WDRI and Wildlife Services already offers. That is one thing GIP can fund we have done some in the past and hope to do a whole lot more. We have been having a lot of coyote problems and a lot of mountain lion issues.

Brad Jessop

I just wanted to remind folks we have proposed a bull hog lope and scatter treatment up in the home ranch area will be proposed to the WRI group shortly. We have gotten feedback from Scott Walker and Scott McFarlane about proportions of trees to leave for mule deer since last meeting we revised out polygons a bit to leave more trees for mule deer. So at this point we are planning on moving forward with the proposal at WRI and see if it gets funded we would be implementing it this fall. Grazing allotments this would affect is South Woodruff and Mechum. Stephen Huffaker and Bill Kennedy need to be notified about the project.

Hailey Wayment

Student from USU working for Terry Messmer doing sage grouse research on Three Creeks and also on Deseret. She will have 3 to 4 technicians working with her. They will be looking at bird survival on chicks. On Deseret they will be looking at how grazing affects the survival of the chicks. How the grazing impacts the year-long needs of the brood.

The questions of the Lek count came up but those with the data were not at the meeting to inform us on what they were.

There was no objections to the projects that were proposed. All of the group unanimously approved the projects that were presented.

Dallen Smith

I do not have projects for WRI but I do have grant funding as a new agent. One of the projects that I am looking at is writing a guidebook for doing prescribe burning of sagebrush and Juniper. I have been talking to some people and understand the need for some thermal cover for mule deer. I would like help from everyone in the group to write the Guidebook I would involve other people to. I found a guidebook that was written in Wyoming I’m not saying that it is going to be the only resource. I have some funding and would like to hire Jack Mononi who recently retired from the Cody Wyoming BLM office, that prescribe burned about 21,000 acres during his career. Another Guidebook that was suggested by Terry Messmer is How to do revegetation after fire and other disturbances. The Guidebook will need to be written so that it adheres to the MOU the Governor signed saying no sagebrush removal will negatively impact sage grouse.

Tour Plans

Jay Tanner has partners for conservation coming to Rich County on Sept 25th to look at Three Creeks to see some of the Coordination that it took to make the project work. There would be about 200 people at the tour.

The CRM plan needs to be updated.