



# Sagebrush Ecosystem Program

Tim Rubald, Program Manager

# Background

- March 2012 – Governor Sandoval created Advisory Committee for sage-grouse management
- July 31, 2012 – Recommendations to the Governor for Conservation of Greater Sage-grouse in Nevada
- Recommends creation of Sagebrush Ecosystem Program – Council and Technical Team
- January/February 2013 – Council appointed and Technical Team hired
- June 2013 – AB461 passed and signed into law; the first of its kind in any state

# Council Members

Sagebrush Ecosystem Council = Council = SEC

## Nine Voting Members

- Mining - Allen Biaggi
- Ranching - Steve Boies
- Agriculture - Doug Busselman
- Sportsmen - Jeremy Drew
- Tribal Nations - Gerry Emm
- Local Government - J.J. Goicoechea (Chair)
- Energy - Starla Lacey
- General Public - Kent McAdoo (Vice-Chair)
- Conservation and Environmental - Tina Nappe

## Six Ex-Officio Members

- BLM, State Director - Amy Lueders
- USFWS, State Supervisor - Ted Koch
- USFS, H-T Forest Supervisor - Bill Dunkelberger
- NDOW, Director - Tony Wasley
- NDA, Director - Jim Barbee
- DCNR, Director - Leo Drozdoff

# Technical Team Members

## Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team = SETT

- Tim Rubald -Program Manager
- John Copeland -Division of Forestry
- Melissa Faigeles -Division of State Lands
- Kelly McGowan -Nevada Department of Ag
- Lara Niell -NDOW

# Major Responsibilities

## SETT is Staff to the Council

- State Plan and BLM Sub-regional EIS Alternative
- Conservation Credit System
- Sage-grouse Habitat Suitability Map for Nevada
- USFWS Datacall/Database Development
- Consultation with project proponents in coordination with the BLM/USFS
- Other responsibilities as pertinent to goal and assigned by SEC

# State Plan and EIS Alternative

## Further Development

- 2012 “State Plan” Revisions
- Alternative E originally developed from 2012 plan

## Major Concepts

- Avoid, Minimize, Mitigate
- No net unmitigated loss due to anthropogenic disturbances
- Reduce the rate of loss due to fire and invasive weeds
- Conservation credit system

Working closely with BLM and providing additional detail for the Sub-regional EIS

# Conservation Credit System

- Primary regulatory mechanism to meet the objective of No Net Unmitigated Loss of sage-grouse habitat due to anthropogenic disturbances
- Still early in the conceptual phase
- Have contracted a consultant, Environmental Incentives, LLC, headquartered in South Lake Tahoe, to develop metrics and overall system
- Anticipate having major functions of the system in place by September 2014

# Sage-Grouse Habitat Suitability Map

- Contract with the USGS – Dr. Pete Coates to develop for the state (similar to Bi-State mapping effort)
- Funding through NDOW and DCNR – BLM holds contract
- Collaborative effort – BLM, SETT, additional state and federal agencies and experts in the field
- Use as basis of State's management and likely incorporate with BLM's LUPs



# USFWS Data Call/ Database Development

- Gather all projects for data call – September 2014
- Establish report to put information in context for USFWS
- Create publically available database so information on projects ecosystem wide are shared – Collaborating with PCD – Lee Turner
- SETT will be the ongoing reporting location for all projects in Nevada pertaining to the Sagebrush Ecosystem – no matter size or property ownership

# Other Responsibilities

- Coordination and collaboration with state and federal agencies and other local groups
- Nevada Cheatgrass Action Team
- WAFWA Fire/Invasives Initiative
- Cooperating Agency – BLM RMP Amendments
- Science Workgroup for Technical Guidance – bringing Nevada's best and brightest to focus on the issues
- Other pertinent activities as they arise...

# The Sagebrush Ecosystem Program and Mining

- We work closely with the CD Program and they have regional field staff **Doni Bruland in Elko, Steve Weaver in Winnemucca**, and soon an Ely field staff person, in developing “on the ground” projects, working with various industries and the CDs. They are our local eyes and ears and regularly work with the industry
- Mitigation is currently under an MOU with the mining industry, and DCNR through the SETT
- The Conservation Credit System will eventually handle all mitigation regarding the ecosystem
- Many issues with mining will be addressed through the BLM/FS Sub-regional EIS currently in draft form, including the Conservation Credit System

## SEP and Mining continued....

- Mining itself not a significant threat to Sage-grouse
- Siting of infrastructure can make it a larger issue
- Sound, visual impacts, increase in predation, traffic, and other issues may not affect males but can affect reproductive success
- Linear features (roads, pipelines, etc.) are a vector for invasive weeds and fragment landscapes
- Vertical linear features increase susceptibility to predation
- Water issues, particularly de-watering, can impact area seeps and springs, reducing the availability of brood rearing habitat which is the limiting factor for Sage-grouse in the Great Basin

# Thank You!



# Questions?

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