



Lesser Prairie-Chicken Coordination Call Minutes

April 18, 2013

MODERATOR: Barth Crouch

PARTICIPANTS: Bob McCready, Barth Crouch, Patty Knupp, Ken Collins, Carol Beidelman, Steve Tryon, Tish McDaniel, Mike Disney, Allison Arnold, Julia Bevers, Zach Eddy, Eileen Dey, Daly Edmunds, Sean Kyle, Jason Thomas, Clay Nichols, George Chavez, Chanda Pettie, David Hoge, Chuck Kowaleski, Carol Blocksome, Philip Barbour, Jason Thomas, Andy Burr, Steve Swaffar

USFWS Listing Update: Allison Arnold

- USFWS following same schedule, nothing new to report. The final rule is still scheduled to be made at the end of Sept. FWS may soon open public comment period and if so, there will be multiple press releases. FWS Staff are presently engaged in pre-decisional discussions.

FSA Update: FSA update on CRP Conferencing w/ NRCS and USFWS

- FSA staff continue to plug away at draft language for the Conference Report. The draft document is about 50 pages in length. FSA continues to meet with Hagan, Ungerer from NRCS and Dave Walker from the USFWS. Question: any chance of getting the EBI fixed soon? Answer is no, but FSA staff are working on another approach that might address this concern. Comment: giving timing of nesting season, it is difficult to coordinate CRP plantings and other treatments (e.g., treating Love grass). NRCS NM is planning on doing surveys prior to any treatments. Texas has found significant numbers of leks and birds in lovegrass CRP. According to TNC NM in good years there are indeed leks in weeping lovegrass CRP on the NM side as well.

Interstate Working Group Activities - Sean Kyle

- Latest draft of range-wide plan has been released and is open for review. There has not been a deadline set for comments. Webinars will be scheduled to provide further information on plan and to offer the opportunity to pose questions about the plan. There now a draft of the CHAT v. 2.0 up on the CHAT website. It uses the same sort of methodology as the previous

CHAT but includes the focal and other priority areas. It is a draft and the IWG is still working on it and tweaking it. Year two of the aerial surveys are underway. If the weather improves, the surveys may conclude by the end of the month. Preliminary feedback is that they are detecting more leks but fewer total number of birds. Note, this is only preliminary info given that the surveys are ongoing. Early feedback from state agencies is that numbers are down, but again, spring ground surveys are ongoing and so this could change. Sean also explained that any LEPC individuals seen are recorded by the helicopter surveys so they are getting hens counted that are not usually counted on the ground surveys which focus on birds using the lek.

Other:

Announcement -- Kathy Boydston from TPWD was just hired by AFWA to fill an Energy Development/Wildlife Liaison position. She will be working from Austin, Texas.

Carol Blocksome -- LEPC Webinar aimed at KS Producers on April 30. Look for an announcement.

NEXT CALL IS May 23TH, call 719-457-0816 and use 127349 for access to the call!