

PVHP meeting notes

11/2/2012

Started meeting with introductions and a reminder of where we are and where we've been in this process. Reviewed the outline for this meeting and reviewed the collaborative process. The group was asked to review the draft PVHP habitat plan outline for next month's meeting.

Discussed how to collaboratively decide where initial habitat treatments should be done.

- Jess suggested having partners identify areas for potential habitat treatments and bringing them to the PVHP
- Mike Murry agreed with this line of thought and they were willing to identify potential treatment areas on a map
- Jim from TU thought other groups besides agencies would have ideas to bring to the table
- FS wants to look at what are the most critical areas first but the district ranger thought they would be able to gather the information to answer this PVHP question.
- It was agreed upon that by January the BLM and FS will identify potential habitat projects/important areas for mule deer management and Game and Fish will have identified treatment areas for the December meeting

Dan Tinker presented information on forest resilience

- Educated the group on forest fire regimes and the factors affecting them and the response of forested ecosystems to fire and disease outbreaks
- Among current research there is no consensus on the direct influence of bark beetle outbreaks and subsequent fire occurrence
- Encouraged the group to rethink the definition of forest restoration and realize it may not be defined as what the forest use to look like
- Several questions were asked about how the shrub community responds to disturbances in the forest (beetle kill/fires), how this information relates to mule deer habitat and what the possible trend for the forest would be in the next decade

Shawn Lanning presented information on GIS maps of the Platte Valley

- Important to use these maps as a reference only as use for finer scale studies would require some ground-truthing
- Introduced the WISDOM application with the group and let the group know it is an on-line mapping application available to the public

- There was some interest in having some type of training or webinar for WISDOM

Neil Thagard presented information on the Sportsman Value Project

- Attempts to identify sportsman values of the landscape and incorporate it as a GIS layer to add more of a human dimension/recreation aspect to other mapping projects
- The group determined it was more appropriate application for the Platte Valley Mule Deer Initiative project than for the PVHP

Wendy Haas and Steve Luce presented historic information on brush dominated communities and forested ecosystems

- Reviewed historic photo points and vegetation transects with exclosures and generally there was improvement in diversity and composition of the plant community outside the exclosure
- Broadcast seeding for shrubs like bitterbrush were not successful. Paula transplanted shrubs in treatment areas in CO by planted them and protecting the seedlings from grazing pressure, very labor intensive.
- Responses in understory production from aspen treatments varies from site to site
- Tom Ryder asked if there are ways for the FS to increase the number of acres treated, especially with PVHP funding. Steve said yes and suggested looking at the entire watershed
- FS already has projects identified with the NEPA process already completed and suggested PVHP starts with those
- Issues of travel management surfaced with a suggestion that more travel management is needed, such as restricting snowmobile use on critical range. It was advised that some roads do need to be maintained to effectively harvest animals. Steve said the goal was to limit user created roads and FS roads that are essentially “duplicates” (i.e parallel roads that end up at the same place)

Tom Ryder presented information on how the PVHP funding will work

- Money will be kept within Game and Fish and ultimately an internal team will determine whether or not projects are funded based on the PVHP habitat plan
- Minimum of a 5:1 match required (3:1 for short term projects, 5:1 for mid-term projects, 7:1 for long-term projects)
- There will be a standardized application form with an application period 4x a year that ties into other potential funding sources
- Anyone can propose projects and I will put together the application packet and give to the internal team
- Question was asked about in-kind funding and if that could be considered a match