

Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group
Tuscarora Assessment Project Planning Meeting Minutes

Tuscarora, Tuesday, July 28, 2009 2:00 – 5:00 – Sidney Teske's Yard

There were nineteen people in attendance: 3 BLM; 1 NDF; 1 FWS; 1 Coopt. Ext.; 1 RC&D Coordinator; 1 Elko County commissioner; 1 Elko County Road Supervisor; 7 Tuscarora residents; 2 Tuscarora ranching; 1 NNSG

The meeting opened with the report from the pre-tour group that met a week ago for a preliminary overview of the region. Ron Arthaud of Tuscarora, stated that the recommendation would be to start within the town of Tuscarora and move out from there as planning provides success.

Kent McAdoo, UNR Coopt. Ext., reviewed discussions from the previous Tuscarora Assessment meetings that concluded that a Demonstration Project approach would be useful. Weed control is only a step toward rehabilitation. In order to provide long-term recovery, weeds would need to be replaced with the appropriate vegetation. The group would decide what the focused criteria for a Project would be. The project would be sizable; the weed elimination methodologies would be specific to land ownership, vegetation complex and preferences. There are three Elko County lots within the township. Kent pointed out that in most cases, a combination of killing approaches is used in order to gain ground.

Tuscarora residents discussed some of the current methods that owners were using to try to keep the white top under control. Everyone recognizes that the problem is so wide spread that everyone will need to be on board in order to contain the infestation.

Sharon Rhoads stated that on their ranch property aerial spraying had been quite effective. Aerial spaying is successful used in open space situations. Sharon stated the cost to be \$25 an acre. There might be places toward the outlying area of Tuscarora where aerial spraying might work.

Elko County commission, Sheri Eklund-Brown inserted that the commission could likely be a partner to the project and provide some assistance.

BLM stated that they are doing many cooperative projects that include public land and private with reasonable agreements. Tyson Gripp said that BLM stands ready with a work force, and any help they can provide. Wendy Fuell, BLM, Supervising Natural Resource Specialist for the Tuscarora Field Office, said that Mark Coca, weed specialist would be assigned to help with the project when he returns from an assignment in Reno.

It was pointed out that most grants that support such projects like to see sweat-equity contributions from the communities where the projects are sited. NDF mentioned they have 2 programs with a 25% cost share. Many of the roads within the township have weeds. This led to a discussion on the status of roads, and if special access for weed control is required. Also, many property owners in Tuscarora are absentee owners and hardly ever get to town.

Shammy Rodriguez, chairman of the Owyhee Conservation District stated they would provide seed to follow on after the spraying program. They might also have spraying rigs that could be used. The District cooperators divide out the areas county roads, and with funds from the state and the county, spray the county roads each year.

The group broke for a walking tour of the town at 3:30, and returned at 4:20 to finalize their planning.

Jeff Arnberger, BLM Fire Specialist, brought up the Green Stripping project that took place about 10 years ago. This was an NDF/BLM coordinated project involving a 125 acre swath, encompassing the perimeter area of the town. The area was brush-beat to reduce fire threats to the town. The project area was designed with a maintenance provision, but the timeframe had passed. Jeff from BLM and Ryan Shane of NDF, will check on the details of this agreement. Elko County participated as a partner, and the project was mentioned on an agenda. Sheri was going to check and see what the county had.

Ryan Shane refocused the group on the possibilities and advantages of forming a Fire Safe Council in the Tuscarora region. The group reviewed what they knew about Councils and decided to pursue that mechanism for gathering the area residents around. There is a \$10 per family per year fee. Ron Arthaud, and Sid Teske volunteered to get in touch with Mike McCarty for further information, and a possible community information meeting. Sid requested a list of all the contacts for the Tuscarora Planning Project for their use. Leta will get that to Ron and Sid.

It was suggested that we decide on a timeframe for the development of a project description for the weed containment Demonstration Project. As much as possible, needs to get accomplished this year to establish a plan that we can begin working around. Otis Tipton suggested we consider formulating our proposal by budget time for the county. BLM's budget period begins in October. It was decided that a core group of BLM, NDF, Coopt. Extension, FWS, and Tuscarora residents, gather to define the optimum boundary for the Project and lend language to a proposal document. The proposal would be ready by November.

Submitted: Leta Collord