

NNSG Board Minutes, Wednesday, September 7, 2011

Attending: Larry Hyslop, Orson Tingey, Lucy Downer, Doug Clarke, Leta Collord, Steve Dondero, David Overcast, Gar Abbas, Kristi McKinnon, Chris Jasmine, Ryan Shane. Presenters from Great Basin Institute: Jerry Kier, Director, Nick Brancato, NV Conservation Corps crew head and Forest Service, Recreation Nancy Taylor

President Larry Hyslop noted the absence of a quorum. Introductions were made.

- Jerry Kier introduced himself and Nick from the Great Basin Institute and reviewed the Secret Pass – Lamoille Trail project. (See GBI web page for details of their organization. <http://www.thegreatbasininstitute.org/>)

Highlights of the presentation:

- Phase I of the trail was financed with a Q-I grant. Work began on the Lamoille Canyon – Talbot Creek leg and has progressed 4 miles east during the 2010 – 2011 season. When completed the trail route will be 48.57 miles long.
- Nick Brancato enthused over the crew’s spirit and hard work. The crews seem to be well received by locals, and folks have been visiting the construction sites. The Trail required more logistical revisions than originally thought to accommodate safety factors on switchbacks. This required demanding timbering and rockwork.
- Funds have supported the first two years of trail construction, and Jerry explained surplus funds from other projects have been transferred to Secret-Lamoille to extend the work into the next season.
- The construction in the next phase to reach Talbot Creek will require locating a base camp as the distance from the highway is too long for crews to access and get daily work done. Steve Dondero, BLM noted that there could be a chance to partner with BLM on their June training (?) to transport timbers, etc. to the base camp. (These types of partnering efforts will facilitate the trail construction.)
- Jerry works with Mark Kimbrough, Washo Zephyr Consulting, Carson City. Mark helped plan, advertise, and build the Tahoe Rim Trail. Jerry spoke to the importance of engaging with the community to build a “legacy” project.
- The date of Saturday, October 22 was suggested for the Trail Tour. Leta volunteered to coordinate the outreach and plan for the day. Nancy Taylor, Lucy Downer, Doug Clarke, and Larry Hyslop will be the committee. GBI will check with Mark to verify if the Oct. date will work.

Public comment period:

- Chris Jasmine, USFWS and NNSG Sage-grouse Pod chair explained that there is a new approach locally to unite the interested parties and coordinate activities related to sage-grouse conservation. The group is titled, Sage

Brush Habitat Conservation Fund. He will notify the board of these meetings for any and all to attend. He brought up a possible letter of support for the grant request to NDEP by the Humboldt CWMA (weed management) for a three-year term coordinator. The timing seemed too short for submittal.

Fire Ecology Pod, headed by Ryan Shane, NDF. Ryan explained that fire ecology is different from fighting fire, as we know it. The emphasis is to focus on landscape health and understand how controlled burn enhances the ecological states. The board discussed the sensitivity of “fire in the system”, and suggested an educational symposium on the topic.

Chris expanded on the sage-grouse conservation group taking a more formalized nature than the NNSG pod. Lee Turner, NDOW Partners in Conservation lead will assist with the group in leveraging funding and coordination. The initiating management premises are sage-grouse conservation, and cheat grass reduction. They envision a chartered organization with a board where projects will be ranked and meetings are held quarterly. They hope for private partners as well as, agencies.

Agency updates:

Forest Service, Gar Abbas reports a 12 acre planned burn in the Harrison Pass area with the purpose of breaking up the mat of Medusahead, a noxious weed, in order to facilitate successful spraying at an appropriate time. Chris added that he heard of a pellet that was successful in turning back Medusahead.

BLM: Dave Overcast, Tuscarora Associate Manager spoke to weed monitoring. Bryan Fuell, Wells Manager is working on the Wind Mountain towers project in north Elko County. 50 towers will be constructed on the Nevada side of the project area. A question was asked regarding the Horse Preserve proposal that BLM circulated this season. There is a Tech Advisory group that is reviewing the proposals. BLM will host a “Let’s Move Outside” activity in September.

NNSG Activities:

Doug Clarke has been in touch with the local Ruby Pipeline lead, and they are working on a tour of the sage-grouse rehabilitation areas, to include a discussion of the Generation Tower facility. Doug suggests a bus for the tour to facilitate onboard explanations and dialogue. People who have expressed interest in attending are: Debra Ellers, with the Sagebrush Habitat Conservation Fund, Cattlemen’s Assoc., Western Folklife Center, also private landowners should be contacted that are within the affected zone.

A discussion followed of the planned and proposed energy generation and transmission lines and management implications in our region. It was mentioned that energy was on the NV Cattlemen's agenda for the fall. Also, Cooperative Extension might be presenting on the topic. NNSG should find out what other meetings will cover energy, conservation, and management before serious plans are approached.

The next board meeting was set for Wednesday, September 28 to accommodate planning needs for the Ruby Pipeline Tour, and the suggested Trails Tour, October 22.

Submitted with edits, Leta Collord