

Cooperative Allotment Management Planning

Location: Martin Basin, Winnemucca, Nevada



Project Summary: An educational and collaborative process was employed to address grazing concerns within Martin Basin (MB) as part of an effort to develop an adaptive management alternative in the AMP. The hope is that this process can be expanded to other FS and BLM allotments.

Resource Challenge: In response to the draft EIS for MB, the permittees, in conjunction with numerous other partners, submitted an alternative to Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest staff, which the staff agreed to incorporate into the final EIS. Generally, the alternative was based on the collaborative development of AMPs. These plans were to use riparian PFC assessments and develop resource management

strategies based on objectives and the use of trend-based assessment and monitoring, rather than annual indicators alone. Throughout the process, a number of resource issues and differences of opinion surfaced. In response to these issues, the Nevada Department of Agriculture, MB permittees, and the Santa Rosa Ranger District jointly requested NRST assistance. The objective was to develop grazing strategies that were acceptable to all parties by establishing a mutual understanding of the resource issues and assessment and monitoring techniques.

Key Partners: FS, Martin Basin permittees, NV Dept. of Agriculture, FWS, NV Cooperative Extension Service, Resource Concepts, Inc. (range consultants), NRST and

network members, NV Dept. of Wildlife (NDOW), NV Cattlemen's Association, BLM, Humboldt County commissioners, and local permittees (beyond Martin Basin).

Activities:

Prework: The requestors took the lead in terms of outreach and workshop logistics. Design of the workshops was developed during numerous conference calls among NRST, network members, and requestors.

Creeks and Communities (C&C) Workshop: A 1-day introductory workshop was organized to foster group discussion of the situation in MB, explain the C&C strategy and how it might help address issues in

the MB area, and determine group interest in moving forward.

Collaborative Adaptive Management Workshop: A 2-day community workshop was held, with 1 day spent in the field assessing stream reaches and making changes to the FS matrices when on-the-ground conditions proved different than descriptions and conditions provided. The second day was spent inside working through a root cause analysis as a means for establishing objectives, standards, and monitoring parameters on a specific site.

Community-Based PFC and Matrix Assessment: Over 2 days, an experienced interdisciplinary team and stakeholders together walked segments of two creeks (6-8 miles) in the MB allotment. The group assessed both PFC and matrices indicators that were developed by the FS to meet the intent of the Record of Decision (ROD) and to determine

whether the terms and conditions established in the Biological Opinion (BO) for Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) were being met. The third day was spent inside discussing assessment results, livestock management techniques, and long-term monitoring strategies.

Outcomes: These sessions initiated and enhanced the adaptive management process within the EIS and the ROD, as well as incorporated PFC into the biological assessment (BA), BO, and ROD. The group was able to reach consensus on the ability and process to change the matrices to fit site-specific situations and started the process for focusing on resource specific objectives rather than utilization standards. The group identified the need to monitor trend and developed a practical monitoring strategy involving the FS, permittees, and NDOW that should be possible to accomplish with the available funding

and workforce. The science-based alternative that was jointly developed during the sessions was incorporated into the EIS and the ROD. The EIS was ultimately appealed by Western Watersheds Project. This group is outside the local area and, while not excluded, no deliberate outreach was conducted to invite them to participate in the process. The EIS was remanded back to the FS and a revised EIS is expected to be out for review in the winter of 2008. Regardless of the appeal, working relationships among all individuals involved have improved significantly. The group's new capacity, both in terms of technical knowledge and social dynamics, will be used to address the remainder of streams in the MB planning area. To continue to build capacity within the community, a grazing course has been scheduled for the fall of 2008.



"This process developed relationships and group understanding of ecological processes that will be beneficial in other management decisions, planning processes, etc. in this area and surrounding locales."

Gary McCuin (November 2007)
Nevada Department of Agriculture