

## Report Argenta 2016 EOS Review

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**Date** February 9, 2017  
**Location** Internet, conference call and/or BLM Battle Mountain Office  
**Host** Laura Van Riper

### Participants

Jamie Dafoe  
Laura Van Riper  
Genevieve Skora  
Jon Sherve  
Gant Massey  
Jack Alexander  
Ken Cole  
Steve Leonard  
Kim Dow  
Kathryn Dyer  
Adam Cochran  
Lynn Tomera  
Eddyann Fillippini  
Sam Ault  
Mark Gonzalaz  
Shawn & Angie Meriluch  
Mike Lunn  
Bob Schweigert  
Steve Cote

(NVSO) = Kim, Kathryn & Adam

### Attachments

- Kim Dow's meeting notes
- Met/not met comparison table
- Electric fencing proposals (Rock Creek & Park)
- 2017 Stockmanship Plan B
- Draft cooperative Agreement

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## Argenta 2016 EOS Review

### Update on Actual Use (Sam)

Tomera and Meriluch Actual Use sent to CMG 2/7

Actual use reports have been submitted by all permittees.

#### DISCUSSION

- There are no AUM calculations (Ken Cole)
- It would also be useful to have AUM calculations for 2015 for comparison (Ken Cole)
- True no AUM calculation, Sam will complete for final report (Laura Van Riper)
- Sam will also include 2015 AUM calculations (Laura Van Riper)

→ *DECISION: Sam will complete 2015 and 2016 AUM calculations for final report*

→ *DECISION: Sam will send Filippini actual use to CMG*

### 2016 EOS Report Comments and Responses (Sam)

Excel file sent to CMG 2/8 from Sam

For the most part, we went line by line through the excel spreadsheet until about comment 49, then we skipped to 96 (R2 addressed later in agenda) and 99 (see below). We did this because many of the comments dealt with similar issues. Discussion notes below are captured below by topical areas; see Kim's notes for additional line by line details.

#### DISCUSSION TOPICS

##### Length of public comment period

- CMG can revisit 15 day comment period for 2016 if needed (Laura Van Riper)
- Kathryn -- seems we probably won't since that's how we've been doing it for past two years. (Laura Van Riper)
- I agree with Kathryn (Shawn & Angie)
- Shawn - already doing more than any other permittees in terms of public comment (Laura Van Riper)
- Did anyone read Katie's comments? She had plenty to say. (Ken Cole)
- I think that the comment period should be longer. (Ken Cole)
- Shawn - 15 days plenty (Laura Van Riper)
- Well, Katie's comments that were submitted late were not considered. (Ken Cole)
- Already getting a lot more information on web, etc than on any other allotment (Laura Van Riper)
- Settlement agreement does not even require this step, already a surplus opportunity (Kathryn). Often 7 days comment periods are used. (Laura Van Riper)
- Getting quality public comments requires more time (Laura Van Riper)
- Aren't we already up against a time crunch to finish the monitoring and adapt the information into the next year's plan? (Bob Schweigert)
- Make sure that email docs to existing interested parties (i.e., Katie) (Laura Van Riper)
- Ken's comments were only ones submitted on time -- so demonstrates that this timeframe is too short. We considered Bob and Jamie's that were late. (Laura Van Riper)

- Move Nov meeting a week earlier (Laura Van Riper)
- This would allow for a 3 week comment period (Laura Van Riper)
- Also move Oct EOS monitoring up a week (Laura Van Riper)
- I would appreciate a 3 week period. Agency workload makes quick comment periods hard to work into schedule. I also understand scheduling issues on the other side. I appreciate the late comments being posted to the web. (Genevieve Skora)
- We all need to do a better job of upholding due dates (Laura Van Riper)
- We can revisit at end of the day to see if we can bump Oct/Nov meeting to allow for 3 week comment period. If that doesn't work, we'll stick with 15 days and continue to post late comments to web for transparency (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION (made at end of day):** MLFO decided comment period will remain 15 days. 2017 EOS Report will be directly emailed to Katie, in addition to CMG, to avoid delays.

### **Fencing and rest**

- Jamie -- refer to Bob's email in response to Foree's comments. That is applicable to these comments as well (Laura Van Riper)
- Given the almost total lack of improvements proposed in 1984 RPS/1988 RPS, we are trying to use the best tools available at this time. Some of those tools, due to the failure of nearly any improvements, are fences. If the Spring developments, well, reservoirs etc HAD been built we would be having a very different conversation that MAY not include fences. (Jamie Dafoe)
  - I apologize I meant to say the "total lack of improvements actually implemented" (Jamie Dafoe)
  - Jamie -- almost total lack of improvements implemented prior on Argenta. If they had been done, we would be having a different conversation. We are now trying to identify best available tools given situation. (Laura Van Riper)
- Ken -- should not be considering fences for these problems and should close use areas for the year (Laura Van Riper)
- Rest was considered, but not selected as NRST's recommendation. (Laura Van Riper)
- Shawn - improvements have been made on the ground, and rest has occurred with rotations, etc (Laura Van Riper)
- Given all of the information and data, there were improvements, so that's why Use Area rest was not selected as NRST's recommendation -- Kathryn (Laura Van Riper)
- Shawn -- on recorded disputing Ken's 'abusive livestock grazing' comments (Laura Van Riper)
- This topic was fully explained in the response to WWP from SD Ruhs. (mike lunn)
- These areas haven't necessarily had rest. They have been grazed every year. (Ken Cole)
- Kathryn- Holocheck's classic definition of rest is no livestock use for an entire year. Discussion here is that rest to the plant in terms of growing season rest through deferment. Purpose and amount of rest for a particular situation would be defined by physiological need of plant in that situation. Refer to Grazing Response Index ( Laura - this was discussed at length as the framework NRST was using in development of SA) (Laura Van Riper)
- BLM response #6 explains interpretation of rest - applies to comment #32 (mike lunn)
- Shawn - look at utilization reports in uplands was slight all over Argenta, so why Ken is against riparian and giving them the rest Ken is looking for year round is not understood (Laura Van Riper)
- Ken -- year round rest can be accomplished through closing use areas (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION:** NRST is not going to change their recommended 2017 Stockmanship Plan.

- Ken - make sure there is decision that can be appealable for any of electric fencing for this year. Sam - yes there will be (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION:** *Decisions regarding construction of temporary electric fences will be appealable. (see agenda item below for more information)*

- I would submit that improvements made in meeting the utilization requirements does not equate to improvement of habitat. (Ken Cole)
- We don't have any long-term objectives, the SA only deals with annual use indicators. The fact that we don't have long-term objectives has been discussed as a problem. Long term data was collected at riparian areas and these data are available to permit renewal process. BLM also has long-term upland data. (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DISCUSSIO ONLY:** *No decision made.*

- (Comment #10) note that cows got into fence at low point where crossed creek. Modifications to that structure will be completed this year. (Laura Van Riper)
- If balancing scales, note that fences around Slaven and Ratfink were effective (Laura Van Riper)
- List all R1 fences that were effective (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION:** *Note planned modifications to Mill Creek fence will be in responses and report; and note that all other R1 fences were effective.*

- Kathryn - add comment to Ken's note that CMG was informed about the likelihood that additional temporary fences would delay PRT process. This was conjecture, not a definite outcome -- PRT has not confirmed this/ (Laura Van Riper)
- Ken - certainly re-directs resources away from MLFO if they have to address these new fences (Laura Van Riper)
- Ken - payments for analysis of fencing projects is paid for by the public (Laura Van Riper)
- Bob - that is BLM's job...BLM has to do NEPA analysis and monitoring. Ken's point is this is a public subsidy to the livestock industry. Position taken with regarding to all public lands grazing. WPP largely funded by contributions, someone is paying for their time too (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DISCUSSIO ONLY:** *No decision made.*

### **Use of met/not met & statistical uncertainty terminology**

Please also see next agenda item (met/not met comparison) because we used that table to demonstrate how met/not met would be defined and used in the final report.

- Bob -- a bunch of these comments focus on same thing. Really encapsulating issue in #24. (Laura Van Riper)
- In final version, met does not equal exceedance of threshold – it refers to whether SA terms were met (thresholds were not exceeded). Definitions page will be included in the report (Laura Van Riper)
- Given our discussion on 24 et al, about "met", "not met" etc., I think we should include a paragraph that explains the ongoing scientific dispute about confidence intervals post dispute resolution. (mike lunn)

→ **DECISION:** Use the terminology in the met/not met comparison table below for the final report.

→ **DECISION:** Make a footnote that the interpretation represents the decision in the dispute resolution(s). Also note that there is significant disagreement among CMG members regarding the existing dispute resolution decision

- (Comment 21) is not accurate. Delete NRST and replace with MLFO chose language from a dispute resolution. ( Mark G)
  - #21 Mark - NRST did not recommend statistically uncertain language, that was MLFO language from dispute resolution (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION:** Change will be made

### **Streambank alteration**

- (comment #25) Bob - Not all data that was collected in 2015/2016 is reported in here (ie., AIM and HAF). Streambank alteration is in the SA -- Bob says okay. (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION:** Streambank alteration information will continue to be collected and reported, but not included in determination of met/not met per settlement agreement.

### **Sample size & key species**

- Mark - leave it at 10 b/c that's what we agreed to last year. He will find documents. (Laura Van Riper)
- Jack - we've been using 10 in other existing cooperative monitoring agreements with BLM. Adam also has same recollection as Mark (Laura Van Riper)
- Bob stands by his comment #33 (Laura Van Riper)
- Sample size = per key spp per monitoring site (Sam). Does it count if you have to zig-zag count to find 10 plants? (Shawn) (Laura Van Riper)
- If you have to hunt that hard to find 10 plants in transect, that should be one of the disqualifying factors (Shawn & Bob) (Laura Van Riper)
- Sam – if forced to do it that way (zig-zag) in order to capture herbaceous utilization, then it counts (Laura Van Riper)
- Mark - what Shawn is describing sounds like an improper site. If you have to deviate from protocol to find plant...doesn't meet definition of key spp. (Laura Van Riper)
- Kathryn -- did zig-zag in 2015 not to get more samples of a particular spp. It was due to the fact that there were several sites in very limited topographic range or micro-sites (i.e., close to other ecological sites). Done to maintain transect in proper site and/or to compare grazed and un-grazed. (Laura Van Riper)
- Shawn - Sansininea (2015) - Jamie, that's why the geothermal sites were established -- b/c that was occurring. Transects being run in inappropriate lengths to find species. (Laura Van Riper)
- Mark - when you get to a sample point on those transects and don't find species move forward 2 paces and look again and again, and again. So already have mechanism within protocol for finding these spp. If you run full length and don't have adequate size, then it's not a key spp. Don't zig-zag (Laura Van Riper)
- This problem has been addressed through protocols so it won't happen again. (Laura Van Riper)

- CMG did revisit multiple locations in 2016 to confirm ecological sites and key spp given concerns from 2015. (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION:** *Maintain sample size of 10. Follow monitoring protocols related to identification and determination of key species.*

### **Demonstrable Improvement**

- Mark - Fire creek higher values in 2015 and lower values in 2016. Point is they both succeeded. (Laura Van Riper)
- Gant - there is a mathematically demonstrable difference. Understand political point, but the statement as it stands is factually correct. (Laura Van Riper)
- Kathryn – the factually correct one would be demonstrable increase or decrease in utilization level; 'improvement' is value laden (Laura Van Riper)
- Steve L - if met standards, it met standards. Only way to get demonstrable improvement, is if you bring areas that did not meet standards last year to meet standards following year (Laura Van Riper)
  - Bob - concurs with the way Steve L explained it (Laura Van Riper)
- Shawn -- why does this extra statement have to be in there, if you met and utilization levels are in the report (Laura Van Riper)
  - Shawn – it gives the appearance that they went backward, but actually met SA requirements both years. (Laura Van Riper)
- Sam - standards are statistically uncertain but, based on CIs, still showing improvement (Laura Van Riper)
  - Sam – understands Shawn's concerns with Fire Creek, intention was not to say there was backwards movement. He will clarify that. In other areas we had improvement, but still not meeting standards per say. Thought it was worthwhile to note that. SA not clear on definition of demonstrable improvement (Laura Van Riper)
- Demonstrable improvement is defined in SA (NVSO)
  - 'Demonstrable Improvement' is defined in the SA as 'a steady increase in the number of monitoring sites meeting End of Year Use Levels over the course of this agreement. (Laura Van Riper)
- It seems we are hung up on several things. One thing I'm hung up on is terminology and definitions. We shouldn't be discussing standards here (NVSO)
  - We have neither met or not met or anything for standards yet. (NVSO)
  - Standards are not being addressed here!! (NVSO)
- Steve L – when you are looking at an area where 'standards' are not met, you can't say demonstrable improvement has occurred simply b/c the #s have gone up between years. Analysis needs to be run as to whether this is a significant difference. This analysis has not been completed, so this statement cannot be made. (Laura Van Riper)
  - Steve L - If want to determine if there is a statistical difference between #s need to run a T-test (Laura Van Riper)
- Sam - in reporting section(s) he will maintain 'demonstrable improvement' to indicate those areas that either didn't meet or were statistically uncertain and now have met (Laura Van Riper).
  - Didn't capture second half of Sam's comment (Laura Van Riper)
- Shawn - no need to incorporate additional information for those areas that met (Laura Van Riper)
- Demonstrable increase -trend is being established. 2015 Fire Creek no utilization, in 2016 increase in utilization detected. (Laura Van Riper)
- Sam - data shows that we are increasing distribution in the uplands (Laura Van Riper)

- Angie -- go with what Steve L said. If not meeting utilization requirements, and you go from 70% in one year to 50% in second year, and that's a significant difference (either b/c moved classes or is determined by T-test), then you can say you're improving. But if you've met your criteria, it doesn't make any difference where it is in that. (Laura Van Riper)
- Mark - Fire Creek discussion of using more or less is not responsive to SA or informative to management. So don't understand why we'd note it in report. But the additional interpretation Sam provided (comment #92 above) is helpful – i.e., we have evidence that there is broader use of uplands, which may be helping riparian. SA (3.12) only reference we need to make about demonstrable improvement. Truth is moving from any class to another probably shows improvement (i.e., not met to statistically uncertain to clearly met) -- all is showing that practices are moving in the right direction. Doesn't necessarily imply statistical significance. Wouldn't use words 'demonstrable improvement' b/c it has a specific definition in the settlement (Laura Van Riper)
- Kathryn - agree in 3.12 have defined demonstrable improvement, only use that term in that way. Refers to those areas not meeting or inconclusive last year are now meeting. Agree that using the term improvement in general is worthwhile to note. Agrees with Shawn's point that if you're meeting your stipulated use levels, there isn't any benefit from noting that you met it at 7" vs 5". Information doesn't show improvement or lack of improvement. If intent is to tie this to larger understanding of management, you need to be clear about that in the report (Laura Van Riper)
- Bob - agree. Stay away from when we have variations in a parameter, unless its crossing one of those thresholds, it's a red herring that doesn't need to be in there. ( Laura Van Riper)
- Jamie (comment #97) - remember that for some of these monitoring sites key spp were added/dropped. So if going to compare years, then this needs to be recognized ( Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION:** *Use 'demonstrable improvement' as defined in SA. The raw information is in the report, be careful with overlaying additional interpretation.*

→ **DECISION:** *If criteria was met, no additional explanation is needed. If it was not met or statistically uncertain and additional information is included to provide a larger understanding of management that must be clearly articulated; it currently is not.*

→ **DECISION:** *Do not make determinations as to whether improvement occurred (beyond how defined in SA) in the absence of additional analysis needed to determine whether difference is statistically significant.*

→ **DECISION:** *Report will read 0% utilization observed instead of no measurable utilization.*

#### **Missing data/discrepancies**

- (comment #99) Jamie - why discrepancy in #? ( Laura Van Riper)
- Mark - average plant height was in the height weight tables in 2015 EOS report, this year we don't have it included, so we can't reconstruct these values. Would be nice to see that data – and have it included in the report. (Laura Van Riper)
- Sam needs to see IRC data and will try to remedy problem (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION:** *IRC and BLM will send raw upland data to CMG (similar to what Mark did for riparian), so existing problems can be remedied. It would be ideal if the raw data could be included in final report as well.*

## Miscellaneous

- Kathryn (comment #6, change response wording) -- our interpretation of MR Cole's 'comment' not complaint b/c it was a comment letter (Laura Van Riper)

→ DECISION: *Change will be made*

## **Met/Not Met Comparison (2015 and 2016) (Sam)**

See attached file

Sam - this will be how information is conveyed in final report. Double negatives will be removed

### **DISCUSSION**

- Adam - statistically uncertain is dispute resolution language. Developed with Sherm Karl, national BLM lead for rangeland monitoring and statistics. Sam has verified rewording with Sherm and he agrees with changes that Sam proposed. So those changes will be made (Laura Van Riper)
- Bob - Problem is that it's not statistically uncertain (comment #95 & #24). (Laura Van Riper)
- Adam - In uncertain areas, if 'more likely to not have met' then we look at if/how to modify stockmanship plan – but it is not used in determining success. Sherm Karl agreed with this approach. ( Laura Van Riper)
- Kathryn -- NRST addressed in more thoroughly than that in 2015. Anything that was in inconclusive realm, NRST looked at needing modification. (Laura Van Riper)
- Jamie -- general audience for this report is not just educated professionals on this topic. General public will not understand what this means. Figure 3 (TR 1730-1) very explanatory to general public. Still not clear about deviation from Figure 3. (Laura Van Riper)
- Bob – in MIM protocol, if something is exceeded by 1-5% it is not counted as exceeded. Need to let public know we are well below, at or above threshold with statistical certainty (Laura Van Riper)
- We already went through lengthy dispute resolution on this topic, and MLFO came up with their determination (Laura Van Riper)
- Laura will send dispute resolutions for folks to review over break (Laura Van Riper)
- Mark - areas that exceeded threshold need to be addressed in stockmanship plan going forward, same for the statistically uncertain ones (likely to not have met). Where do we need to be vigilant? in areas where we exceeded or came very close (Laura Van Riper)
- Is the direction from Sherm in writing? If so is it accessible to the CMG? (Jamie Dafoe)
  - It is in the dispute resolution documents (Laura Van Riper)
- Shawn - we're under a public microscope so making it as clear as possible is the right way to go and Sam moved in that direction. Bob would prefer wording he put in comment #24 (Laura Van Riper)

## **Update on R2 Fences (Jon S)**

Jon - MLFO is currently in discussions with NDOW and believes they will provide a written variance that will allow for R2 construction prior to the brood rearing season - whenever conditions allow until May 15th. If conditions don't allow access, another option is to go forward with temporary electric fences for R2. Won't need additional NEPA analysis or decision b/c less of an impact than what has been currently analyzed.

## DISCUSSION

- Construction dates up until May 15th (when brood rearing season starts -- it ends Sept 15). (Laura Van Riper)
- Kathryn - not a "variance" it is NDOW's confirmation that there are local site variations that would allow construction (Laura Van Riper)
- Was this variance considered in the EA? (Ken Cole)
  - Kathryn - both GRSG plan and EA decision spoke of ability to work with NDOW to adapt time to address local variations (Laura Van Riper)
  - But it did not analyze impacts of construction outside the narrow fall window. That's what an EA is supposed to do. (Ken Cole)
  - Jon S/Adam in response to Ken's Q -- EA says we'll remain in accordance w ARMPA. So the EA spoke to local variation in that those things would be considered in accordance with ARMPA. Decision spoke to flexibility that the ARMPA includes, if in interest of bird and okay given seasonal issues, then we can do that. (1) Need to get letter from NDOW stating it's ok, which requires coordination. (2) Following coordination need to go on ground and make justification that it is in the best interest of GRSG (Laura Van Riper)
  - Who is 'we?' Adam - BLM is final decision authority; however, BLM has requirement to coordinate and attempt to get concurrence. Hard to show it's in the best interest of bird if NDOW doesn't agree (Laura Van Riper)
- John Ruhs direction (via Raul email) spoke of need for CX for temp elect fences if R2 fences couldn't go forward. GRSG plan has been modified since R2 decisions. Both CX and decision would be needed, and wouldn't necessarily need seasonal restrictions. (Kathryn) (Laura Van Riper)
  - Jon S - why would we need another round of NEPA for temp electric fence? (Laura Van Riper)
  - Jon S - if R2 fencing can be constructed prior to brood rearing, that's the best scenario. If conditions don't allow for that, proposal was to have electric fence over the same footprint of the jackrail fence. (Laura Van Riper)
  - Jon S - Can discuss more internally, but MLFO take on it is that we don't need additional NEPA in form of CX, b/c NEPA already covered with what was done under jackrail proposal (Laura Van Riper)
- Would temporary electric fence would be under the same time constraint (May 15-Sept 15) - seasonal restrictions? (Laura Van Riper)
  - Kathryn - if these temp elec fences need to go in, they'd only be able to be constructed during the 6 week window (fall). How does that address the problem? (Laura Van Riper)
  - Shawn - Easier to get up there in spring w electric fences than to trailer load the jackrail (Laura Van Riper)
- Jon – The plan is to continue working with NDOW and get concurrence that construction allowed up to May 15. Fencing could be jackrail or electric depending on what best fits conditions. If overlap into brood rearing would need to get additional okay from NDOW (Laura Van Riper)
  - If can't not build either jackrail or electric fences before May 15 -- would need to go back n ground with NDOW at that time. (Laura Van Riper)
- Given that North Fork is much higher elevation than Ferris, is the date (May 15) set back 2 to 4 weeks? (Bob Schweigert)
  - Sam response to Bob's Q -- if approach May 15 date, BLM will reach out to NDOW do a site visit and confirm whether the bird is using that area for brood rearing habitat. If they are not, that's where the variance would come in. Both sites would be independently looked at, because of differences in the sites and thus habitat (Laura Van Riper)
- Jon - If get up there before May 15 NDOW has already okay'd. If after May 15th, would need to go to NDOW again and request a variance. (Laura Van Riper)

- Kathryn – technically we don't yet have concurrence from NDOW for construction up to May 15 yet. Jon - that's correct (Laura Van Riper)
- Kathryn - conversations with NDOW show that this is likely and probable but don't have formal letter yet (Laura Van Riper)
- Shawn – so BLM will continue coordinating with NDOW and try to get approval to construct prior to May 15? Don't know if we can get to any sites right now, but the sooner we get the green light the better. (Laura Van Riper)
- Sam - sent letter to be signed off in the next week and get coop agreements with Tomeras in next week. Once that's done and you can construct (given conditions) -- you can construct, as long as before May 15. If after that date, BLM will need to coordinate with NDOW again and re-asses (Laura Van Riper)
- Please elaborate where I can see the changes made to the GRSG plan. (Ken Cole)
  - Kim – to see GRSG modification go to e-planning site, left hand side of screen there is a link. At very top is a list of maintenance actions, this one should be at the very top. Kim will send a link (Laura Van Riper)
  - Original R2 decision is based on the plan as written. Maintenance action changes relate to future decisions (Laura Van Riper)
  - Adam - maintenance decisions were not in place when EA decision was done, but according to ROD seasonal dates may be modified due to local variations to better protect GRSG and its habitat. (Laura Van Riper)
  - ARMPA Management decision SSS 3 part D from the original Sept 2015 ROD provides the language for seasonal variations. This language was used in the R2 decision. (NVSO)

## **Update on temporary electric fences for Rock Creek & the Park (Jon S)**

[See attached file](#)

Jon – To his knowledge, R4 projects were first brought up in Nov CMG meeting (temp elect fences Rock and Park). During meeting we discussed # of options to move forward with how to implement this (how to process the proposal) -- permit renewal, stand alone, part of S Boundary Fence, or CX. We carried that forward into internal discussions between MLFO and NSO; MLFO provided a briefing paper to John Ruhs. NSO provided clear direction on how to proceed. MLFO is now looking at processing these fences through CX, with proposed and final decision. This priority work and will likely start as early as next week.

### **DISCUSSION**

- Will this add delay to other priority projects elsewhere? (Ken Cole)
  - Jon - potentially it could delay projects elsewhere. We're adjusting Sam and other's work priorities (Laura Van Riper)
  - EOS monitoring report will remain on schedule. Cooperative agreements will go ahead. Then getting these fences moving. Most of impact will be felt in other allotments (Laura Van Riper)
- Ken - Why shifting priorities to build electric fences that don't need to be built, b/c there are other options? Jon - MLFO #1 option was to work through PR process. While it makes sense to go through rangeland health assessment first, it's not a requirement ( Laura Van Riper)
- Ken - what are likely impacts to PR process? (Laura Van Riper)
  - Shawn - PRT liked the idea of projects being started, particularly temp elec fence, so they can see if worked/not worked and that could inform PR (Laura Van Riper)
  - Kathryn - PRT don't see any reason why CXs or temp electric fences would impact their timeframes at all. It doesn't change their workload or process (Laura Van Riper)
  - Kathryn - all information may not be able to be included in PR process depending on when data is collected and when the cut-off date is (Laura Van Riper)

- Steve L -- purpose of fences is temp in nature to jump start, can't see why it would be part of permit renewal anyway. (Laura Van Riper)
- Ken - they should be (Laura Van Riper)
- Cote - do the same deadlines like May 15, etc apply to elec fence if they get CX? (Laura Van Riper)
  - Sam - yes and no. Required to consider them, but before the decision process we can do a modification with NDOW like we're doing for R2 now (Laura Van Riper)
  - Kathryn – GRSG plan maintenance action clarifies that these seasonal restrictions are not meant to apply to every project all of the time. They are meant to apply when project would have negative impact on GRSG ability to use that habitat. That change is what will allow us in any new NEPA (R2 was signed under original ARMMPA) to look at those seasonal use restrictions and determine whether they are necessary (Laura Van Riper)
  - Kathryn - they will be applied as appropriate, but only if appropriate (Laura Van Riper)
- Shawn - do you have to go through NDOW? (Laura Van Riper)
  - Kathryn - yes work with NDOW (Laura Van Riper)
  - Kathryn - coordination must occur during analysis of project not after decision has been signed. (Laura Van Riper)
- Jamie - BLM has its own WBIO, in the future they are going to solicit NDOW over using their in-house WBIOs? (Laura Van Riper)
  - Kim - BLM WBIOs are asked to be part of this process, plan specifically requires that BLM coordinate with NDOW on seasonal restrictions. BLM roles/responsibilities are related to habitat and NDOW roles/responsibilities are related to species. So, when trying to establish impacts to species and habitat - both BLM and NDOW must coordinate (Laura Van Riper)
- Jamie - case by case basis every time a fence to be put in? (Laura Van Riper)
  - Kim - case by case for every project. Necessary for a lot of things, not just fencing projects (i.e., veg projects, cattle guards, etc). NEPA has to show every time there won't be an impact to birds' use of habitat in Q and NDOW to confirm that (Laura Van Riper)
- Steve and Steve, are the GPS coordinates for these available? (Bob Schweigert)
  - Waypoints under maps on p 2 and 4 (Laura Van Riper)

### **Update on South Boundary Fence (Sam)**

Sam - MLFO received application from Tomeras. MLFO is still in pre-planning phase, and are committed to 8 month deadline outlined in SA. MLFO is also reaching out to Barrick to see if interest in them contributing to processing the NEPA for this, which would free up BLM specialist time. Alongside application for S Boundary fence, MLFO also received application for pipeline and trough for private ground that Barrick controls. MLFO would like to analyze all of these under same EA. Determining now whether that is feasible -- seems like it is whether Barrick pays or it is done in house.

### **DISCUSSION**

- Trough on N side would be either for Barrick or Argenta permittees depending on who is leasing it. Barrick has water right. Trough would be on Argenta side S of boundary fence (Indian creek use area). The S side of fence would not cease to be Argenta, for reasons of permit renewal. It significantly complicates analysis if we remove a section of the Argenta allotment. C ranches currently operating it. Barrick purchased C ranches and will be subleasing it back to them (Laura Van Riper)
- Allotment to the south = Carico Lake (Laura Van Riper)

## Stockmanship Plan B (Steve L., Steve C. & Bob)

See attached file

### DISCUSSION

- Nov CMG meeting Adam/Sam were going to review fire fence decision and whether this fence could be changed to a drop down fence. Did this occur? What was the conclusion? (Laura Van Riper)
  - Adam - will do early next week and report back to everyone (tue am). General alterations typically ok. (Laura Van Riper)
- Steve L. - If we could open fence clear across, it would be better than just opening the gate - if possible (Laura Van Riper)
- Steve C. - Small group of cows at the Park hang on riparian areas b/c not much upland use observed. In past they were pulled to Maysville, but that is too easy of a trek back -- so they return (Laura Van Riper)
- Steve C. - Slaven has both good water and crested wheat grass, so that amount of use shouldn't be a problem. Hope is they will not want to climb back over the hill (Laura Van Riper)
- Steve L - looked at shortage of water in the park. Developing water in some different place might have a lot of potential and should continue to be considered (Laura Van Riper)
- Bob -other thought on canyon where mine is about 1 mile or so down canyon from summit there are private pieces that might facilitate a drift or management fence. (Laura Van Riper)
- Steve L - advantage of drift fences in canyons is that it makes it a real short move coming off areas higher in canyon to put them on private land, rather than just move them over a topographic saddle where they come back. Drift fence should slow that process significantly (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION:** Sam will insert Stockmanship Plan B section into EOS report at the end of Tomera's 2017 Stockmanship section, since all in Tomera use areas.

## Update on Cooperative Monitoring Agreements (Sam)

See attached file

Sam – This is an early draft. Put a lot of work into yesterday – but it is not complete, it's just a starting point. Participants were asked to flip through pages and get a sense for the document. This was the first time permittees had seen the draft, and it was not what they expected based on discussions during the Nov meeting. As a result, they expressed a fair amount of concern. Some of the discussion elements are captured below. The collective sense was that we are very early in this process and a lot more time, thought, and discussion needs to go into the development of CMAs for Argenta – given their unique situation (i.e., existing settlement agreement).

### DISCUSSION

- Sam – the idea is to do more qualitative methods at beginning of season. As utilization starts to be approached, then start implementing some more quantitative methods. Early season methods could be implemented by riders. He was thinking at a minimum photo point monitoring every 30 days with data provided to CMG (Laura Van Riper)
- Steve C. – seems like a good idea would be incorporate reporting information (8 steps) from March CMG meeting notes into CMA (i.e., keep rider diaries like last year and add photo points). (Laura Van Riper)

- Shawn – permittees do not want to spend as much \$\$ on monitoring as last year. Kathryn sent Rancher Monitoring Guide. Thought the plan was for permittees to self-monitor, and bring in outside assistance if needed (Laura Van Riper)
- When the concept was discussed in Nov the intent was for permittee to be self-regulating. The intent was not to require specific monitoring protocols/deliverables, but to outline minimal things permittees could do for themselves until they needed more detailed information. This CMA draft looks like a very specific regiment of monitoring throughout the duration, which folks thought we were trying to avoid (Laura Van Riper)
- Sam needs to outline something that says at certain points self-monitoring will occur (i.e., photo point monitoring does not need to be done by IRC). Still want data provided to CMG. Sam would appreciate some alternatives on how this could be done otherwise. (Laura Van Riper)
- Suggestion to use heading 'monitoring tools' vs 'protocols' (Laura Van Riper)
- Permittees – this cooperative agreement is supposed to accomplish what? We already have triggers we need to live within, why do we need a cooperative monitoring agreement? (Laura Van Riper)
- In Nov, we agreed to monitor less -- don't need cooperative agreement to deal with that. Cooperative agreement outlines what protocols are acceptable to meet the intent within the SA (Laura Van Riper)
- Kathryn --- State-wide CMA template contains following sections: 1. Introduction 2. Existing Management Objectives 3. Existing monitoring data/info and additional data needs 4. Future Monitoring Attributes and protocols 5. Frequency and timing of monitoring and who does it 6. Data analysis 7. Agreement implementation (NVSO)
- Pages 36-39 of the notes from last November meeting discusses monitoring; pre-season, mid-season and EOS. It stipulates who is responsible, and that data will be shared. Please review that section before moving forward beyond here with completion of this task..... (mike Lunn)
- Suggestion – review monitoring requirements in SA and do not duplicate requirements already outlined in SA in CMA. (Laura Van Riper)
- Permittees are not opposed to development of CMA, but do not want it to be another list of things that they need to do (or will be held to). Should be a set of guidelines, not requirements. They'd also like to have BLM's contribution to 'cooperative monitoring' outlined, as well as how data/information will be shared between BLM and permittees going forward. (Laura Van Riper)

→ **DECISION:** *Permittees, NSO and NRST (and others) will review draft document and provide suggested edits/changes to Sam.*

→ **NRST SUGGESTION:** *Schedule a virtual meeting and/or conference call (April?? or sooner) to continue discussions regarding CMA development after additional thought has been given to CMA purpose, and how to create a document that reflects the existing and unique situation in Argenta – while meeting needs of all parties.*

→ **NRST SUGGESTION:** *In addition to the development of CMA, it is also important to remember the agreements made during the March CMG meeting regarding the monitoring plan/requirements for areas that either are either not meeting or likely to not be meeting SA criteria as a way to ensure that the same areas do not 'fail' to meet criteria multiple years in a row. The NRST believes these requirements should continue to apply, regardless of a CMA – although it might be appropriate to codify these agreements in a CMA.*

NV Rancher Monitoring Guide

<http://www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/ag/2006/eb0604.pdf>

NV Rangeland Monitoring Handbook

<http://www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/ag/2006/eb0603.pdf>

### Final EOS Report Schedule (Laura)

Finalize report and responses to public comment for internal review	Sam	Feb 13
Internal review comments to Sam	NRST/NSO	Feb 20
Final report and responses sent to CMG and posted to web	Sam	Feb 28

### 2017 CMG Activity Schedule

**Week of Oct 9 or 16 for EOS monitoring? Week of Nov 6 or 13 for EOS meeting?**

- Angie - against 3 week review period (Laura Van Riper)
- BLM will email key interested parties EOS report directly (Laura Van Riper)
- BMDO has no problem with expanding to 3 weeks. We have had this request multiple times and had issued with many people responding in time this year (NVSO)
- Sam -NDOW would like a longer comment period (Laura Van Riper)
- Gen - USFWS wanted an extra week as well (NVSO)
- I would like to keep the review time to 15 days. (Shawn & Angie)
- BMDO is ok with both proposed weeks (NVSO)

→ **DECISION:** *MLFO decided comment period will remain 15 days. 2017 EOS Report will be directly emailed to Katie, in addition to CMG, to avoid delays.*

→ **DECISION:** *CMG EOS Monitoring will occur during the week of October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017.*

→ **DECISION:** *CMG EOS Meeting will occur during the week of November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017.*

→ **DECISION:** *Sam and permittees will set a date for pre-season range ride (monitoring) when he solicits applications from permittees.*

### Closing Comments

**How did you feel about today's meeting?**

- I felt the meeting went pretty smoothly. (Shawn & Angie)
- Went pretty well, especially using new technology, probably saved money also. (steve cote)
- I think it went OK. (Steve Leonard)
- The consensus from the Battle Mountain office is that the meeting was useful and informative. The rabbit-trailing on settled issues was distressing, but somewhat

unpreventable. The web-based system was good, although we agreed that using it as a subgroup from a common location led to fewer distractions than individual home use. (Mount Lewis Field Office)

- It ended up being much more constructive than it appeared it was going to be in the beginning. I appreciate the increased productivity and decreased drive time. Thank you. (NVSO)

**What did you think about the web-based meeting tool?**

- I think it worked well, maybe have people say who is talking prior to speaking (Jamie Dafoe)
- I was impressed with how the web based software works; with a few more practice sessions and maybe some protocols, it can be a big time/money saver... (mike Lunn)
- I think this is a very useful tool. It was hard in this forum with people talking over each other, but I think that will only improve with use. I think face to face has real value, but this is an excellent way to have really useful interaction and save face to face meetings for only necessary occasions. I look forward to using this with Argenta as well as in other projects. Thanks! (NVSO)
- I think the web-based meeting went well, and was very organized with everything we needed. (Shawn & Angie)
- It worked fairly well. My biggest problem with typing a response is 1) I don't type very well 2) I don't have a speaker phone and can't type at all and still listen. Thank you Laura capturing everything. (Steve Leonard)

**What remaining questions and/or concerns do you have?**