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Technical Analysis and Findings
Utah Coal Regulatory Program

PID: C0250005
TaskID: 4934
Mine Name: COAL HOLLOW
Title: ANNUAL SAGE GROUSE REPORT

Operation Plan

Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement Plan

Analysis:

On June 12, 2015 the Division received the 2014 Sage Grouse progress report for the coal hollow mine. This memo will include a review of that information. The Division staff has had the opportunity to meet with ACD personnel and provide comments and recommendations on two previous versions of the draft report that includes sage grouse monitoring and vegetation treatment information from October 2013 to October 2014.

A records review indicates that the Division did not receive the final progress report for 2013 that includes sage grouse monitoring and vegetation treatment information from October 2012 to October 2013. This document should be given an appendix number perhaps 3-7 or 8. This years draft report includes:

FALL 2013 – WINTER 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS;

- Sage-grouse Population Monitoring;
- Employee Observations and Sage-grouse Population Monitoring

The data collected from ACD's employee awareness program is an integral component of the protection and enhancement plan for the sage grouse population near the mine. ACD and the Division will continue to use the data collected from employees to monitor the movements and patterns of the birds.

Bird Surveys

These surveys along with the noise surveys have shown how the birds are reacting to the ongoing mining activities in Sink Valley. The data suggests that the birds have habituated to the ongoing mining activities to some degree by their observed proximity to the mine and associated activities.

GPS Collaring and Monitoring

ACD had committed to providing funding for one GPS collar and one aerial survey for the October 2013- October 2014 monitoring season. However in lieu of the aerial survey that was neither funded nor conducted DWR recommended that the funding for 2 additional GPS collars be provided by ACD. ACD only provided the funding for one and only data from one bird could be obtained as a result of the three month turn around period in ordering additional collars. The GPS data and associated maps need to be included in this report. As well additional funding for GPS collars will be required for the 2015 monitoring season. See recommendations under the Partnership and Collaboration topic.

Historic and Current Lek use in Alton/Sink Valley

The current lek that is located approximately 0.35 miles from the closest mining activity and has supported 12-15 males that have been observed over the past 3 breeding seasons

- Noise Detection and Sound Assessment;
- Habitat Mitigation;
- Predator Control Activities;
- Participation and Involvement with Local Working Groups

ACD and DOGM will continue to attend meetings and solicit input from the local sage grouse working group.

FALL 2014 – WINTER 2015 GOALS, PLANS AND PROPOSALS;

Sage-grouse population monitoring

Monthly bird and sound surveys will continue except for May, June and July to account for the nesting and brood rearing season. ACD will assist Dr. Frey in the trapping and GPS collaring program. Funding for additional collars is described in the Partnership and Collaboration section of this document.

Vegetation Improvements and Monitoring

Vegetation improvements for this season include the remaining treatments for the 72 acre conservation area. ACD has also committed to complete the remaining 443 acres of mitigation this year. This will complete the 2044 total acres of required mitigation for the current mining activities excluding the North Lease proposal.

Predator Control

This is the fifth year of the five year contract for controlling predators, mainly coyotes and ravens near the mine. DOGGM and mine personnel are in agreement that the efforts to control predators have had a positive effect on the grouse.

Partnership and Collaboration

The recommendations from DWR, DOGM and Dr. Frey suggested that ACD provide funding for three GPS collars for the 2015 trapping season (July 15, 2015-February 28th, 2016) and budget enough money annually thereafter for 2GPS collars or \$8,000 whichever ever is greater.

ACD should make the following revisions to the text under this section of the report: ACD will provide funding for three GPS collars for the 2015 trapping season. Funding will be provided by no later than July 29th, 2015 to ensure timely placement of collars on the birds. In the years following ACD will continue to support the monitoring efforts on an annual basis by providing funding for two GPS collars or \$8,000 whichever ever is greater.

Deficiencies Details:

The information in the 2014 annual sage grouse report is not adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations. Prior to approval the following information is required in accordance with R645-301-333;

A copy of the 2012-13 annual sage grouse report;

Appendix numbers for the 2013 and 14 annual sage grouse reports.

The GPS data and associated maps provided by Dr. Frey and;

The following commitment under the Partnership and Collaboration section of the report: ACD will provide funding for three GPS collars for the 2015 trapping season(July 15, 2015-February 28th, 2016). Funding will be provided by no later than July 29th, 2015 to ensure timely placement of collars on the birds. In the years following ACD will continue to support the monitoring efforts by providing funding on an annual basis for two GPS collars or \$8,000 whichever ever is greater.

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