

Cliffnotes
Oct 2, 2015 AGM Meeting
Semi-Arid Grassland Research Center
Additional notes, transcript available: hailey.wilmer@colostate.edu

Present:

Kim Obele
Rachel Murph
Ted Toombs
Leonard Ball
Dana Bowman
Andy Lawrence
Angela Dwyer- BCR potential new
member of stakeholder group
David Augustine
Nick Dufek
Jake Thomas
Jeff Thomas
Justin Derner
Craig Lawrence

Pam Freeman
Steve Anderson
Matt Mortenson
Lauren Porensky (taking notes)
Maria Fernandez-Gimenez (facilitating)
David Briske
Hailey Wilmer (taking notes)
Robert Parkhurst
Marshal Frasier (Afternoon)

Absent:

Terry Schultz (In Spain)
Casey Matney (has left position with
CSU extension, needs to be replaced)

Meeting Objectives/Decisions to be made: Maria F-G

- 1) stocking rate requests
- 2) potential vegetation treatments
- 3) stakeholder group replacements
- 4) info needed to inform the January 2016 decisions
- 5) Pasture tour of 2015 grazing results

Overview of Monitoring Results: David A. (See powerpoint)

- precip: average year but all rain came in first half
- photos of burns.
- overview of grazing rotation: Snowfence 12 days, 41 days in Saltflat, 44 days Nighthawk, 41 days Highway.
- the and grazing created “habitat” for plovers, bare ground, space between plants
- Cactus: during last winter, pronghorn ate cactus. Much better pronghorn response than in previous study. High impact of burns on cactus densities.
- Patch burn effects on forage quality and cattle distribution: TGM cattle really responded to the burn. Not so much for AGM herd...still selecting the burn but not as strongly. traveled far to get needle-and-thread and western wheat. Moving on a daily basis. For nighthawk, not as much selection for the burn, similar between TGM and AGM during the time period when the AGM herd was over there. Much stronger selection in late May and early June, less in July.
- difference in VOR between on burn and off burn (Ted impressed that grass growth outpacing consumption)
- VOR reductions over time in Nighthawk and Highway

- Achievements for the year: Grassbanking, C3 grasses, Saltbush, Diverse perennial grasses, among-pasture heterogeneity, grasshopper sparrow habitat, cactus removal, plover habitat.
- Tradeoffs: Cattle weight gains, McCown's Longspur habitat
- Casey comment at last meeting: what if criteria don't allow movement, but we have objectives for those pastures, do we graze them anyway?

Livestock observations report: Craig Lawrence

- Activity: cattle suggesting they want to move before we hit the threshold, cattle getting out...August 10 cattle starting to get out, VOR above 400 lbs/acre...8 day period from 10 to 18 where happiness index is low but we are above residual threshold. Now 420 lbs/acre, cattle starting to get unhappy...spreading out across the pasture when forage was low. Forage color follows from forage amount. 1-1.5 hours spent to corral cattle and fix fence.
- Can we document this time as part of the economic analysis of the project?

Pasture visits:

- 1) Highway: Current location of cattle
- 2) Nighthawk: On Burn and off burn stops
- 3) Saltflat (Burned)/Snowfence
- 4) Hilltank: Rested 2015

Lunch @ CPER: Thanks to Justin!

Stocking rate for 2016 Decision

- What did we do in the past, and why? We did 5% to increase cattle profits, but it didn't work. This year we have some flexibility and 6 rested pastures.
- Much discussion of benefits of grassbanking, conservative stocking rates, potential financial benefits from increasing stocking rate. Hard to separate stocking and rotational decisions.
- "It will be dry one of these years."

Action: The group was in complete consensus to keep the stocking rate for 2016 the same as 2015.

Burn or herbicide treatment decisions/discussion:

Options were set out for burning or herbicide treatments and were voted on (6 vote supermajority needed)

- a. Burn NW Corner of south for plover, Mccowens, cactus forage. Yes 5, No: 3 (no ranchers) **No supermajority**
- b. Burn Crossroads for plover, Mccowen's forage, but wouldn't help cactus: YES 2 (TT and Angela) No: 4 (RM abstain wants production estimates) **No supermajority**

- c. Burn Snowfence YES 3 (TT, AD, RM) No: 4 KO Abstain **No supermajority**
- d. Burn Elm: Yes 2: TT, AD No: 4 Rachel doesn't care. Elm is not her pet project. ☺ **No supermajority**
- e. No Burn on anything: Yes 3 No 3 **No supermajority**
- f. Spray in Snowfence for cactus: Yes 5 No 3 **No supermajority**
- g. Burn and spray in Snowfence: Yes 1 (but in bigger blocks) No: 6
- h. (An attempt to make everyone happy?) **No supermajority**
- i. Combination of burn south and spray Snowfence: **No supermajority**

Action: No group consensus to burn or use herbicide at this time. Herbicide treatments can be reconsidered in the fall/winter.

Stakeholder Group Membership Decisions:

- Matt Pollart is a state land board person to join as an agency to join as an agency person in addition to the Extension.

Action: Consensus to invite Matt Pollart to project as State Lands rep.

- Casey Matney needs to be replaced as he has left CSU Extension. CSU will hire a replacement for Casey in 3-6 months. We'll wait until that person is hired to replace Casey Matney. They can attend a couple of meetings and the group doesn't work well they can vote to not have them.
- Also we will have Angela participate in place of Gillian Bee from Bird Conservatory of the Rockies (RMBO) for the January meeting and the April meeting.

Meeting Ended