

DRAFT - SUBLETTE ANTELOPE MIGRATION CORRIDOR LOCAL WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 1: Recommendations related to additional opportunities for conservation, including voluntary opportunities on private land.

FENCING

- Establish a policy that reviews the success of fencing verses under passes and establish funding to encourage private landowners to install wildlife fencing. (Commissioner Connelly)
- Continue to convert fences to wildlife friendly specs.
 - Explore and fund research and trials to improve fence crossing during times of deep snow.
 - Stable and sustainable funding for overpasses and gates utilizing alternative structures where overpasses and underpasses aren't warranted. (Mike Henn)
- Support seasonal fence lay-downs. (Commissioner Slaughter)
- Continue with fence modifications, throughout the corridor (lower top wires, laydown panels, large gate openings). Work with local wildlife groups or local fencing contractors with reliable contracts and long term accountability to ensure that fencing is lowered if the fall and raised back up in the spring, per grazing allotment requirements. (John Erramouspe)
- Pursue funding to modify or remove fencing and other barriers to movement within the corridor and adjacent seasonal ranges. (Maggie Hudlow)
- Develop a prioritization system to direct fence removal and/or reconstruction/retrofitting the highest priority locations. (Mike Brennan)

FUNDING

- Set up a fund, or allocate Game and Fish revenues, for conservation leases of state lands that are in bottlenecks such as the OSLI parcel in the green river bottleneck. (Commissioner Newcomb)
- Sustainable revenue for corridor Projects using the Wildlife Trust fund in a new over cap Legislation (Commissioner Connelly)

- Promote and prioritize WGFD and other state funds for water developments within the corridor to give antelope and other wildlife water and improve grazing management. (Mike Henn)
- [Support] funding programs that allow for forage improvements, water improvements which would help distribute livestock better and take pressure off of corridor areas. (John Erramouspe)
- Continue work with landowners through programs supported by groups like the WGFD and the Wyoming Stockgrowers Land Trust to secure voluntary conservation easements. (Commissioner Slaughter)
- Provide funding or tax incentives to modify fences. (Commissioner Slaughter)
- Offer continued technical and financial support for:
 - Native Vegetation Restoration
 - Water Developments that reduce conflict and improve distribution
 - Invasive species control (Commissioner Slaughter)

HABITAT

- Work with landowners and land managers to improve habitat within the corridor. (Mike Henn)
- Pursue funding to aggressively treat invasive annual grass infestations and conifer encroachment within the corridor. (Maggie Hudlow)
- Develop a prioritization system to direct cheatgrass/invasive species control efforts to the highest priority locations. (Mike Brennan)

FERAL HORSES

- Urge and hold BLM accountable for wild horse numbers and keep them in the HMA's and remove or authorize the State to remove horses outside of active HMA's. (Mike Henn)
- Recommendation for legislation or a Governors Ex Order for BLM to Manage Wild Horses as a management Herd Unit just like we do wildlife. (Commissioner Connelly)

- The BLM should be urged to manage wild horse populations to Appropriate Management Levels (AML) within the corridor. (Maggie Hudlow)

PRIVATE LAND

- Give exemptions for easements across public and state domain when giving access to private property within the corridor. (Mike Henn)
- Establish conflict areas where the corridor creates private and public Land access issue. Establish policy how to handle that. (Commissioner Connelly)
- Information on private landowner incentive programs and funding opportunities within the corridor should be made publicly and easily available. (Maggie Hudlow)
- Establish a clearinghouse to provide information on incentive programs and funding opportunities, and support landowner applications for same. (Mike Brennan)

Section 2: Recommendations related to corridor components (bottlenecks, high-use, stopover, medium use and low use, protection buffer on the line sequence) and future research/monitoring.

REVIEW

- Continue to monitor and use best science to understand the corridor and if it is still meeting the animals needs into the future.(Mike Henn)
- Study the impact multiple corridors have on species and private land and BLM changes to RMP's. (Commissioner Connelly)
- Continue and expand GPS Collar Monitoring & Trend Analysis. (Commissioner Slaughter)
- Track Route Fidelity, timing shifts and bottleneck use over multiple years (Commissioner Slaughter)
- Mandate biennial review by WGFD on effectiveness of corridor with suggestions for changes and updates on most sensitive areas of the corridor. (Commissioner Slaughter)

- The accuracy of current protections should be continued and maintained, but monitored through continued migration data and additional collared pronghorns. (John Erramouspe)
- Prioritize funding for research and collar deployments to monitor antelope use in the corridor. (Maggie Hudlow)
- Prioritize funding for research and collar deployments to monitor antelope use in winter and summer range adjacent to the corridor. (Maggie Hudlow)
- Study lands that are not located within the proposed corridor and segments and which are utilized by antelope as during hard-winter conditions and identify conservation strategies to ensure such lands remain available to antelope during harsh winters. (Mike Brennan)
- Research potential crossing technologies and locations along the I-80 and Union Pacific railroad corridor to expand available winter and harsh winter habitat availability. (Mike Brennan)

BUFFERS

- Game and Fish should review and update the 300-meter buffers to ensure there are no errors based on known infrastructure.¹ [PARAPHRASED] (Craig Rood)
- Refine spatial models to better reflect actual antelope movement. Remove areas within bottlenecks and high/medium use zones where antelope do not travel due to existing infrastructure or inaccessibility. While maintaining the scientifically supported 300-foot buffer, recognize that in some locations the buffer extends over areas not used by antelope. Adjust buffers where appropriate to account for

¹ The document titled "One-Page Overview" on the G&F website explains that 300- meter buffers were utilized. It appears the 300-meter buffers were drawn based on statistically significant collared data. However, it appears that because of buffering, there are some areas that do not make sense. For example, some high use areas are shown on top of the Union Pacific Railroad or similar high traffic corridors, some of which are fenced out. As such, the buffering incorrectly shows usage areas. Additionally, some medium use areas are shown inside the WE Soda Alkali Westvaco and Granger evaporation ponds. These corridors are the result of map buffering and are in error and should be removed or corrected appropriately. (Craig Rood)

large, pre-existing developments. Incorporate local WGFD expertise to validate and correct disturbance layers.² [PARAPHRASED] (Jasmine Allison)

WEATHER

- Weather systems and migration timing are key to success of the corridor. So detailed research and monitoring of what does and doesn't work should continue. (John Erramouspe)

Section 3: Recommendations for consideration of socio-economic impacts to county and state revenues, jobs, and proposed and current projects.

COLLABORATION

- While maintaining the importance of the Pronghorn and the Pronghorn Migration, remembering that they are sustained by multiple use communities. (Dave Lankford)
- The Game and Fish should recognize that the Corridor takes precedence over development and quits allowing homeowners/developers the latitude to infringe on the corridor. (Commissioner Bernard)
- Although we request the Rancher to voluntarily "work with" the corridor, when they parcel off/develop the property it needs to adhere to the Corridor's requirements. (Commissioner Bernard)
- The participating counties Planning and Zoning should jointly meet and determine standards for the Corridor and building/development around it. (Commissioner Bernard)
- Convene a group of affected county planners to explore feasibility of and interest in voluntarily amending county land use plans to align with the Executive Order. (Maggie Hudlow)

² Although removing these inconsistencies system-wide may be impractical, prioritizing corrections in key areas would reduce confusion regarding access and acceptable use in the future. In doing so, this may also reveal that antelope movement is more narrowly concentrated than currently depicted, further emphasizing the importance and sensitivity of those true travel corridors. (Jasmine Allison)

- Governor- encouraged updates of County Land Use and Federal Land use plans with advice from counsel funded through FNRPA designed to make plans more consistent with Corridor Designation. (Commissioner Slaughter)
- Maintain regular communication with BOCC's to evaluate effects of designation on projects that have been completed and also any effect on proposed projects. Emphasis should be placed on job effects and county valuation concerns. (Commissioner Slaughter)

EDUCATION

- [Increase] public awareness to limit human interaction during migration seasons using media, social media, newspapers, etc. (John Erramouspe)
- [Increase] public awareness on the impacts of the overpopulation of wild horses in the southern portion of the corridor (checker board). They are affecting every species of wildlife & livestock that rely on this area for critical winter forage. (John Erramouspe)
- Promote the corridor via educational kiosks and material through WGFD. (Mike Henn)

Section 4: Recommendations on existing protections and designation.

- Utilize technology to develop oil and gas, and minerals to reduce the impacts while maintaining revenue into the future. (Mike Henn)
- To protect this [corridor] to the fullest extent possible for an extended period and not just a couple of weeks. (Commissioner Bernard)
- Corridor designation should be limited to the high-use and bottleneck areas, and not the isolated segments and low-use areas.³ [PARAPHRASED] (Craig Rood)

³ The concept of a 'corridor' suggests a path from one point to another. Logically, the low, medium, high use and stopovers should more-or-less tie together or be linked. However, there are many islands or unique polygons that don't seem to link to the corridors. These islands seem to go against the concept of 'corridors'. We should only designate the heavy use/connected corridors, and not the isolated islands. Designation of the isolated islands goes against the concept of corridors. We should "designate" the northern part of the corridor and the high use areas and "identify" the low use areas and islands. (Craig Rood)

- The Local Working Group finds that existing protections are important but not by themselves sufficient to ensure long-term functionality of the Sublette Antelope Migration Corridor. The group recommends designation, paired with a voluntary-first implementation strategy for private lands, recognition of valid existing rights, continued grazing and agricultural use and site specific management focused on bottlenecks, stopover areas, and future surface disturbance. The real question is not whether antelope survive today, but whether the corridor remains functional long-term. (Commissioner Slaughter)
- The corridor is designated in its entirety as outlined in the Biological Risk and Opportunity Assessment. (Maggie Hudlow)
- The dates of peak timing use for each segment can be adjusted on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of Game and Fish staff in response to conditions on the ground. (Maggie Hudlow)
- The Sublette Antelope Working Group will convene every five years (or more frequently if deemed appropriate by Game and Fish staff) to re-evaluate the corridor, incorporating the latest, best available science and data. (Maggie Hudlow)
- Consider establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Bureau of Land Management Wyoming, and US Forest Service - Rocky Mountain Region to consolidate resources and coordinate efforts within the antelope migration corridor. This MOU can include, but is not limited to, directing resources for habitat improvement, fencing modifications, reaffirming valid existing rights, reinforcing the right and ability to graze livestock on federal and state lands, and addressing other conservation concerns within the corridor. (Maggie Hudlow)

Section 5: Recommendations related to highway projects, including wildlife crossing opportunities and other project considerations.

- Work with WGFD and Department of Transportation to target highest risk locations. (Commissioner Slaughter)
 - Use collision data and GPS collar data to identify repeat crossing zones
 - Focus first on highways with known pronghorn movement (e.g. US 191, US 28 and other key corridors in the area.

- Package projects to compete for federal wildlife crossing funds (infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Programs)
- Install Wildlife crossings Paired with Strategic Fencing. (Commissioner Slaughter)
 - Use overpasses or underpasses designed specifically for pronghorn movement
 - Pair with funnel fencing to direct animals to safe crossing points
 - Incorporate “jump outs” on road side of fences
- Incorporate Digital signs warning drivers during peak migration periods. (Commissioner Slaughter)
- Coordinate Corridor protection with Future Highway Planning. (Commissioner Slaughter)
- Leverage Partnerships and Funding Opportunities (Commissioner Slaughter)
 - Partner with Federal Agencies, NGO’s, and local governments to cost share projects.
 - Pursue grants tied to wildlife-vehicle collision reduction and habitat connectivity
 - Engage private landowners near highways for adjacent habitat improvement
- Laydown sections of ROW fences on areas where needed to get pronghorns from one side to the other, and using digital LED road signs to alert travelers of wildlife crossing during those time periods. (John Erramouspe)
- Identify opportunities and prioritize funding to address risk or conflict associated with road crossings. (Maggie Hudlow)

Section 6: Recommendations on the Executive Order, broadly.

- Better clarify the definition and requirements of a stop-over area.⁴
[PARAPHRASED] (Craig Rood)

⁴ The definition of stop-over areas is not clear: 1. For the ~20 year period, in how many of the years must the area be “used a majority of the time by GPS Collared animals to forage and rest....” to qualify as a stop-over area? Is that one year out of 20, all 20 years out of 20, or something in between? 2. If those

- Better clarify the definition and requirements of a medium use area⁵.
[PARAPHRASED] (Craig Rood)
- Add definition of “Valid Existing Rights” (Commissioner Slaughter)
- Strengthen Appendix B, Section 8 on the Scheduled Review Cycle (Commissioner Slaughter)

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

Mike Henn

- Conflicts tied to public uses including recreation now and into the future as that grows.
- Wild horses occurring on the landscape both in and out of active HMA's
- Population impacts out of human control (disease and weather).
- Threats to habitat from invasive species like cheatgrass.

Commissioner Slaughter

- Feral Horse Interference
- Increasing Public Awareness
- Accountability for failure to perform agreed upon functions (Laying fences down not putting up)
- Yearly information on herd health and numbers
- Other multiple use concerns

areas are not used every year for 'stop-over', what is the scientific basis for determining that they are indeed an important stop-over area? 3. What percentage of the total collared animals have to use that area as a 'stop-over' in order for it to be considered a stop-over? Is that requirement based on a percentage use each year, or is it the total percentage of the total sequences over the whole 20 years? (Craig Rood)

⁵ The definition of medium use area is not clear: 1. Does the 10-20% indicate that 10-20% of the total migration sequences used that area over the 20 year period? Or does it indicate that in at least one of the 20 years, 10%-20% of the collared animals in that year used that corridor? If the latter (i.e. in any one of 20 years, 10-20% of the collared animals at that time used the corridor) what is the scientific basis for the designation? (Craig Rood)

