

## Box Elder County Adaptive Resources Management (BARM) Sage-Grouse Local Working Group

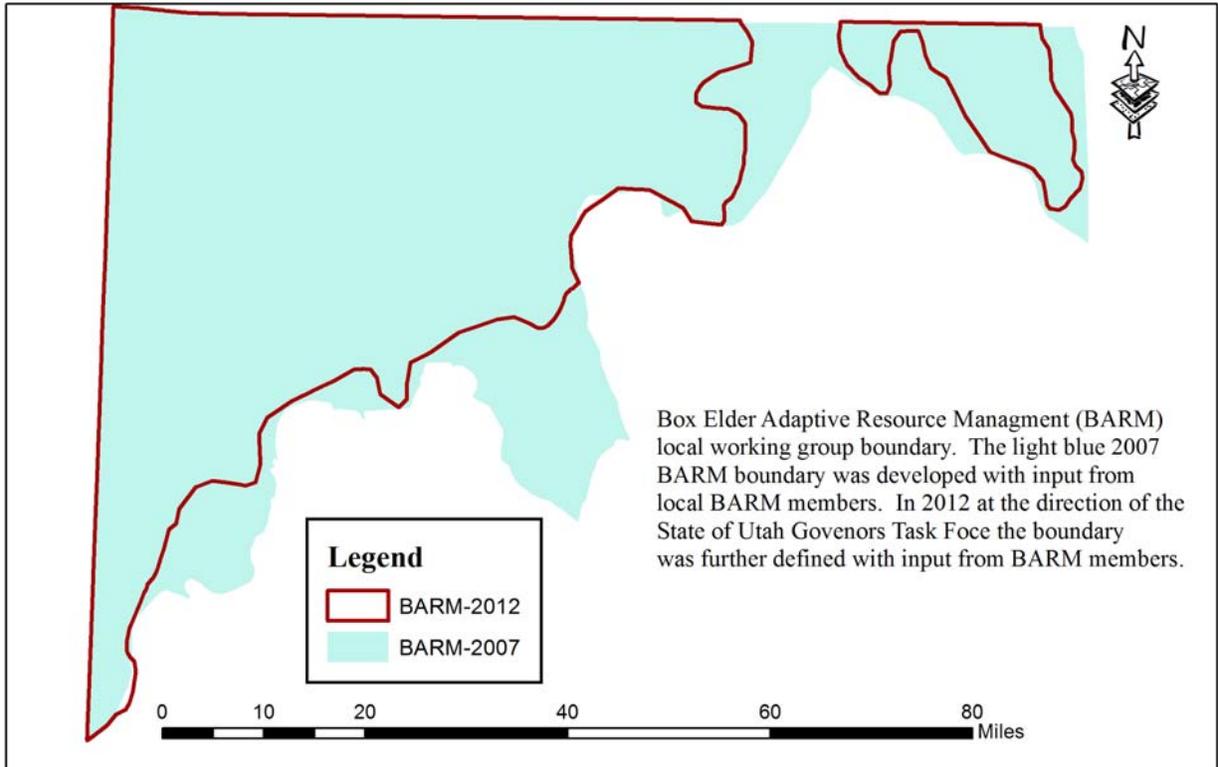


Figure 3. The Box Elder Adaptive Resource Management (BARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group and new Sage-grouse Management Area.



The Box Elder Adaptive Resource Management Plan (BARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group (LWG) was organized in 2001. The group is currently facilitated by Mr. Todd A. Black. The BARM is comprised of state and federal agency personnel, representatives from local government, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, private industry, and private individuals.

In 2011, BARM was incorporated into the newly formed West Box Elder Coordinated Resource Management (CRM). The CRM plan provides overall direction and guidance for habitat projects within the conservation area and SGMA. The CRM established a sage-grouse subcommittee as part of the plan. The committee meets 2-3 times per year to address and discuss sage-grouse specific issues of concern, management actions, and strategies. The subcommittee reports these to the CRM. Todd Black is the sage-grouse committee representative to the CRM group. He will continue in this capacity until 30 June 2013. At this time, these duties will be reassigned to another staff member.

In 2012, the subcommittee met twice to review and discuss updating maps and boundaries and progress and changes to the LWG plan and revisions to the 2009 State of Utah Greater Sage-grouse Strategic Management Plan as proposed by the Utah Governor's Task Force.

Additionally, the group reviewed and made changes (see below) to the LWG Summary of Threats to local sage-grouse populations from the 2006 BARM plan.

## **Description of Area and General Population Information**

The CRM encompasses western Box Elder County, from the Snowville area west to the UT/NV border and south to the shore line of the Great Salt Lake. Sage-grouse habitat in this area is broken down into 3 sub regions, the Grouse Creek, Pilot, and Raft River range. See [http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/BARMSAGRPlan\\_Final.pdf](http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/BARMSAGRPlan_Final.pdf) for maps and figures.

Although our knowledge of sage-grouse populations in the area is incomplete, research efforts in the area continue to map sage-grouse movements and habitat-use patterns in the Grouse Creek and Raft River Mountains. These research efforts have identified important brooding and winter areas.

## **2012 Conservation Strategies and Actions**

In 2012 the LWG/CRM devoted a substantial effort engaged in conservation planning processes for sage-grouse. This included internal discussions that contributed to revisions of both the threats matrix of the local plan (Table 1) and assisting with the Governor's Task Force sage-grouse planning processes. The CRM and Box Elder County Commissioners provided comments on the plan and two CRM members participated as members on the Task Force. In addition, group members and the facilitator attended meetings and provided input to the Task Force.

Other activities included:

- Continued work with Box Elder County Commissioners to incorporate sage-grouse and other wildlife into county plans.
- Field tours with NRCS SGI biologist Tammy Koldyke and others worked to identify and contact landowners interested in doing proactive sage-grouse habitat work on their properties. These have subsequently developed into 2 projects focusing on the threats of pinion and juniper encroachment and wet meadow restoration projects.
- A joint field tour with the Morgan and Summit Counties sage-grouse LWGs sage-grouse in June 2012.
- A field tour at the request of the Box Elder County Commission conducted May 2012 with BLM state and regional directors Juan Palma and Kevin Oliver and other field office staff to discuss major threats and concerns to sage-grouse and sage-grouse habitat on BLM lands.

## **Project and Research Highlights**

In 2012 USU initiated a major research project to map the ecology of sage-grouse populations in the Grouse Creek, Raft River, and Pilot Mountain sage-grouse management sub-units. The annual reports for this research can be found on-line.

See research project reports:

<http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/boxelder/GrouseCreek2012AnnualReport.pdf>  
[http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/boxelder/ParkValley2012AnnualReport\\_8\\_29\\_12.pdf](http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/boxelder/ParkValley2012AnnualReport_8_29_12.pdf)

## **Revision of Threat Matrix and Strategies Sections of Local Plan**

The LWG revised the threat matrix in a series of meetings held in 2012. Each individual threat level (the intersection of a specific threat and a specific element of the sage-grouse life cycle) in the chart was considered separately. Several threats were modified and the levels of the threat were adjusted accordingly. See original Threat Matrix in the 2006 plan [http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/BARMSAGRPlan\\_Final.pdf](http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/BARMSAGRPlan_Final.pdf) and the modified/revised Threat Matrix table below.

## **Map Revisions**

As part of the Governor's Task Force process, statewide maps for sage-grouse management areas (SGMAs) were developed. The maps for the areas occupied by sage-grouse in the CRM/LWG area remained fairly consistent over the process with a few minor changes from the 2006 plan. The CRM/LWG group agreed with and approved these changes as they more accurately reflect sage-grouse movement areas with current research efforts and available sage-grouse habitat. The CRM/LWG will continue to work with UDWR and other agencies to modify and improve these maps as more information becomes available.

## **Summary of Major Issues and/or Concerns**

The CRM/LWG will continue to work to implement their conservation plan for West Box Elder County. The sage-grouse subcommittee will remain an important participant in the overall plan. Much remains to be addressed with the map and identifying on a finer scale occupied, unoccupied, or potential habitats. Key species conservation concerns in the area remain habitat loss and fragmentation because of wild fires and invasive weeds.

Table 1. Relative importance/contribution of individual threats to reducing or degrading aspects of sage-grouse populations in the BARM Resource Area. Threats are described in the “Threat Analysis” section of this Plan. Ranks are defined according to TNC (2005).

Threat	Reduced population size	Population distribution	Reduced breeding habitat quality	Reduced late summer/fall habitat quality	Reduced winter habitat quality	Reduced connectivity of seasonal habitat types	Reduced connectivity of populations and sub-populations
Altered water distribution	-	Very High	Very High	High	Low	Low	Low
Prolonged drought and extreme weather shifts	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low	Low	Low
Power lines and other tall structures	-	Medium	Medium	Medium	-	Medium	-
Second home and cabin development	-	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Excessive use of existing roads or newly developed roads	-	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Existing and new fences	-	Medium	Medium	High	Low	Low	Low
Renewable and non-renewable energy development	-		Medium	Medium	-	Low	Low
Incompatible vegetation management practices	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Hunting	Medium	Medium	-	-	-	-	-
Incompatible OHV and other recreation uses	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	Medium	Medium
Invasive/noxious weeds	Very High	Very High	Very High	High	High	Medium	Medium
Parasites and disease	Medium	Medium	-	-	-	-	-
Predation	Very High	High	-	-	-	-	-
Wild fire	-	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High	High	Medium
Pinyon-juniper encroachment	-	-	High	High	High	High	-
Incompatible grazing of wild and domestic ungulates	-	-	High	High	Low	Low	Low
Conversion of agriculture	-	-	Low	Low	-	-	-