

Castle Country Adaptive Resources Management (CaCoARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group

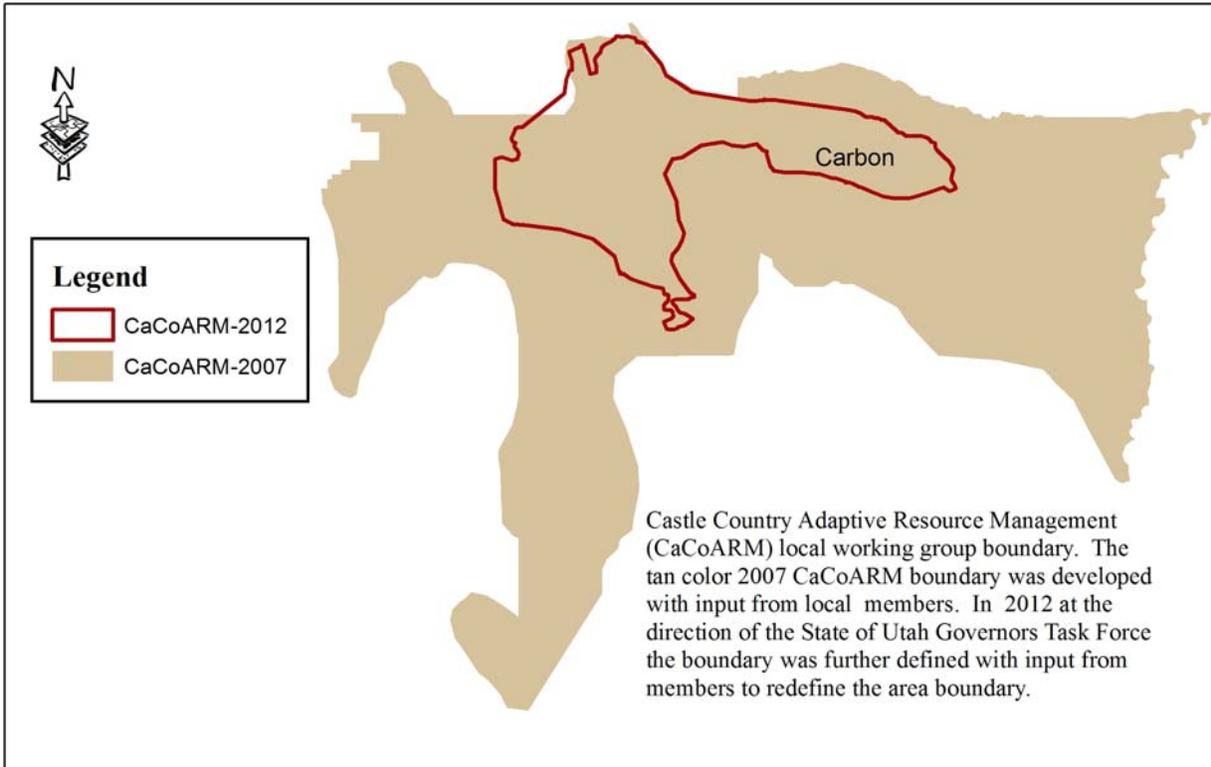


Figure 4. The Castle Country Adaptive Resource Management (CaCoARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group and new Sage-grouse Management Area. The SGMA include parts of Carbon County.



The Castle Country Adaptive Resource Management Plan (CaCoARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group was organized in 2004. This LWG is facilitated by Mr. Todd A. Black. The CaCoARM consists of state and federal agency personnel, representatives from local government, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, private industry, and private individuals. In 2012 the LWG 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 plan as proposed by the Utah Governor's Task Force. Additionally, the group reviewed and made changes (see CaCoARM) to the Summary of Threats to local sage-grouse populations from the 2006 CaCoARM sage-grouse plan.

Description of Area and General Population Information

The CaCoARM conservation area encompassed occupied sage-grouse habitats in Carbon and Emery Counties with portions of Utah and Sanpete County. Sage-grouse habitat in this area is naturally fragmented by both geology and topography. The habitats have been classified into 5 sub regions; the Sanpete, Taviputs, Emma Park, Gordon Creek and Manti. See http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/carbon/CaCoARM_final-01-07.pdf for maps and figures.

Research and monitoring efforts in this area have contributed to increasing the LWG knowledge of sage-grouse ecology. This information proved important in Task Force deliberations. Based on this information, occupied sage-grouse habitats in Emery County which were originally part of the CaCoARM LWG have been included in the Parker Mountain - Emery Sage-grouse Management area.

2012 Conservation Strategies and Actions

In 2012 CaCoARM completed revisions of the threats matrix contained within the LWG plan (Table 2). The LWG also assisted in the Governor's Task Force planning processes by providing timely reviews of maps and strategies. In addition, LWG members and the facilitator attended meetings and provided input during Task Force meetings.

Some of the highlights addressing actions and strategies from the 2006 plan in 2012 included:

- Field tours with NRCS SGI biologist to identify and contact landowners interested in doing proactive sage-grouse habitat work on their properties. These have subsequently developed into two projects focusing on the threats of pinion and juniper brood rearing habitat, planting forbs into old crested wheat plantings.
- Continued participation in the Bill Barrett Corporation and BLM Taviputs planning group.

Project and Research Highlights

The UDWR continued monitoring sage-grouse movement patterns on Emma Park and Taviputs Plateau. This monitoring effort was made possible with funding provided by the Bill Barrett Corporation.

Revision of Threat Matrix and Strategies Sections of Local Plan

The threat matrix was revised by the group over 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 threat rankings were modified (Table 2). (See original Threat Matrix in the 2006 plan http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/carbon/CaCoARM_final-01-07.pdf and the modified/revised threats.

Map Revisions

During the Governor's Task Force process major changes were made to original maps of the CaCoARM sage-grouse occupied areas contained in the 2006 plan. These changes were made based on information contained in the East Taviputs EIS (Bill Barrett Corporation and the BLM), input from the Counties, and connectivity of habitat between the Strawberry (to the North and West) and Parker Mountain (to the South) sage-grouse populations. The LWG and the County were supportive of the changes made to the map. The LWG will continue to work with UDWR and other agencies to modify and improve these areas as more information becomes available and is needed.

Summary of Major Issues and/or Concerns

The new CaCoARM LWG area will include the Carbon SGMA. This SGMA includes part of Carbon, Emery, Utah, and Sanpete Counties. Because of the energy development footprint, Lorien Belton will transition in as the facilitator for this group in 2013. Lorien has extensive experience working with energy interests in the Uintah Basin. The larger portion of the Emery County which was originally included in the CaCoARM LWG will be facilitated as part of the Parker LWG. We anticipate that we will hold joint and individual meetings with both groups.

Table 2. Relative importance/contribution of individual threats to reducing or degrading aspects of sage-grouse populations in the CaCoARM Resource Area. Threats are described in the “Threat Analysis” section of this Plan. Ranks are defined according to TNC (2005).

Threats	Reduced population size	Population distribution	Reduced lek habitat quality	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
Hindrance of ability to maintain and implement local management decisions	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Power lines and other tall structures	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Renewable and non-renew-able energy development	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Roads	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High	High
Prolonged drought and extreme weather shifts	High	-	Low	High	High	High	-	-
Lack of proper range management	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Incompatible fire management practices	-	High	High	High	Low	High	High	High
Incompatible livestock grazing management	-	Low	Low	High	High	Low	-	-
Incompatible OHV and recreation	-	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Invasive/noxious weeds	-	Medium	Medium	Very High	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Parasites and disease	High	High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Predation	Very High	High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vegetation management	-	High	High	High	High	High	High	Medium
Pinyon-juniper encroachment	-	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Incompatible grazing of wildlife horses	-	-	High	High	High	High	-	-