

Parker Mountain Adaptive Resource Management (PARM) Local Sage-grouse Working Group

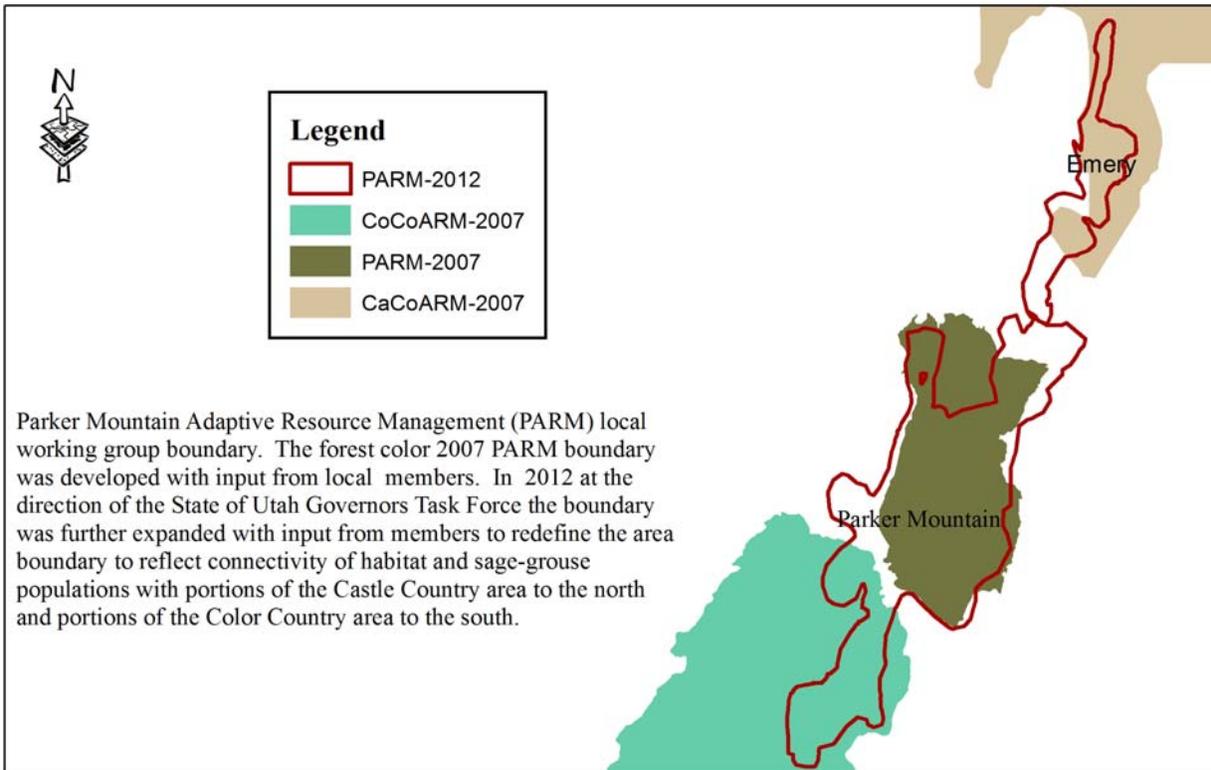


Figure 7. The Parker Mountain – Emery County Adaptive Resource Management (PARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group and new Sage-grouse Management Area (SGMA). Emery County has been incorporated into Parker Mountain – Emery SGMA.



The Parker Mountain Adaptive Resource Management Plan (PARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group was organized in 1998. This LWG is facilitated by Mr. Todd A. Black. PARM 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 Utah Greater-sage-grouse Strategic Management Plan as recommended by the Utah Governor’s Task Force.

Description of Area and General Population Information

The PARM LWG area covers portions of Garfield, Piute, and Wayne Counties that contain occupied sage-grouse habitats. Sage-grouse habitat in this area is well connected and the majority of the sage-grouse can be found on the Awapa and Aquarius plateaus. It is broken down into three sub regions; the Parker, Fish Lake, and Grass Valley. See <http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/parm/PARMfml-10-06-web.pdf> for maps and figures.

The PARM area has been the most studied population of sage-grouse in Utah going back to 1998 and there have been several publications made available through these research efforts in addition to annual reports. See <http://utahcbcp.org/htm/groups/parkermountain> for more information.

2012 Conservation Strategies and Actions

In 2012 the LWG participants focused a substantial portion of their time engaged in conservation planning processes for sage-grouse. This effort included internal discussions that contributed to revisions of both the threats matrix of the local plan (see Table 5 below). In addition, a great deal of energy was put forth assisting with the Governor's task force sage-grouse planning processes. Members from the PARM as well as the County Commissioners provided comments on the plan. In addition, group members and the facilitator attended meetings and provided input to the State Task Force during the sage-grouse planning efforts.

In 2012 the LWG met three times to review and discuss updating maps and boundaries and progress and changes to the LWG plan and address boundary and mapping issues proposed by the Utah Governor's office sage-grouse task force group. Additionally, the group reviewed and made changes (see below) to the Summary of Threats to local sage-grouse populations from the 2006 PARM sage-grouse plan. Some of the highlights addressing actions and strategies from the 2006 plan in 2012 included:

- Field tours with PARM members to review past treatments and restoration projects in the Grass Valley region.
- Annual LWG lek count day held in April annually. This year there were 9 participants and over 500 male grouse were counted.

Project and Research Highlights

The PARM worked closely with the Utah Governor's Task Force to revise LWG maps and develop management recommendations.

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 (Table 5). 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/parm/PARMfml-10-06-web.pdf> and the modified/revised matrix.

Map Revisions

During the Governor's Task Force planning process, as noted previously, draft statewide maps for sage-grouse management areas were developed. Significant changes were made to PARM sage-grouse occupied areas changes from the 2006 plan. These primarily had to do with connecting habitat and populations to the North (Emery County—Horn and Wildcat Mountains) and to the South John's Valley north of Bryce Canyon. The PARM working group 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

One of the most pressing research needs on Parker Mountain is to look at the effects of increased predation on this population. Intensive predation management that occurred in the area in the past (associated with the sheep industry) is being curtailed. Additionally, USDA Wildlife Services (WS) had been addressing raven populations for the past several years but may not continue at current levels because of funding limitations.

Table 5. Relative importance/contribution of individual threats to reducing or degrading aspects of sage-grouse populations in the PARM 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 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
Power lines and other tall structures	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High	High
Natural resource exploration and development	High	High	Low	High	High	Medium	Medium
Excessive hunting pressure	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Prolonged drought and extreme weather shifts	High	-	Low	High	High	-	-
Lack of proper range management	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Altered fire regimes	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Herbivory practices that are detrimental to the habitat (wild/domestic)	High	High	Low	High	High	Medium	Medium
Incompatible OHV and recreation	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Invasive/noxious weeds	High	High	High	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Parasites and disease	Very High	Very High	Low	Low	Low	Low	High
Extraordinary predation	Very High	Very High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Lack of vegetation management	High	Medium	High	High	High	High	Medium
Pinyon-juniper encroachment	High	High	High	High	High	High	Medium
Livestock grazing	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium