

## **East Box Elder County Adaptive Resources Management (EBARM) Sage-Grouse Local Working Group**

The East Box Elder County Adaptive Resources Management (EBARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group (LWG) was formed in November 2015. The LWG group consists of private landowners, state and federal agency personnel, and conservation district members. The group elected C. J. Roberts and Brett Selman as their co-chairs for the group. The first objectives of the group are to learn more about the sage-grouse population in their area, which consists of nearly all private land. This included lek searches, recording wintering grouse, and communicating with landowners for their knowledge. This group is facilitated by Dave Dahlgren.

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

The East Box Elder area is the Sage-Grouse Management Area that lies west of I-15 and north of I-84. There are only 2 or 3 active known leks in the area with relatively few birds at each lek. Most of the lower elevations have been converted to dry farming at European settlement. Most of the sagebrush habitat is in the higher elevation rangelands. Much of the sagebrush habitat has been fragmented over the years and fire continues to be one of the most significant threats to the sagebrush communities. Cheatgrass invasion following fire is also an extensive issue in the area. The landownership is predominantly private and there is only a small section of Bureau of Land Management property in the northwest portion. The area is unique in that private landowners are numerous and landownership is not generally in large blocks. This creates its own challenges and opportunities.

### **Recent Activities and Accomplishments**

The LWG purchased a GPS-PTT radio-transmitter to mark a sage-grouse within the area. In 2016, we attempted to locate and trap a grouse on several occasions, but all were unsuccessful. A female sage-grouse was radio-marked in the spring of 2017. However, the female died within a few weeks of capture (Figure 5). Another radio-transmitter is available for the spring of 2018 and efforts will be made to trap another sage-grouse in the area.



The East Box Elder LWG has purchased GPS transmitters to deploy on sage-grouse to learn more about their habitat use. This photo shows a GPS transmitter mounted on the rump of a female sage-grouse. These transmitters provide 4-6 locations a day, 24-7. Photo by Todd Black.

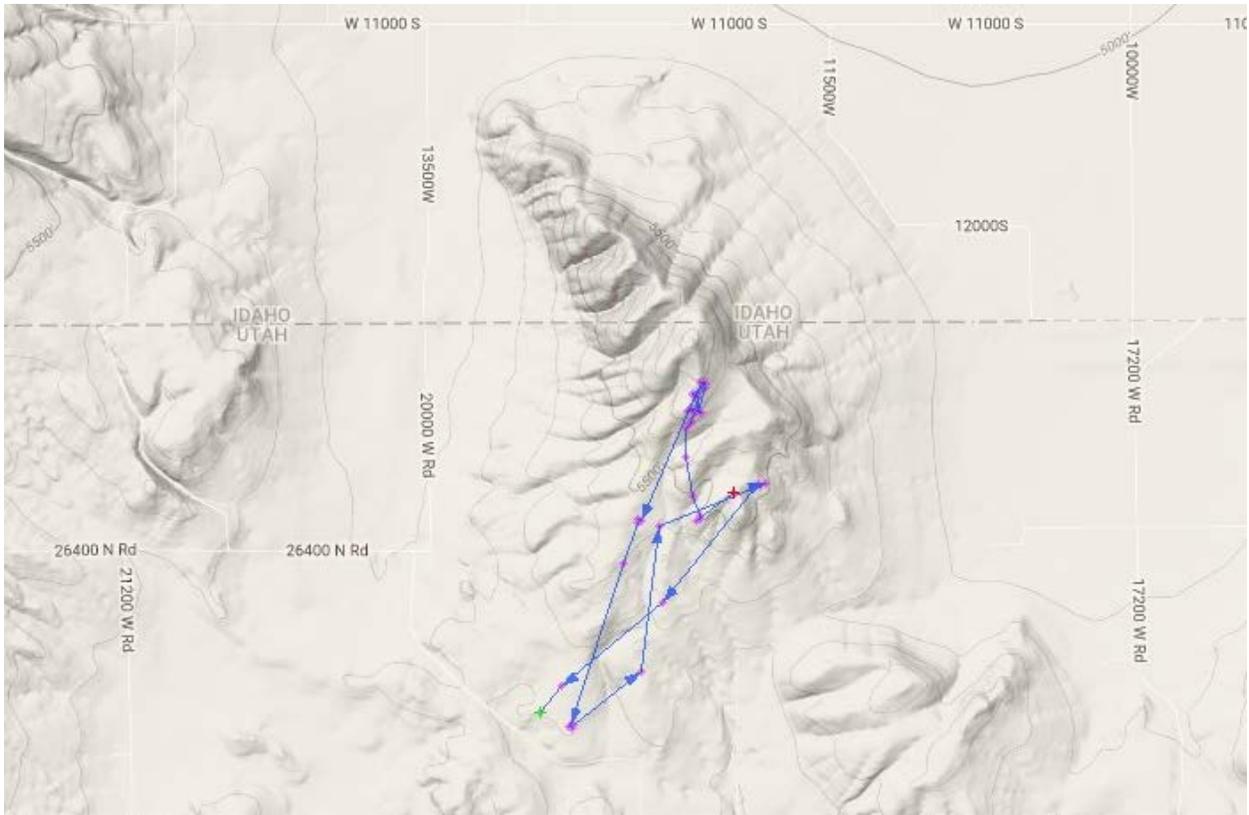


Figure 5. Map of locations of GPS-PTT radio-marked female sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) within the East Box Elder Resource Area, near the Idaho border in the middle of Pocatello Valley. This female was trapped during the spring of 2017 and survived only a few weeks.

### Upcoming Year Work Plan

A proposal for a new landfill to be opened on private land in the area was considered by the State of Utah. There has been some debate and conflict within the group concerning this potential development. The group has not been active for nearly a year now. It has been difficult to get momentum within the group. Efforts are underway to start meeting more regularly again.