

## **Color Country Adaptive Resources Management (CCARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group**

The Color Country Adaptive Resource Management (CCARM) Sage-grouse LWG is facilitated by Nicki Frey. The main purpose of the LWG is to provide a framework of strategies and associated actions that can be implemented to abate threats, address information gaps, and guide monitoring efforts. Strategies developed by CCARM were designed to be specific to the local area while taking into consideration the guidelines at a range wide level.

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

The Panguitch Management Area is located in southern Utah, in Kane, Garfield, Paiute and Wayne Counties, incorporating more than a dozen, often connected leks. Due to the population exchange throughout this Management Area, and its incorporation of the southern-most sage-grouse lek, it is considered an important population for Utah.

This population uses a series of leks throughout the habitat area, with some males visiting more than one lek per season. The population is distributed north-south in a series of linked valleys and benches, and constrained by mountains and canyons. There is a large range in the number of males in attendance among these leks. Movement of sage-grouse from one valley or bench to another among seasons is necessary to meet their seasonal habitat requirements in the highly variable annual weather conditions of this region. Movements among valleys are not present in each group of sage-grouse, and not all used areas are known to managers.

### **Project and Research Highlights**

The LWG continues meets every other month. We typically have 20 people in attendance depending on the topic of conversation. We continued to provide assistance to Alton Coal for mitigation planning. The group continued to provide assistance to UDWR, FS, and BLM WRI projects in the proposal phase and on the ground. The Upper Sevier Watershed Project kept them busy. CCARM hosted field work day in August to cut “whips” from a recently treated field that is used by sage-grouse.

Nicki has continued work on the project started in 2013 (mostly 2014) to study grouse response to treated areas, and connectivity among leks. She is deploying GPS transmitters on sage-grouse in Dog Valley, the missing link between Bald Hills SGMA and Panguitch SGMA.

The UDWR will use these data to also support an employee’s Masters of Natural Resource program through Utah State University.

Nicki implemented the Wildlife Research Education Network program in Kanab for the second time. Students were shown about radio-telemetry, collected field data on sage-grouse habitat, learned tracking and other field ID tools, and hiked through grouse country, seeing 3 sage-grouse along the way. During the fall, 40 students from two high schools (Kanab and Cedar City) participated in the program.