

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

CCARM had a productive 2016. We commented on over a dozen WRI projects, providing ideas to improve projects, guiding project methods to increase the benefits to sage-grouse, and providing written support for these projects. We continued to assist the Alton Coal Development mitigation strategy plans and committed to assist with monitoring 5 sage-grouse that use the area around the current mine. CCARM also commented on the ACD supplement draft EIS for the federal lease application. Dr. Frey continued her WREN program with Kanab High School in 2016. She had students from Kanab high school collect data at the Alton grouse study site, and discussed the reclamation efforts that have been conducted in that area. Additionally, Rowland Hall, from Utah County, participated in WREN in April; while the weather was treacherous, they collected data on sage-grouse habitat characteristics and discussed grouse ecology.

In the late summer, CCARM joined the WRI Southern Region's tour to look at watershed restoration programs. We learned about streambank restoration, explored a newly establish beaver dam and the beaver dam analog that controls the water level of the beaver dam, and were even able to release Boreal toads into the new beaver pond. Over 70 people attended this field trip.

In the fall, we deployed 3 new transmitters in Sink Valley to continue the ACD monitoring project. We employed high-school volunteers to assist with the trapping. In December, Dr. Frey provided an update to the sage-grouse monitoring program. She is coordinating with Mr. Rhett

Boswell, UDWR, to conduct a habitat analysis of the grouse. He will create a resource selection function analysis to determine how often grouse use treated areas. We will also be conducting a survey in Garfield county to gather the public's opinion to the WRI program as it benefits greater sage-grouse. Dr. Frey also presented her research update to Kanab, at an annual BLM open house. This has led to Dr. Frey assisting Kane County with their county management plan. Finally, Dr. Petersen and Dr. Frey published the results of Dr. Petersen's study of grouse response to the mine in the Human Wildlife Interactions journal. Also in December, CCARM hosted the BLM's presentation of the IMs. This presentation was posted online (<http://utahcbcp.org/htm/groups/colorcountry>).