

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

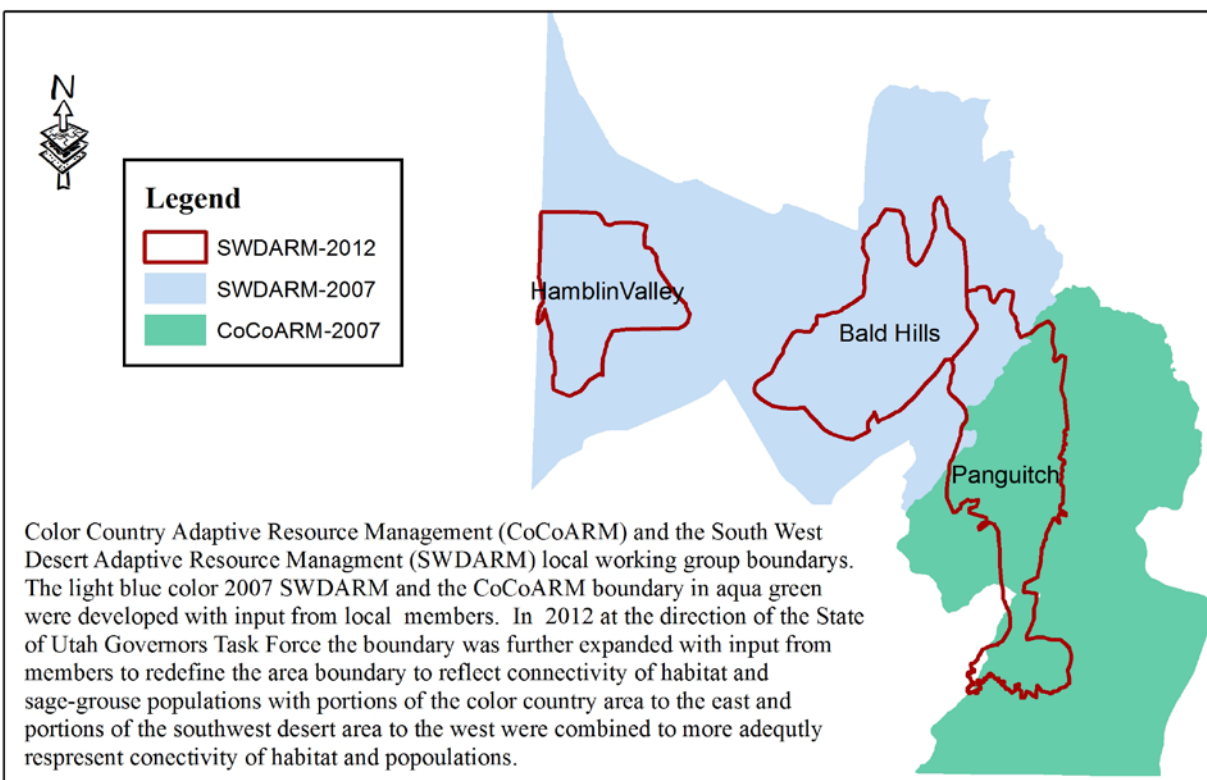


Figure 5. The Color County Adaptive Resource Management (CCARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group and new Sage-grouse Management Area.



The Color Country Adaptive Resource Management (CCARM) Sage-grouse Local working Group is facilitated by Dr. Nicki Frey. One of the main purposes of our LWG plan is to provide a framework of strategies and associated actions that can be implemented to abate threats, address information gaps, and guide monitoring efforts. Several other documents and publications provide recommendations and guidelines for management of sage-grouse populations and their habitats, many of which were reviewed in the Introduction of our Plan. 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 Color Country local working group is currently working collaboratively on a satellite telemetry project funded by the BLM. This project is conducted by Dr. Frey; however members of CCARM regularly volunteer their time to assist with trapping, gain private lands access, and troubleshoot the project.

The study began in 2013, to investigate Greater sage-grouse use of Ford Pasture and Sink Valley, critical areas in the Panguitch WMA. Currently we are following 8 grouse from Panguitch to Sink Valley. We are gathering information on inter-lek movements, corridors, habitat use, and use of habitat treatments.

To assist the Alton Coal Development LLC with their mitigation, we will also deploy 2 transmitters for this company in the coming fall. The data from these 2 transmitters will be pooled with the data collected from BLM to increase our sample size. However, the data will also be kept separate to allow for individual reports for mitigation.

Our annual field tour was conducted in August rather than June this year. This allowed time for advertising the field tour, to increase public participation. We focused on the information we are gaining from the telemetry project; we traveled to the focal points of grouse activity from Sink Valley to Panguitch.

In 2013, Dr. Frey initiated her Wildlife Research Education Network program. In this program, she instructs high school students on the scientific method, using actual data to allow students to investigate. In 2013, she instructed 20 students from Kanab during a 2-day module. In this time, students used real-time data collected from a satellite telemetry study to pose questions and formulate hypotheses about Greater sage-grouse.

Additionally, Dr. Frey participated in the Upper Sevier River Natural Resources Field Day, organized by Kevin Heaton, an active member of CCARM. This field day educates 400 K-6 students. As an instructor, Dr. Frey taught students about Greater sage-grouse conservation and the things being done in the Panguitch WMA to promote Greater sage-grouse.

Table 3. Relative importance/contribution of individual threats to reducing or degrading aspects of sage-grouse populations in the CCARM Resource Area. Threats are described in the “Threat Analysis” section of this Plan. Ranks are defined according to TNC (2005).

Threat	Aspects of Sage-grouse population in the CoCARM Resource Area							
	Reduced population size	Population distribution	reduced lek habitat quality	Reduced nesting/early brood-rearing habitat quality	Reduced summer/late brood-rearing habitat quality	Reduced winter habitat quality	Reduced connectivity of seasonal habitat types	Reduced connectivity of populations & sub-populations
Enhanced native and domestic predators	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Recreational use	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	Medium	Medium
Invasive/alien vegetation species	High	High	Medium	Very High	High	Medium	High	High
Concentrated wildlife and/or livestock use	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Fire and vegetation management	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	High	High
Development of roads or utilities	High	Medium	Medium	Very High	High	High	High	High
Lack of communication among public parties	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Diseases and parasites	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Alternative land uses (mining, wind power, water development)	High	High	Medium	High	High	High	High	High
Dramatic weather events	Low	Low	Medium	High	High	High	High	High