

## Castle Country Adaptive Resources Management (CaCoARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group

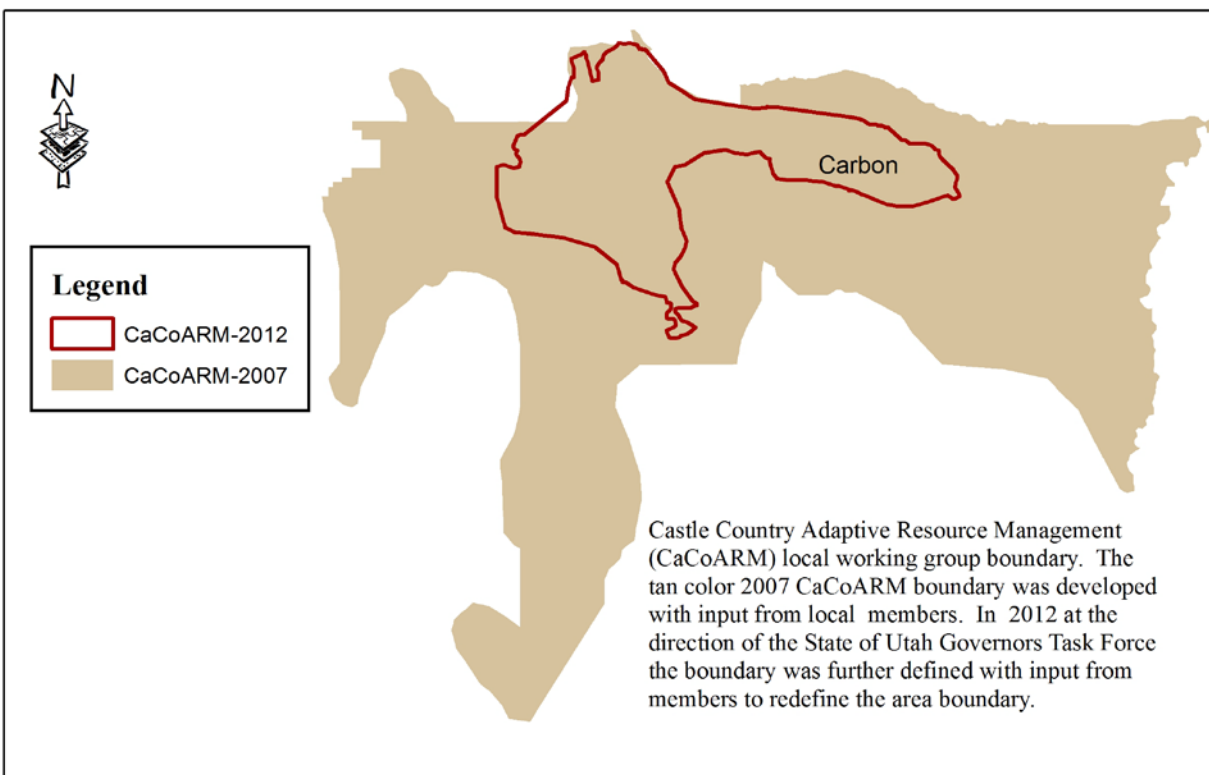


Figure 4. The Castle Country Adaptive Resource Management (CaCoARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group and new Sage-grouse Management Area. The SGMA include parts of Carbon County.



The Castle Country Adaptive Resource Management Plan (CaCoARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group was organized in 2004. Lorien Belton is the current facilitator.

### Description of Area and General Population Information

The CaCoARM conservation area encompassed occupied sage-grouse habitats in Carbon and Emery Counties with portions of Utah and Sanpete County. Sage-grouse habitat in this area is naturally fragmented by both geology and topography. The habitats have been classified into 5 sub regions; the Sanpete, Taviputs, Emma Park, Gordon Creek and Manti. See [http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/carbon/CaCoARM\\_final-01-07.pdf](http://utahcbcp.org/files/uploads/carbon/CaCoARM_final-01-07.pdf) for maps and figures.

Research and monitoring efforts in this area have contributed to increasing the LWG knowledge of sage-grouse ecology. This information proved important in Task Force deliberations. Based on this information, occupied sage-grouse habitats in Emery County which were originally part of the CaCoARM LWG have been included in the Parker Mountain - Emery Sage-grouse Management area.

## **Project and Research Highlights**

The CaCoARM group transitioned to a new facilitator just prior to the beginning of this reporting period. When not focused on understanding or critiquing current policy issues, much of the work in the last year and a half has been focused on knowledge sharing and relationship building. In July 2014, a field tour to the Tavaputs Plateau provided an opportunity for several landowners to showcase their management projects and for all LWG members in attendance to continue building relationships and learning about their respective programs. Other meetings have provided opportunities for group members to learn more about the NRCS Sage-Grouse Initiative, and the Watershed Restoration Initiative Funding opportunities as they pertain to sage-grouse.

The LWG provide a unique and personal opportunity for communication and feedback among stakeholders. One key role is facilitating communication between the diverse members of the group and any entities which seek input based on local knowledge. Another is ensuring that large scale processes, such as federal planning efforts, are represented accurately and in a timely manner to the local participants in the group. Between January 2013 and August 2014, the LWGs provided an avenue for information flow about the federal planning processes, including facilitated comment opportunities on the BLM/USFS Draft EIS for sage-grouse in Utah. Updates to the state plan were also communicated via the LWG.

The CaCoARM group reviewed key sections of the BLM-USFS draft sage-grouse EIS for Utah. Although the group did not reach consensus on all topics, multiple areas of agreement and concern were submitted to the federal agencies during the comment period.

The CaCoARM group did not have any WRI projects for sage-grouse proposed in the area during this reporting period. However, additional project development for submission to the WRI funding may be a future opportunity for the LWG. CaCoARM meetings also provide opportunities for energy industry representatives to ask questions, get new representatives up to speed on sage-grouse issues, present concerns, and see habitat work.

Continuing to develop trust relationships and empowering a diversity of local individuals to address local sage-grouse resource concerns are the primary (if informal) goals of the LWG. Moving forward, it will be critical to develop a variety of projects within the group that will appeal to the diversity of challenges and constituencies within the group.

The following update comes directly from Natasha Gruber, a Sage-Grouse Initiative Biologist in Utah. "Local Boy Scouts, Utah State University- Price Wildlife club, Utah Dedicated Hunters, private landowners, NRCS, and UT DWR all came together to help accomplish a large scale fence marking project for greater sage-grouse. Forty-two motivated volunteers came to help mark 10 miles of barbed wire fence to prevent sage-grouse collisions near leks (breeding grounds) in Emma Park, just north of Price, Utah. The white vinyl markers were donated by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) of Utah and also hunters who are part of the Dedicated Hunter Program here in Utah. Recent research has shown that these fence markers can help reduce sage-grouse fence collisions by 83%."

Table 2. Relative importance/contribution of individual threats to reducing or degrading aspects of sage-grouse populations in the CaCoARM 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 lek habitat quality	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	High
Power lines and other tall structures	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Renewable and non-renew-able energy development	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Roads	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High	High
Prolonged drought and extreme weather shifts	High	-	Low	High	High	High	-	-
Lack of proper range management	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Incompatible fire management practices	-	High	High	High	Low	High	High	High
Incompatible livestock grazing management	-	Low	Low	High	High	Low	-	-
Incompatible OHV and recreation	-	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Invasive/noxious weeds	-	Medium	Medium	Very High	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Parasites and disease	High	High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Predation	Very High	High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vegetation management	-	High	High	High	High	High	High	Medium
Pinyon-juniper encroachment	-	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Incompatible grazing of wildlife horses	-	-	High	High	High	High	-	-