

Parker Mountain Adaptive Resource Management (PARM) Local Sage-grouse Working Group

The Parker Mountain Adaptive Resource Management Plan (PARM) Sage-grouse LWG was organized in 1998 by Terry Messmer. PARM consists of state and federal agency personnel, representatives from local government, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, private industry, and private individuals. This LWG is currently facilitated by Dave Dahlgren.

Description of Area and General Population Information

The PARM LWG area covers portions of Garfield, Piute, and Wayne Counties that contain occupied sage-grouse habitats. Sage-grouse habitat in this area is well connected and the majority of the sage-grouse can be found on the Awapa and Aquarius plateaus. It is broken down into three sub regions; the Parker, Fish Lake, and Grass Valley. The sage-grouse populations at Wildcat Knoll and Horn Mountain have been included with the Parker Mountain SGMA. The stakeholders (e.g., USFS, Emery County, etc.) working on these two populations have joined PARM.

The PARM area has been the most studied population of sage-grouse in Utah going back to 1998 and there have been several publications made available through these research efforts in addition to annual reports. See <http://utahcbcp.org/htm/groups/parkermountain> for more information. The Wildcat Knoll and Horn Mountain had two years of research with radio-marked grouse from 2008-2009.

PARM meetings and field tours.

Type	Date	Location	No.	Comments
Face to Face	March 11, 2015	Courthouse, Loa, UT	20	Discussed future events (lek counts), research update from spiked pastures, cheatgrass issues and plans, PARM became the official Pronghorn Committee for the UDWR
Field Tour	April 8, 2015	Parker Mountain, UT	15	Conducted lek counts across Parker Mountain covering all known leks
Field Tour	June 10, 2015	Parker Mountain, Red Knoll	12	PARM members searched the area for cheatgrass invasion and recorded observations
Field Tour	July 1, 2015	Parker Mountain, UT	~80	Six County AOG Summer Natural Resource Field Tour
Field Tour	September 17, 2015	Mytoge Mtn. Project	8	Did a site visit to the Mytoge Mtn. Project area with USFS, UDWR, and USU Ext. personnel

Face to Face	October 15, 2015	Courthouse, Loa, UT		Planned upcoming cheatgrass treatment, BLM Update on RMP.
Field Activity	November 2, 2015	Parker Mountain, Red Knoll	7	Sprayed spot treatments of Plateau on cheatgrass areas
Face to Face	January 27, 2016	Courthouse, Loa, UT	16	New PARM members introduced, cheatgrass WRI project, Mytoge Mtn. Project update, Research Update Spike Pastures, Pronghorn Research Proposal

Projects Proposed with benefit for sage-grouse:

Name	Treatment Type	Proposed Date	Partners	Comments
Red Knoll Cheatgrass WRI Project	Plateau	Fall 2016	UDWR, PARM, SITLA, BLM, WRI	Large aerial treatment, extending onto BLM if possible
Mytoge Mountain Watershed Restoration	Pinyon-Juniper removal, Spike, Aspen Regeneration	Fall 2017	USFS, BLM, UDWR	NEPA to be done by this Fall, BLM working on a project adjacent to USFS property

Project and Research Highlights

The research project conducted by USU in association with SITLA and GIP has been completed and Nate Dulfon (graduate student working with Eric Thacker) is currently writing research results. Large (~500 – 1000 ac) sagebrush areas on Parker Mountain were treated with Tebuthiuron (i.e., Spike) over the last 10 years, each in a different year, in the upper elevation Nick’s, Chicken Springs, South, Forshea, and Buttes pastures. Nearby untreated reference areas have also been established to provide baseline information within pastures. Time since treatment is successively different for each pasture. Spiked areas have been shown to increase forage for livestock and are used more by sage-grouse broods than nearby untreated reference areas. Additionally, the research followed up on the Parker Lake Pasture treatments and found long-term positive impacts of treatment, especially spike to vegetation and sage-grouse use. Lawson aerator and Dixie Harrow plots had sagebrush canopy cover return to pre-treatment levels within 5-10 years, while spiked areas continued to have reduced shrub canopy cover.

PARM is proceeding with two important projects with the Mytoge Mountain project which will reduce conifer cover near two leks in the corridor leading to populations farther north. The BLM is also preparing a project to do similar treatments on adjacent areas to USFS property. PARM is

trying to find resources to have GPS-marked grouse in these areas prior to and after treatment occurs to document the impact of these management practices on the sage-grouse population in the area. PARM is also working to treat cheatgrass invasion that is occurring near Red Knoll and is invading sagebrush communities in the area. Cheatgrass poses an imminent fire threat to Parker Mountain sagebrush habitat for multiple species, including livestock.