

Rich County Coordinated Resource Management Sage-grouse Local Working Group

The Rich County Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Sage-grouse LWG (RICHCO) is facilitated by David Dahlgren. The RICHCO consists of state and federal agency personnel, representatives from local government, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, private industry, and private individuals.

Description of Area and General Population Information

The Rich CRM is located in northeastern Utah, and is a significant population center for grouse in three states – Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming. The SGMA management area includes Cache, Rich, Weber, Morgan, Summit and Wasatch Counties. The area boundary was determined by consulting with adjacent states, UDWR, and the Morgan-Summit Adaptive Resources Management Local Sage-grouse Working Group, and the CRM. It incorporates vegetation types used by sage-grouse.

Currently, there are 51 known active leks counted in the CRM boundary. The average number of sage-grouse attending these leks exceeds 20 males. One lek found on the Utah/Idaho border is one of the largest in the state with male counts often exceeding 150 grouse. The population has remained stable with a slight decline in population numbers and male lek attendance since 2010. However, a strong increase in males/lek has occurred for the last 4 years. The area remains one of four areas in the state that still allows conservative hunting of sage-grouse. This follows similar trends throughout the state of Utah. This population is regarded as one of the most stable in Utah with a potential for growth. Sage-grouse in this area show resiliency to known threats, and are not regarded as being in jeopardy.

The Rich CRM includes a diverse group of stakeholders from private and public organizations. The communication and collaborative process of the CRM allowed for increased understanding of various view points as well as oversight to upcoming projects. The Rich County Commission considers the CRM its official body for reviewing and approving projects that occur within the county. All WRI projects that are going to be implemented are reviewed by the CRM with at least one county commissioner present. This allows for greater inter-organizational communication of projects and more informed representatives of all participating entities.

Rich County CRM meetings and field tours.

Type	Date	Location	No.	Comments
Face to Face	March 2, 2015	Senior Citizen Center, Randolph, UT	18	Discussed the Gov. Executive Order, Update CRM Plan, Planned landowner appreciation dinner
Field Tour	April 17, 2015	Sage Junction, UT	12	Conducted lek counts in north Rich County

Face to Face	May 7, 2015	Senior Citizen Center, Randolph, UT	62	Landowner appreciation dinner and presentation
Field Tour	June 10, 2015	Rich County, UT	25	Combined CRM and WRI tour looking at management projects in Rich County
Face to Face	October 23, 2015	Senior Citizen Center, Randolph, UT		Research project discussed, results from USU Grazing Study presented
Field Tour	November 16, 2015	North Rich County and Crawford Mtns	11	Sagebrush treatments Duck Creek Allotment, Pinyon-Juniper Treatments on Crawfords
Face to Face	January 5, 2016	Senior Citizen Center, Randolph, UT	21	WRI Proposals for Rich Co. Presented, Board Meeting followed, discussed hiring someone to update CRM Plan

Projects Proposed to Rich County CRM

Name	Treatment Type	Proposed Date	Partners	Comments
Crawford Mtn PJ treatment BLM	Pinyon-Juniper removal	Fall 2016	BLM, Rich CRM	Sagebrush focal area
Bearlake WUI Fuels project, USFS	Conifer, Aspen, and sagebrush treatments	Fall 2016	USFS, WRI	Fuels reduction near communities
GIP – SGI projects (multiple)	Pipeline development, fencing, etc.	Fall 2016	GIP, SGI, Private Producers	Taylor Payne project lead
Three Creeks – Grazing Improvement	Grazing System Changes	2015	GIP, Producers, SGI, USU	High Intensity – Short Duration Grazing System

Project and Research Highlights

The first four years of a long-term grazing study has been completed by Seth Dettenmaier, under the direction of Terry Messmer. Nest success was higher on Deseret Land and Livestock (DLL) than Three Creeks BLM Allotment. DLL rangelands exhibited taller grass cover at nest and brood sites in comparison to Three Creeks. This first study to the direct effects of grazing on sage-grouse vital rates. Wayne Smith, a new USU graduate student working with Terry Messmer has also marked sage-grouse with GPS-radios in DLL pastures where cattle with GPS-collars were being grazed. This research will analyze the behavioral response of sage-grouse to grazing.

The Three Creeks project (conversion to short-duration high intensity grazing) is still under review. The projected release date for the NEPA has been postponed to Spring/Early Summer 2016. Once the management shift occurs monitoring of the sage-grouse population response to this change will continue.