

Strawberry Valley Adaptive Resource Management (SVARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group

The Strawberry Valley Adaptive Resource Management (SVARM) sage-grouse LWG is facilitated by Lorien Belton.

Description of Area and General Population Information

The LWG conservation area covers Wasatch and Duchesne Counties. There are leks and associated nesting/brood-rearing areas both at high elevations around the Strawberry Reservoir, as well as in the lower-elevation Fruitland area in Duchesne County. The birds winter primarily in Fruitland. In recent years, the population has grown increasingly stable. Predator control efforts, particularly with regard to red fox control, have played a large role in helping the sage-grouse population rebound from previous lows.

SVARM Meetings and Field Tours, October 2014 – January 2016

Type	Date	Location	# attending	Comments
Meeting	February 3, 2016	Heber	10	Habitat project planning
Meeting	April 21, 2016	Cancelled	-	Both presenters cancelled
Field tour	August 2, 2016	Strawberry Reservoir	8	Habitat projects: past projects and future planning
Meeting	November 1, 2016	Heber	8	Proposed developments near the reservoir, habitat project planning

Project and Research Highlights

The Strawberry sage-grouse group has been very focused on the next round of habitat projects in the area to benefit grouse. The projects are designed to be implemented gradually over a number of years, but planned as a cohesive set of similar efforts. During the extended planning phase, the group has been careful to consider how the exact location, bird usage information, weed situation, grazing leases, and other circumstances factor in to planning appropriate treatments and working with all the appropriate partners. During the summer field tour, the group visited many of the proposed project locations to observe conditions and plan strategic treatments. The group also is paying careful attention to how past treatments have grown back over the years (such as in Trout Creek) and whether the long-term vegetation response has been as beneficial to grouse as the short-term response. These results will influence the type of treatments done in the future.

Another topic of conversation are two developments proposed near the reservoir. The LWG stays apprised of changes to county approvals, and provides information to the county as appropriate on how sage-grouse might be impacted by any new proposed actions. As the original approvals for the developments were done years ago, a component of the discussion

includes keeping everyone apprised of the history and how that factors in to decisions that are yet to be made.

BYU continues to participate actively in the group, helping by sharing the extensive knowledge gathered over the years about seasonal habitat usage, bird movements in response to treatments, and other topics.